

Induction for beginning teachers

Case studies

A network for beginning teachers

Southern Graduate Network

The Southern Graduate Network comprises over 110 primary teaching graduates in their first three years of teaching, from the southern region of Melbourne. The network is led by an executive team of graduates, and facilitated by Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM). The role of the executive is to identify the professional learning needs of the graduates, and feed these back to CEM. The executive reflect on what they needed as beginning teachers; draw on the current priorities of CEM; and respond to member feedback in planning professional learning.

Schools encourage graduates to join the network, where they receive additional induction support and a comfortable environment to share their experiences and discuss challenges with other graduates.

The network seeks continuous feedback via an online platform, in order to promote evaluation and improvement of network meetings. Feedback is also collected from members in person at the end of every session.



School sector Catholic
Location Metropolitan
School types Primary



Being able to have a network of people that are going through exactly what you're going through, to be able to come and talk to, is something that's amazing. It's just going to help and push all of us to be the best we can be.



Network approach

Network meetings occur every term for graduates to connect with each other, share their experiences and engage in professional development and learning opportunities organised by the executive. When visiting schools, CEM staff are able to recognise the year a member graduated by their colour-coded mug which is given to all new network members. This allows them to easily tailor the support they provide to staff in the school.

Making connections

Graduates are supported to begin forming professional networks with like-minded colleagues. They are able to meet with other recent graduates who may be encountering similar challenges, and share advice, resources and support. They are also able to learn about other supports that might be available, and hear perspectives from other school contexts. The network includes mature age graduates who bring different backgrounds and life experiences to share.

Members are able to communicate and share learnings on an online platform, in addition to face-to-face meetings. A social network was chosen, as opposed to an e-mail list, as the members were considered most likely to engage via social media. The community is chiefly moderated by the graduate executive, who also provide content and discussion prompts. They are supported by the region's CEM learning consultants.

The network is about providing an opportunity for graduates to come together, learn new things that are relevant to their classroom, and giving them a chance to network outside of their school.

Professional learning

The executive closely monitors the professional learning needs of the graduates. This allows them to ensure that development opportunities are targeted for maximum impact across the membership. Initial meetings of new members include familiarisation with the requirements of the profession, including engaging with the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. Other areas of learning have included pedagogical approaches aimed at specific student cohorts, professional wellbeing and elements of professional identity within the community. Professional learning experiences are aligned to the Standards.

Graduates are then able to share their learnings back in their schools, giving them a voice and an opportunity to engage in school improvement.

Professional learning sessions are supported at an administrative level by CEM. CEM is also able to identify potential teaching and learning leaders for the future, and support their professional development.



Questions for reflection

1. How might you establish a similar network in your context?
2. How can you support graduates to connect and share with other graduates?
3. How can you encourage graduates to get involved in available opportunities/ support outside of school?

Related resources

Professional Conversations

What do teachers talk about professionally? Where do these conversations happen, when do they happen, and what are the conditions that are needed to make them more effective? Most importantly, what is the impact that they can have on developing teacher expertise and improving student outcomes?



Related resources

My Induction mobile app

Induction is critical to new graduates' growth in the profession. The My Induction app works alongside the induction beginning teachers receive in schools to support their development across the four key areas identified in *Graduate to Proficient: Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession*.

