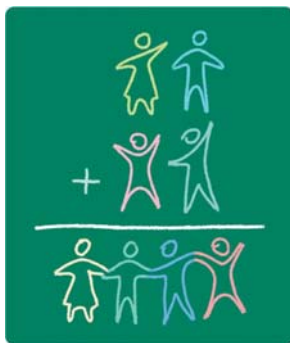# A YEAR OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

2008/09 Program Evaluation

Final Report

This report provides information about the activities and outcomes in 2008/09 for the purposes of evaluating the pilot program, "Year of Professional Support" for early career teachers. This program is being piloted by the Provincial Intermediate Teachers Association (PITA) through funding made available by the British Columbia Ministry of Education and the Abbotsford and Central Okanagan Teacher's Associations.

Prepared by: Jaime Beck and Stephanie Barclay McKeown

06/05/2009

A YEAR OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR EARLY CAREER TEACHERS
2008/09 PROGRAM EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results of the program evaluation are presented as the foundation of a continual process to improve the "Year of Professional Support for Early Career Teachers" program (YPS), services and communication to beginning and early career teachers. Data was collected from a variety of follow-up surveys and telephone interviews about the *Start-Up Your Classroom* and *Program Successfully* and *Build-Up Your Program Successfully*, as well as feedback on the YPS preliminary program schedule for the 2009/10 academic year.

The detailed findings from the evaluation based on results from 286 follow-up workshop surveys, 7 individual interviews, and 22 surveys on the proposed YPS plan for next year are presented in the report. This section provides the highlights based on findings from the survey responses and interviews.

Participant Demographics
❖ The majority of participants identified themselves as teacher candidates. Participants were primarily in their second and first year of teaching, and were mostly teaching Grades 4 to 7 (intermediate), working full-time, and female.

Levels of Preparedness and Confidence for Teaching
❖ Even prior to their involvement in the workshops, participants indicated on a 5-point scale that they felt prepared (average 3.48, sd 0.77) and confident (average 3.62, sd 0.75) to teach overall and prepared for the first week of school (average 3.85, sd 1.05). They also described feeling *confident, excited, organized, and prepared*.

❖ They were less prepared (average 2.79, sd 1.20), however, to teach a particular subject/topic, and described this as feeling *nervous, excited, anxious and uncertain*.

❖ These results suggest the YPS program is filling a gap in the specific elements of teaching. Overall beginning teachers may feel prepared and confident, but at the level of teaching a subject/topic or setting up their classroom they are much less so.

Demand/Support for the YPS Program
❖ Existing research makes the need for effective induction clear and indicates that supports that are responsive to the local contexts of new teachers are most effective. The kind of ongoing and just-in-time support the YPS program is offering is supported by the literature as an effective method of supporting teacher growth.

❖ The support and demand for the YPS program was very high; 93% would recommend the workshop to others.

❖ During the telephone interviews, participants were asked to describe existing supports offered to beginning teachers in their school or district. None of the interviewed participants were able to describe any formal support offered with the exception of the formalized relationship between teacher candidates, School Associates, and Faculty Associates.

❖ When asked to describe a useful YPS program, they suggested one that was "useful/helpful," "collaborative/supportive," and "practical."

❖ However, even with the high demand and support for these workshops, there is room to improve ongoing participation. Majority of the respondents, 83%, indicated it was their first time taking the workshops. Advertising is likely one cause of the low continued participation, as it was ranked a "3" or lower on a scale out of 5 (highest) by more than half of the participants. Participants typically found out about the workshops incidentally through professional development program guides.

❖ In addition to advertising, time and financial constraints were identified as barriers to participation. Participants indicated that they would be more motivated to participate if they felt that they were saving time with the collection of appropriate and useable classroom resources/materials, and saving money with free or low fee sessions.

❖ Another aspect of planning for increased participation is to continue scheduling the workshops on weekends and in conjunction with scheduled Professional Development days, which were identified as the most convenient times for participants.

Evaluation of the YPS Workshops and Future Planning
❖ Participants were asked to rate the logistics of the workshops including location, facilities, fees, registration, and advertising. All were rated fairly positively, with the exception of advertising, which has been previously noted.

❖ Workshop facilitators were ranked on 7 aspects of running a workshop. All of them were rated very positively by the majority of participants.

❖ Almost all participants found the level of workshop was appropriate for them and the information provided was relevant and applicable.

❖ Although the interest is high for the use of the wiki/online community, limits to participation tend to be attributed by participants to time constraints and the skills necessary to navigate the site.

❖ Suggested priorities for the focus of the YPS workshops were on the sharing of resources, assessment/evaluation, unit planning, and classroom management.

CONTENTS

1.0   Program Description

Why YPS?

The Year of Professional Support Program (YPS) was initiated by Ray Myrtle, current president of the Provincial Intermediate Teacher's Association (PITA). Myrtle began to formulate ideas for the YPS program after witnessing the exhaustion and deflation of several competent, beginning teachers at his school. While working to aid these beginning teachers, he identified workload as a primary source of their stress and anxiety. As middle school teachers must prepare and teach several different subject areas, the task of planning for one's first teaching assignment can be daunting. Myrtle began to wonder why beginning teachers were working from scratch and developing their own best practices through difficult trial-and-error practices when experienced teachers have lessons, units, and teaching techniques that have been tested and refined over a number of years. In addition to the resources of experienced teachers, there are also a number of beginning teachers teaching in the same subject areas across the province. Myrtle posited that a greater degree of resource sharing between and among these groups would not only alleviate some of the pressure placed upon beginning teachers, but would also reduce the amount of trial-and-error time spent in developing resources and teaching strategies on the part of beginning teachers.

Goals of Program and Target Audience

The YPS program's immediate goal is to provide targeted curriculum support for beginning teachers. YPS workshops focus on single subject areas to ensure that beginning teachers obtain support specific to their current teaching assignment. Workshops are held throughout the year to provide beginning teachers with the right support at the time it is needed. Intermediate and long-term goals of the YPS program include the facilitation of in-person/online communities that will connect teachers with similar teaching assignments from across the province. Veteran teachers participating in the YPS program currently make themselves available for email queries and participate in an online wiki community. Program organizers are also hoping to reach out to more remote areas by webcasting their workshops. The target audience of this program is teachers within their first four years of a temporary or continuous contract. However, the program has generated interest among teacher candidates, teachers on call, and more experienced teachers as well.

Program Timeline

The 2008/2009 school year is the pilot year of the YPS program. Workshops for beginning teachers and the online wiki community have been piloted this year. During the 2009/2010 school year, program organizers hope to develop the online community further and to include more school districts in their workshops through the use of webcasts. Additional workshops aimed at beginning teachers in their second year will also be developed. Over the next four years, program organizers hope to have developed workshops capable of

supporting beginning teachers through their first four years of teaching and to provide teachers across the province with access to the online community.

Program Scope
The YPS program is organized provincially and is implemented at the district level. The program has focused on planning and curriculum support because program organizers felt that this kind of support would be effective from the district/provincial level. Schools across British Columbia follow the same curriculum and if these teachers are connected through an online community they can effectively offer curriculum support to each other. Program organizers recognize that this is only one part of an effective beginning teacher support program, and also recognize that some types of support are more effective if offered from the school or district levels.

Program Locations & Leaders
During the 2008/2009 YPS pilot year, workshops were offered in Abbotsford, Burnaby, Kelowna, and Richmond. During the 2009/2010 school year workshop locations will be expanded to include Abbotsford, Burnaby, Kamloops, Kelowna, Maple Ridge, and Surrey. It is possible that workshops will be webcast to other areas as information about the YPS program travels. Currently there are more than twelve veteran teachers facilitating these workshops across the province, many of whom are PITA members.

1.0.1 Program Activities

Start-Up Your Classroom Successfully
YPS offers two kinds of *Start-Up* workshops; the *Start-Up Your Class Successfully* and the *Start-Up Your Program Successfully*. The *Start-Up Your Class Successfully* workshop is a full-day workshop that provides beginning teachers with the tools they need to prepare for a successful first week of school. The workshop provides its attendees with a booklet created by Ray Myrtle in collaboration with other veteran teachers and with the feedback of beginning teachers. The booklet includes a first week start-up plan that is complete with checklists, resources, and blackline masters. Both the book and the workshops impress upon new teachers the idea that they do not have to create their lessons from scratch, nor do they have to start-up every subject in the first week. The lesson plans provided highlight the need to create and teach the routines of the classroom, for informal assessment of student levels and needs, and highlight the importance of creating a learning community. YPS offers the *Start-Up Your Class Successfully* workshops in August, during the week prior to the beginning of the school year.

The *Start-Up Your Program Successfully* workshops are half-day workshops that provide beginning teachers with resources and support they can use to start-up individual subject programs in their classrooms. Offered in August and early September, the goal of these

workshops is to support beginning teachers in planning that will enable them to teach a single subject area until the Professional Development day in October. These workshops will cover the following subject areas in the 2009/2010 school year: Language Arts, Reading, Socials, Science, Physical Education, French, and Fine Arts.

Build-Up Your Program Successfully
The *Build-Up Your Program Successfully* workshops are half-day sessions that focus on supporting teachers in their planning of single subject areas. During the 2009/2010 school year, YPS will offer Build-Up workshops in the following subject areas: Language Arts, Reading, Writing, Socials, Science, Math, Physical Education, French, and Fine Arts. As in the *Start-Up* workshops, beginning teachers will be offered the resources and support required to plan for their current classes. The goal of the *Build-Up* workshops is to offer beginning teachers enough material to implement a 4-8 week unit plan in a given subject area. The *Build-Up* workshops are offered in August, September, October, November, January, February, March, and April. When possible, the workshops coincide with district or provincial Professional Development days, otherwise they are held on Saturdays.

Online Community
The YPS online community is comprised of two elements: direct email support and a wiki community. Currently, veteran teachers facilitating YPS workshops make themselves available to workshop attendees for continued support via email. Many of these veteran teachers have also submitted resources to the YPS wiki, which is currently hosted on the wikispaces website at <http://pita-earlycareer.wikispaces.com/>. Program organizers hope that the wiki will encourage those with similar teaching loads to form online communities, communities in which members can ask each other questions, and share and co-develop resources.

1.0.2 Related Research

Teacher effectiveness has long been recognized as one of the most significant predictors of student success (Brewster & Railsback, 2001; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2000). However, beginning teachers are often denied the kinds of support required to enable them to grow into competent professional educators or even to survive the profession. The prevailing model of teacher induction is well-documented in the literature and is described variously as 'trial-by-fire,' 'sink-or-swim,' a 'hazing,' or even as a 'boot-camp' experience (Anhorn, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Teachers entering into this kind of induction system are often given difficult classes or placed in challenging schools; assigned several different subject or grade levels; or assigned courses outside of their area of specialization. At a time in their careers when classroom management is the greatest challenge; when they possess the least amount of resources; and when they must learn the policies and professional culture unique to their

districts and schools, they receive teaching assignments that are more challenging than those of their veteran colleagues. These conditions make it difficult for beginning teachers to experience feelings of success in their induction years (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003) and may reduce the capacity beginning teachers have for growth; causing them to cling to methods of teaching that allow them to survive the profession but do not represent best practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Ingersoll, 2002). For other beginning teachers, persistent feelings of failure combined with the low-pay and low-prestige of teaching, make attrition from the system an attractive option (Darling -Hammond, 2003; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008).

The literature reviewed here includes articles based on original research or reviews of empirical research that attempt to define the qualities of a successful teacher induction programs. Successful programs are defined in the literature as those that reduce the teacher attrition rate and/or those that facilitate the professional growth of beginning teachers. The insights gained from the literature were considered in terms of their relevancy to the qualities of the YPS program, which has focussed its energies on supporting the professional growth of new teachers by providing curricular based support (see program description above).

The core of the YPS program is a series of curriculum based workshops prepared by veteran teachers for beginning teachers. Wang, Odell, & Schwille, in their 2008 review of research, identify three potential limitations of a workshop based approach to teacher induction: that teachers' existing beliefs have a considerable effect over the potential influence of workshops; that the potential influence of a workshop is dependant upon where the teacher is in his/her journey as a beginning teacher; and that changes to teacher beliefs may not lead to changes in practice due to the pervasive influence of a teacher's local context (p. 141-142). The YPS workshops however, have several features that can been seen to mitigate the limitations of more traditional, 'one-off' teacher induction workshops. First, the aim of the workshops is to provide material that can be easily implemented as well as adapted to meet a variety of teachers' needs. This flexibility allows teachers to incorporate the suggestions into their existing practice. Second, offering different YPS workshops at different times of the school year facilitates the delivery of 'just-in-time' support, as mandated by the program's vision. Third, the YPS workshops are offered in local districts, most often by practicing teachers from within the district, making the YPS program more responsive to local contexts.

The ongoing nature of YPS workshops provides participating teachers with several additional benefits. Regular meetings give beginning teachers opportunities to form networks of peer support that they may not find within their school context. Peer networks have been shown provide an effective support for beginning teachers, both in terms of the professional collaboration they encourage and in terms of psychological and emotional support (Carter & Francis, 2001; Wang, et al., 2008). The series of workshops also allows

beginning teachers to interact with approachable mentor figures. Any interaction of this kind, or even general collegiality with veteran teachers, can have a positive impact on teacher retention, can reduce teacher isolation, and can encourage professional growth in beginning teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Carter & Francis, 2001; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Additional mentor characteristics valued by beginning teachers include: availability, friendliness, approachability, openness, interest level (Carter & Francis, 2001), as well as personal encouragement, and pedagogical support (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Pedagogical support is seen to be one of the most effective support strategies for beginning teachers. Beginning teachers who struggle often identify a lack of curricular resources and pedagogical support as a source of dissatisfaction (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Wang, et al., 2008). Research indicates that beginning teachers conceptualize a mentor-mentee relationship as one that will provide support with classroom management and with curricular resources (Wang, et al., 2008). In offering curricular support, in the form of resources and guided classroom organization and planning, YPS makes a valuable contribution to teacher induction. The fact that the YPS workshops bring together beginning and veteran teachers within subject and grade level specific groups is also a positive, as mentor-mentee matches are most effective when they are based on shared subject and grade level expertise in order that the mentor may provide lesson feedback and curricular resource support (Carter & Francis, 2001; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Wang, et al., 2008). This kind support however is most effective with smaller distances of physical proximity between the mentor and mentee. For example, having a mentor at the same school and in the class next door is more effective than having a mentor at the other end of the building or in another school. This proximity allows for lesson observation and discussions, a support highly valued by beginning teachers (Hobson, et al., 2009; Wang, et al., 2008). Therefore, to increase the likelihood that beginning teachers participating in the YPS program will make connections with program leaders or with mentors within this close physical proximity the program could encourage more veteran teachers to take part in the workshops and in the program. It may be particularly effective for YPS to invite potential mentors to participate in the program with beginning teachers from their school.

For program leaders and mentors participating in the YPS program, the literature does offer a few cautions. When a teacher takes on the role of mentoring a beginning teacher in addition to regular teaching duties, it can increase the workload of mentor teachers to unmanageable levels (Hobson, et al., 2009). There is also some indication that adopting a transmission style of mentorship that encroaches upon the independent growth of a beginning teacher may have a negative impact on the mentee (Wang, et al., 2008). Also, a mentoring relationship may generate undue anxiety in beginning teachers through the imposition of high standards and heavy workloads (Hobson, et al., 2009). Providing effective mentorship is seen in the literature as a skill-set that is unique from the skill-set of

teaching, therefore professional development or training for mentors is seen as a quality of an effective induction program (Carroll, 2005; Hobson, et al., 2009). In order to take on a mentorship role effectively, release time for mentors would be beneficial. This time could not only be used to directly support beginning teachers, but also to work as a group to develop as mentors teachers. Carroll's 2005 study suggests that collaborative mentor Study Groups can provide an effective vehicle for helping mentors develop their skills. This recommendation is supported by Carter & Francis' (2001) finding that the mentor-mentee relationship is highly dependant on context, so standardized mentor training has limited potential benefits.

The YPS program organizers are also supporting an online wiki community of teachers within the province. The wiki's focus, like that of the program, is the sharing of resources between teachers with similar subject and grade related teaching assignments. A brief review of literature related to online communities of teachers indicates that this is an effective support strategy for beginning teachers (Babinski, Jones, & DeWert, 2001; Hew & Hara, 2007; Jung & Brush, 2009; Vavasseur & MacGregor, 2008), one that can reduce the isolation beginning teachers may feel at small or rural schools (Babinski, Jones, & DeWert). Often, small and closed online communities that are created after or in addition to face-to-face meetings are created through forums. In these communities, teachers are most likely to use the forums as a way to discuss stories of daily teaching and to seek emotional support (Vavasseur & MacGregor, 2008). Large and open communities, like the kind created by the YPS program, are most often used to share resources and knowledge, with emotional support occurring through private emails or messaging (Hew & Hara, 2007). Barriers to beginning teachers sharing knowledge in this way are a lack of time and feelings on the part of beginning teachers of not having the expertise required for them to offer resources or knowledge (Hew & Hara, 2007). Veteran teachers participating in online communities are much more likely to offer expert advice and resources (Babinski, Jones, & DeWert, 2001). Thus, initially the YPS wiki community might be driven by veteran teachers who do feel expert enough to post resources and offer advice. Additional community may be created by offering a more intimate forum for YPS participants to discuss their concerns and get emotional support from peers or veteran teachers. That YPS program leaders offer email support after the workshops is a positive step towards more informal support. Additionally, the technical skills required to navigate the wiki may be a barrier to participation, a barrier that may be overcome by offering brief tutorials and demonstrations to teachers who would like to participate (Babinski, Jones, & DeWert, 2001).

Determining best practices for teacher induction programs presents researchers with considerable challenges as the differences between individual programs are vast (Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Wang, et al, 2008) and in many ways the YPS program is unique. Though many of the reviews of research or original research reports for

this paper identify gaps in the research into teacher attrition, retention, and induction programs, little disagreement has been found in the existing research in terms of defining the qualities of an effective induction program. Existing research makes the need for effective induction clear and indicates that supports that are responsive to the local contexts of new teachers are most effective. The kind of ongoing and just-in-time support the YPS program is offering is supported by the literature as an effective method of supporting teacher growth. YPS program leaders and others who are willing to mentor beginning teachers can be supported through the provision of release time and opportunities to develop professionally as mentors. The online community has the potential to effectively link teachers with peers and mentors within the province in order to reduce isolation and provide valuable day-to-day support. Activities such as those offered by the YPS program are essential in order to provide beginning teachers with the support they need to grow into professional educators capable of meeting the high demands of the teaching profession.

2.0   2008/09 YPS Pilot Project Evaluation

Evaluation Objectives
The results of the "Year of Professional Support" (YPS) evaluation, conducted over the latter part of the pilot year, will guide discussion on the future directions of this multifaceted professional support program. The overall goal of this evaluation is to examine the activities and outcomes of the YPS program, identify its successes, and to identify areas for growth in order to strengthen the services offered and the methods of their delivery.

The monitoring of programs focuses on what has been invested, done and produced, and determines how the program is progressing towards the achievement of the objectives. Typically monitoring is internally conducted and assumes appropriateness of the program, activities, objectives, and indicators. Evaluation focuses on what occurred and what has been achieved as a result of the project. It is typically conducted by external agents and does not assume appropriateness of the program. Thereby, the rationale and relevance of the program objectives as well as the unintended and planned impacts and effects can be examined. In combination, these two elements can provide insight that will guide the continued development of a successful program.

The focus of the YPS evaluation has three primary objectives:
- evaluation and monitoring of the workshop-related activities and outcomes;
- evaluation and monitoring of the nature of the professional supports and partnerships, networks, follow-ups and outcomes; and

- evaluation and monitoring of the impact of the dissemination processes and outcomes.

Evaluation and monitoring of the workshop-related activities and outcomes includes participant reactions to the workshop sessions, perceived changes in confidence and abilities as a result of participating in these workshops, and feedback to inform future programming.

In order to evaluate and monitor the nature of the professional supports, partnerships and networks, we have developed a follow-up telephone interview guide (see Appendix D), which provides updates on the activities and outcomes of the workshops and the contribution of these supports to the overall YPS program.

The third key component of the evaluation involves the examination of the dissemination processes and outcomes of the YPS program. These include: a) the PITA website, b) advertising for workshops, c) online forum/wiki, and d) follow-up processes for early career teachers.

This report presents information on activities and outcomes from survey findings collected to evaluate the YPS program. Overall, the results of the surveys are very positive, and indicate broad interest in this multifaceted professional support program. However, there may be evidence that the YPS program may not be fully reaching its intended audience of beginning classroom teachers, as the demographics show the majority of participants are teacher candidates or teachers on call.

3.0   Methods and Findings

Follow-up surveys (see Appendix B) were administered to participants immediately after their involvement in the YPS workshops, a) start-up your classroom successfully, b) start-up your program successfully, and c) build-up your program successfully. About a month afterwards, beginning teachers and experienced teachers who had agreed to be contacted also participated in a telephone interview (see Appendix D) to gather more in-depth feedback about the workshops and suggestions for future YPS program planning. In addition, beginning teachers participating at the New Teachers' and Student Teachers' Annual Conference were asked to provide their feedback on the proposed YPS workshop schedule and plan for the upcoming 2009/10 by responding to questions in a short survey (see Appendix C). The results from these analyses are described in this section.

All closed-ended survey responses were analysed using a software program, SPSS 17.0. All comments were analysed by researchers for recurring themes and patterns in the group overall, and then according to the teaching status the participants currently held: teacher candidate, teacher on call, or classroom teacher. Researchers sought similarities and

differences between these groups in order to reaffirm general trends in the whole group analysis.

In total there were **286** collected surveys analysed from a variety of workshops offered to help early career teachers start-up their classrooms and programs successfully and build-up their programs successfully. In addition, **7** individuals were interviewed, and **22** surveys were collected providing feedback on the proposed YPS workshop plan for the upcoming year.

3.0.1   Participant Demographics

The majority of participants identified themselves as teacher candidates. Participants were primarily in their second and first year of teaching, and were mostly teaching Grades 4 to 7 (intermediate), working full-time and female (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Information

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher Status		
Teacher On Call	91	30.0%
Teacher Candidate	**96**	**31.7%**
Classroom Teacher	86	28.4%
TOC/Classroom Teacher	3	1.0%
Other	5	1.7%
Unidentified	22	7.3%
Years of Teaching		
First Year	91	30.0%
Second Year	**106**	**35.0%**
3 Years or more	60	19.8%
Unidentified	46	15.2%
Grade		
Grades K-3/Primary	55	17.6%
Grades 4-7/Intermediate	**123**	**39.3%**
Grades 8-12/Secondary	45	14.4%
Elementary (not differentiated)	39	12.5%
Unidentified	51	16.3%
Full-time/Part-time Status		
Full-time	**124**	**40.9%**
Part-time	48	15.8%
Practicum/Student	5	1.7%
Unidentified	126	41.6%
Gender		
Female	**244**	**80.5%**
Male	27	8.9%
Unidentified	32	10.6%

3.0.2 Findings: *Start-Up Your Classroom and Program Successfully*

Participants in the *Start-up Your Classroom and Program* workshops were asked to provide feedback on the workshop and provide a sense of where they felt in terms of preparedness and confidence on different aspects of teaching. These results are reported in this section.

Levels of Preparedness and Confidence for Teaching

Participants in these workshops were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) how **prepared** they felt they were for **teaching overall** (52.5% rated a "4" or "5," with overall average at 3.48, sd 0.77). Findings were similar in terms of rating how **confident** they felt for **teaching overall** (57.6% rating a "4" or "5," averaging 3.62, sd 0.75). When asked to identify three words to describe how prepared and confident they were for teaching overall, most participants indicated their positive feelings through words such as *confident, excited, organized*, and *prepared*.

Responses appeared, on average, to be more positive in regard to how **prepared** they felt for the **first week of school**. Of the 48 participants who responded to this question, a large majority (72.9%) indicated positive ratings of "4" or "5," averaging a rating of 3.85, sd 1.05. However, the rather large standard deviation (sd 1.05) indicates that there were wide differences among some participantsa on this particular item. Upon further examination, although a large group of these respondents rated themselves a "4" on the scale, there was a group of 13 participants that rated themselves at a level "3" or lower. Those rating themselves lower on the scale were primarily teachers on call and teacher candidates.

When asked a more specific question about their **preparedness** in reference to **teaching a particular subject/topic**, the majority of responses were less positive. Of the 77 respondents to this question, 77.9% of them would put themselves at a "3" or lower on the 5-point scale (averaging 2.91, sd 0.89), and described their feelings with words such as, *nervous*, *excited*, *anxious*, and *uncertain*. At one workshop, participants were asked how they felt about teaching a particular topic now (assumingly after taking the workshop). Of the 20 respondents who were asked this question, the majority felt much better about their feelings of preparedness for teaching a topic (averaging 3.90, sd 0.79). Again, they were asked to use words to describe how they felt, which included *confident, excited, organized*, and *prepared*.

Questions provided to respondents in these surveys did not clearly ask them to identify how prepared and confident they felt *prior* to the workshop, and then *after* the workshop. Therefore, information collected from these surveys could not accurately describe the perceived changes in preparedness and confidence levels as a result of being involved in the workshops.

There were 62 respondents who were asked to identify the subjects they felt most and least prepared to teach. The subjects these participants felt MOST prepared to teach were **mathematics** (n=25), **social studies** (n=19), **language arts** (n=18) and **sciences** (n=18). They felt LEAST prepared to teach **French** (n=38), **mathematics** (n=15), **social studies** (n=10), **music** (n=9) and **science** (n=9).

Beyond being prepared to teach subjects, participants were asked to provide feedback on their preparedness for other aspects of teaching such as classroom management, evaluation, unit planning, and knowledge of available resources. Depending on the survey provided, participants were asked to provide their open comments on what they felt most and least prepared for, and/or to provide ratings on a 5-point scale on these aspects of teaching (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Evaluation on Aspects of Teaching
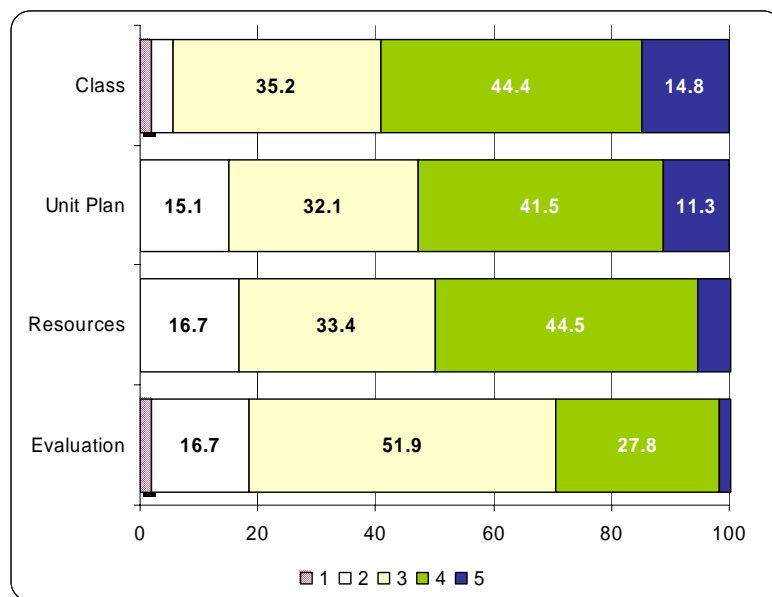
The need to prepare resources was a priority for many of the beginning teachers. "I have not seen/prepared material for new math curriculum" (classroom teacher); "I need to write all new units for all subject areas. I am concerned my preparation, no matter how thorough, will suffer in quality because of lack of time" (classroom teacher); "I am ready to teach, whether or not I have all the materials/resources available is the question" (teacher on call). For the teachers on call, the uncertain nature of their positions only compounded this worry: "There are just too many unknowns. It's like sailing uncharted waters with an ill-equipped row boat" (teacher on call); "There's a lot of uncertainty, which undermines my confidence" (teacher on call).

Being prepared for the first week was an additional concern: "No one ever tells you how to start the year, and it's a critical component for success as a teacher" (teacher on call); "Knowing that I need to establish my classroom tone in the first weeks is a lot of pressure" (teacher in an unidentified position).

Topics participants would like to see PITA cover in the future included classroom management (the most often mentioned), followed closely by resources and information about where to get resources. Participants also mentioned assessment/ reporting and classroom routines as topics they would like additional information on.

Demand/Support for the YPS Program

Information was also gathered on the demand for the YPS program by beginning teachers. Participants were asked to rate how useful they thought this program would be on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Almost all respondents indicated that they thought the program would be very useful (39.1% indicated "4" and 57.8% rated "5"). In order to help PITA prepare the program, participants were asked to share three words they would use to describe a useful program. The most common words selected to describe a useful YPS program for them were, *useful/helpful*, *collaborative/supporting*, and *practical*.

When asked to provide open comments about the usefulness of the YPS program participants were welcoming and saw the program as highly valuable in terms of resources and in terms of isolation reduction: "It makes me feel like I'm not alone and that someone is looking out for me" (teacher on call); "Anything to alleviate some pressure is welcome" (teacher on call).

These participants were also asked to rate the usefulness of various components of the YPS program, such as the workshops/fall conference, the forum/wiki, and the subject and program *Start-Up* workshops. Overall, the majority of participants rated each component very positively (see Figure 2, below).

When asked what might prevent them from participating in the YPS program fully, the number one barrier was time, followed closely by fees. Some participants mentioned that a regular schedule for workshops or the effective communication of workshop dates would be helpful: "Sometimes I couldn't sign up because I didn't know exactly what my life was going to look like, whereas if I knew I was attending 'x' number of times and when, I could change my schedule around" (teacher on call). Other teachers mentioned that knowing "how to get funding forms" (teacher on call) or "how to receive Pro-D funds" (classroom teacher) would help reduce the financial barrier. An accessible workshop location and advertising were additional barriers often mentioned. Some heard about the program through informal channels, and were thus worried that they would not hear about future workshops. Participants who were asked what the best way of communicating to beginning

teachers would be all described some form of email communication as being ideal. A few participants also mentioned that for them, it was not quite the time for YPS: "as a student teacher, it's very hard to think about teaching as a reality" (teacher candidate); "I don't have a classroom right now so I wouldn't be able to implement the lessons" (teacher on call). Other comments indicate that this could be a positive as well: "even if it is information that we can't use right away it's nice to have in our back pockets" (teacher candidate).

Figure 2. Evaluation of Components of the YPS Program
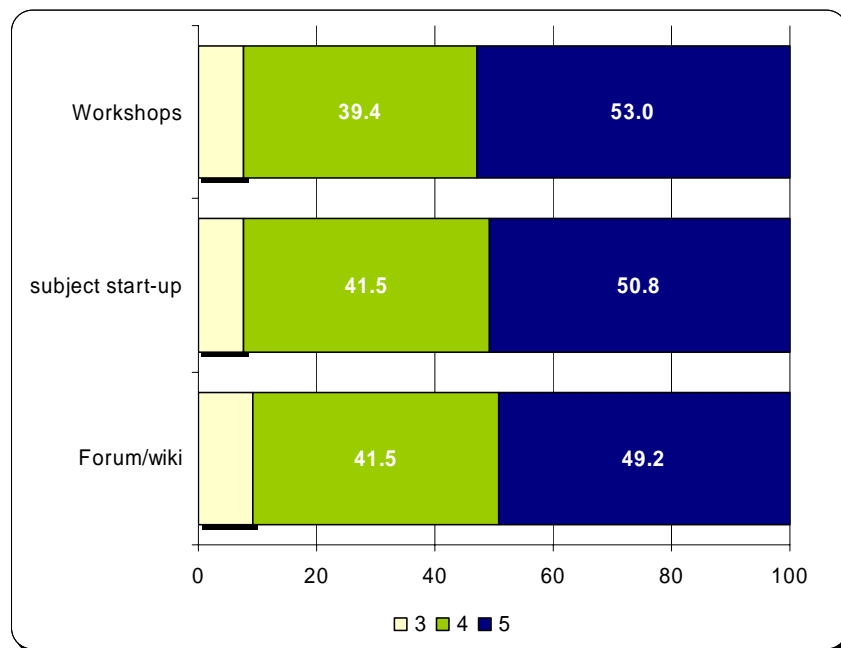
3.0.3 Findings: *Build-Up Your Program Successfully*

There were two different surveys used to assess the workshops offered though the YPS *Build-Up Your Programs* series. One survey was created by Ray Myrtle and offered to participants involved in the workshops in the Fall 2008 to follow-up with participants about the workshop sessions. The results from this survey version were analysed and presented in the preliminary report (see Appendix A). A second survey with additional questions was developed to support the current program evaluation, and was distributed to participants involved in workshops held in the Winter/Spring 2009. The results from 112 participants for the survey are reported in this section.

Levels of Preparedness and Confidence for Teaching

Using a five-point scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), participants were asked to indicate how well prepared they felt about their current teaching assignment prior to taking the workshop. On average, most participants (around 47%) indicated that they would place themselves in the middle of the scale in terms of feeling prepared prior to the workshop (average 3.13, SD 0.89). When asked to indicate on a list of things that some people have gained from taking part in a workshop like this, the results were as follows.

Table 2. Perceived Changes

<u>Perceived Changes</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
More prepared for teaching	80	20.9
Learned something new that will help me teach	77	20.2
Motivated to do something different in teaching	61	16.0
Increased my knowledge of this topic	60	15.7
Greater confidence	46	12.0
Felt supported by others	34	8.9
Increased morale	24	6.3

Demand/Support for the YPS Program

For a large majority (83.0%) of participants this was the first "Year of Professional Support for Early Career Teachers" workshop they had attended. Just over half indicated that they plan on attending other YPS workshops in the future, while 39.3% were still uncertain. However, when asked later on in the survey if they would be interested in attending more YPS workshops, 86.5% said "yes," and most indicated that they would attend between one and three more. So, although they may not be certain that they will attend future workshops, the interest to do so is high.

The comments related to the usefulness of the workshops were overwhelmingly in favour of the practical and immediate nature of the information provided: "It gave me practical materials that I can use the moment I walk into the classroom" (teacher on call); "the workshop offered lots of useful ideas and resources, my first week is ready to go" (classroom teacher); "I feel like I have everything for the first week so there will be no stress about filling time" (classroom teacher); "I feel ready to start and I have a game plan no matter what grade I end up teaching" (teacher on call).

When asked what could be added to the workshops to make them more successful, a few participants mentioned that more time to interact with their peers would be valuable: "I like the idea of meeting in group and kind of strategizing about how you could apply things you have learned" (classroom teacher). This comment is supported by others that indicated interacting with peers and veteran teachers is another reason why this program is valuable: "It's great to connect with people who are just starting" (student teacher); "there's so much that can be learned in that [mentor/mentee] relationship on both sides, I really like the idea of a consistent support system" (teacher on call).

In terms of meeting their expectations, the majority, 76.1%, rated the workshops high with selected ratings of "4" or "5." Furthermore, almost 80.0% thought the information presented could be applied to their work, and 86.6% felt the experience level of the workshops were "about right." These positive feelings were further represented by 91.7% of participants indicating that they would recommend the session to others.

Evaluation of the YPS Workshops

Participants involved in these YPS workshops were asked to provide their evaluation feedback on different aspects of the program to provide information that will inform future program planning.

In the survey there were several questions about workshop logistics. Most participants rated these fairly high, with the exception of "advertising" being rated lower (see Figure 3 for the detailed ratings). Most participants said that they learned/heard about these workshops incidentally through the professional development conference guides when registering for conferences. Almost all participants (98.2%) felt that the time of the workshop was convenient for them. When asked to provide open comments about workshop times, "Professional Development days" and "Saturdays" were the times most often requested. A few participants also mentioned that "short evening sessions" may be more convenient for those who have family commitments or those who work a second job on weekends.

Participants were also asked to provide feedback on the facilitator's role during the workshop sessions. Most of the participants rated all aspects of the facilitators' role very positively with ratings of "4" or "5." These results are reported in Figure 4.

Participants were split almost 50/50 between "yes" and "uncertain" in response to whether they would participate in the online community of teachers (the wiki) after the workshop. When asked to comment about barriers to their participation in the wiki community, time constraints was most frequently mentioned. The skills required to navigate the wiki presented an additional barrier to some for a variety of reasons: "there were a lot of subheadings on the side that I found confusing...sometimes it became a little overwhelming" (teacher candidate); "the wiki wasn't a comfortable format, a forum is more

comfortable, I understand how it works and I know what's mine and what's not (teacher on call). Additionally, some teachers expressed concerns about not being expert enough to post: "I am a new teacher so my ideas might not work as well as an experienced teacher" (teacher on call).

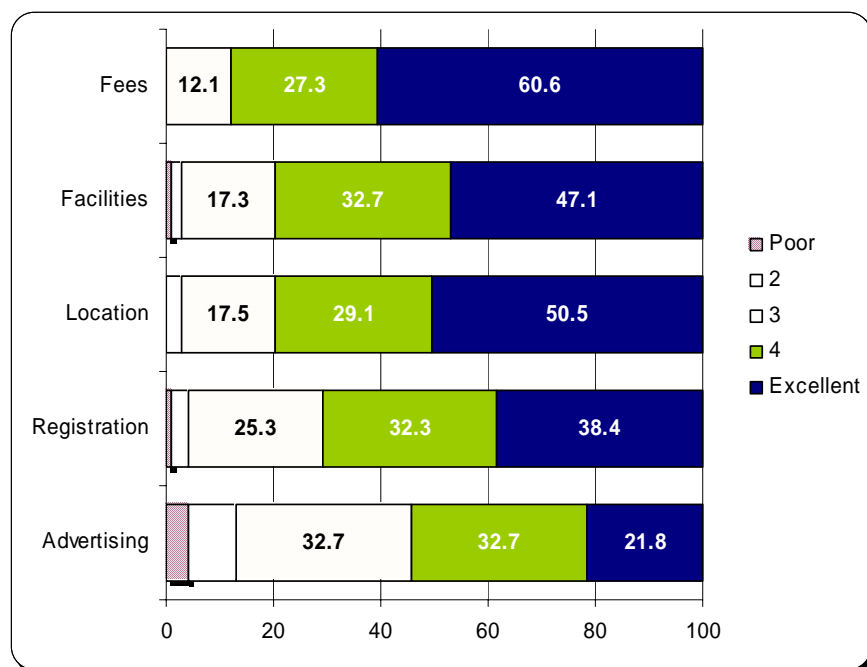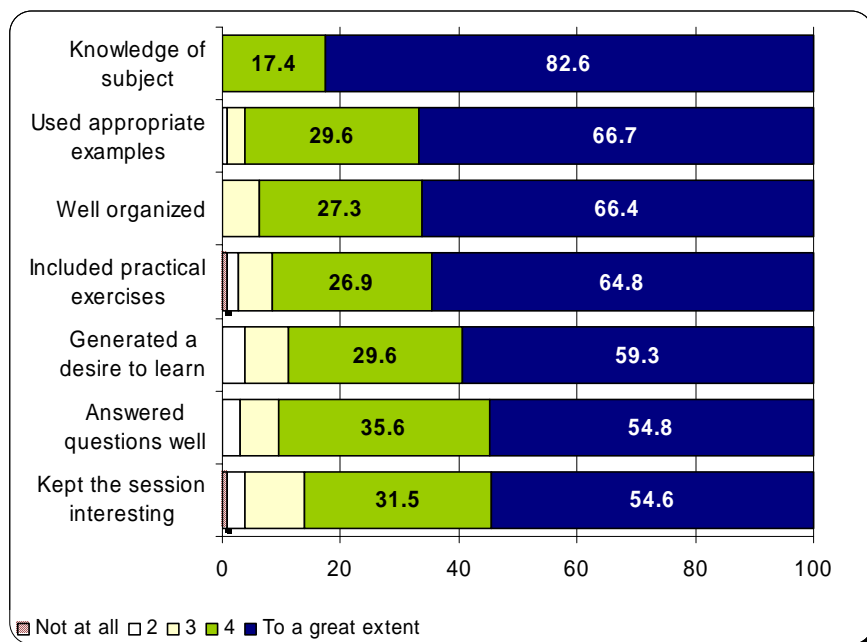**Figure 3. Workshop Logistics**

Figure 4. Workshop Facilitator

In general however, there was a great deal of support was expressed around the idea of an online community. Just over half of the respondents (59.1%) were very favourable to participating in the online community of peers beginning and senior teachers (rating it a "4" or "5"), while 31.8% indicated their interest level at a rating of "3." Even those who had difficulties navigating the site expressed interest in an online support system: "To know that there is a place where you can exchange ideas, exchange resources, it's very nice to know" (teacher candidate); "It's easiest to have something online" (teacher candidates); "I would use the wiki as a place to get information" (teacher on call); "This will make it easier to communicate with teachers and not feel alone" (teacher on call).

3.0.4 Findings: *Feedback About the Upcoming YPS Program Plan*

Respondents (n=22) who participated in providing feedback on the upcoming YPS workshop schedule and plan were asked to rate the extent to which they felt prepared for their current teaching assignments on a scale from 1 to 5 ("1" not at all prepared and "5" a great deal). About 66.7% indicated that they felt somewhat to fairly prepared (42.9% indicated a rating of "3" and 23.8% a rating of "4"). Similarly, most participants felt they had material specific enough and complete enough to meet their immediate needs. Although they felt fairly prepared and had immediate materials to use, 68.2% rated the YPS program as high (a "4" or "5" rating) in terms of meeting their needs as beginning teachers, and 81.0% were very much interested in participating in the YPS program (again, a rating of either "4" or "5").

Similar to previously reported findings, in terms of relative convenience for their schedules, the majority of respondents would prefer workshops scheduled on the "weekend after school is in session" (66.7%), and on "professional development days" (80.0%). When asked which of the following three options would encourage participation in the YPS workshop, respondents ranked **free classroom resources** first (47.7%), **fee waivers or refunds** second (29.5%), and third, **certificate of completion** (22.7%).

In addition to questions regarding the YPS program, interviewees discussed their experiences of available supports for beginning teachers generally. What emerged quite clearly from these discussions was that formal support systems for new teachers are not common, (or beginning teachers do not have information about them), and that the informal supports they are more likely to receive are inconsistent and unpredictable. Of the 7 teachers interviewed (1 veteran teacher, 1 teacher on call, 2 beginning classroom teachers, and 3 teacher candidates) none were able to describe any formal support offered in their school or district with the exception of the formalized relationship between teacher candidates, School Associates, and Faculty Associates. Most described the informal relationships with other teachers at their school as being the most helpful, though this was not reliably expected: "the other teachers at the school are really supportive and really helpful...I've been expecting it from my SA and FA, but the other teachers have been great"

(teacher candidate); "In some cases it [the support] was more than I expected, I just need that reassurance, 'you're doing it right,' and other times it was like 'ok, here are some ideas,' but I know other teachers who didn't have that and for them, it was a really tough experience (teacher candidate); "I don't see anything formal...it [support] depends on what university program they were in...depends on when they land and who they've been place with...depends on the school, how big how small...depends on their subject too, some PSAs aren't as active at supporting their newer members" (veteran teacher). Two of the interviewed teachers were proactive about finding mentorship, but described how asking for help can be uncomfortable: "I've been able to meet teachers who I could ask, but there are days when it's frightening to go out looking for it [support]...I wish there was a more structured, a more formal, easier way to get support" (teacher on call).

When asked what they spend most of their non-instructional work time on, all of the interviewed teachers mentioned finding resources and planning as highly time consuming: "It's a lot of lesson planning, we do a lot of background research in some of the subjects we aren't familiar with" (teacher candidate); "It becomes very overwhelming because, in my case my first few weeks I was in the library or on the internet, googling, photocopying, printing, everything... and I really didn't know if there was just one place you could go" (teacher candidate).

Another emerging theme in the interviews was the need for beginning teachers to know where to turn for help. In some cases, the teachers were worried about overwhelming veteran teachers or their peers: "Sometimes I talked to other student teachers, although sometimes I didn't want to overwhelm them because they were in the same boat as me" (teacher candidate); "They [YPS workshop leaders] all offered email support, I didn't take advantage because there was 40 other people in the room and I was worried they'd be overwhelmed" (classroom teacher). Many expressed the need to have supportive connections available to them: "In an ideal universe there should be a system that exists so when we walk out of university with our degrees there's a list of who we could call" (classroom teacher); "I notice there's a huge gap between student teachers and the teachers...I feel there needs to be more support for student teachers" (teacher candidate).

4.0   Summary and Recommendations

Overall, the YPS program has experienced a great deal of success in its pilot year. It has attracted many beginning teachers and teacher candidates from across British Columbia. The program set realistic goals that are well suited to its position as a program that is organized provincially but delivered locally. Based on related research in the area of teacher induction and attrition and based on the findings from this evaluation, the YPS program has a number of existing strengths. First, it has developed a series of effective workshops that are resource-based and practical in nature. This kind of support is highly

valuable during a beginning teacher's induction years. That the workshops offer timely support throughout the year is also valued by beginning teachers. The ongoing nature of these workshops creates more opportunity for beginning teachers to meet and form networks with their peers and with approachable and knowledgeable veteran teachers.

The results from this evaluation also provide insight to guide future program planning for the design and delivery that will further benefit and engage beginning teachers. Planning focused on encouraging continued participation in several workshops throughout the year by participants, as well as targeting more beginning teacher involvement, will greatly benefit the YPS program and be more inline with the goals of the overall program. The interest is high for the online community resource. However, additional planning is required in the design and development, that takes into account identified barriers, to increase ongoing participation in YPS workshops.

Overall, as demonstrated in the findings section there is great interest and support from participants involved in the pilot study to continue offering the YPS programs, for expanding the topics addressed for beginning teachers, and participation in the online community and support partnerships/networks. Within the scope of this evaluation, the following themes have emerged from the findings and guide the eleven recommendations for the future planning of the YPS program.

4.0.1   *Monitoring and Evaluation of the Workshop-related Activities and Outcomes.*

1. Continue on-going monitoring and evaluation of workshop activities and outcomes.
This evaluation focused on both the monitoring and evaluation aspects. The evaluation team was involved in the pilot program several months after it began. Feedback surveys had been designed for the initial workshop participants, focused on the monitoring of the programs. However, the questions varied slightly in the types and formatting of questions making it more difficult to analyse and gather similar information from all participants. Although it was the intent, information collected from these surveys could not accurately describe the perceived changes in preparedness and confidence levels as a result of being involved in the workshops due to unclear questioning presented to respondents.

1.1 Recommendation: *Include in the budget a cost for continued monitoring and evaluation of the workshop activities and outcomes.*

1.2 Recommendation: *Apply common and uniform assessment methods to determine program resources, participant needs, and the impact of workshops on early career teachers. Levels of preparedness and confidence should be collected in a pre-survey prior to the workshop and then asked again in the follow-up survey post-workshop.*

2. Build capacity for teacher partnerships and networks aimed at supporting early career teachers. The YPS program is offering training that was previously absent yet essential to the development of competent and professional educators. Partnerships are beneficial for knowledge and resource exchange and to strengthen the community of intermediate teachers in our province. Some immediate needs highlighted by pilot participants include the removal of financial and time constraints that may prevent beginning teachers from participating in the program to the full extent. Furthermore, the program would greatly benefit from the provision of additional time allotted to dedicated group of mentor teachers in providing their insight into the further development of the YPS program and to develop themselves as mentors.

2.1 Recommendation: *Work with participating teachers to understand the difficulties and barriers to fostering formal partnerships and networking. Help set up processes and mechanisms that will support the sustainability of these relationships.*

2.2 Recommendation: *Work with the Ministry of Education to provide funding and seek new sources of funding through grants and partnerships.*

3. Expand the program scope and vision of the YPS program. Fostering broad cooperation and engaging outside assistance is essential to the long-term and wide-spread success of the YPS program. Currently, the YPS program targets Intermediate teachers but could expand its scope to target elementary and secondary teachers as well. This could be facilitated by forming partnerships with other PSAs who are interested in supporting beginning teachers. The YPS program could also facilitate positive school-based mentorship relationships by increasing collaborative partnerships with more willing veteran teachers. YPS could help to ensure that beginning teachers receive holistic and reliable support in their beginning years by working with other mentors and though collaboration with other beginning teacher support programs. This program could also increase a collaborative culture within BC's teaching community by fostering relationships between its members that span schools and school districts.

3.1 Recommendation: *Engage the K-12 BC Education stakeholders (Ministry of Education, BCTF, certification board, Districts and provincial associations) in the conceptual development of this program for its expandability and sustainability for the Province.*

4. Establish Effective Communication and Advertising Strategies Targeting Beginning Teachers. Many participants attended a limited number of workshops this year simply because they lacked information about where and when the workshops were happening. Most of the participants learned/heard about the workshops incidentally, through the offerings on professional development days. Findings from this evaluation suggest that email is the preferred method of communication for beginning teachers.

4.1 Recommendation: *Update the email contact list of beginning teachers in the PITA system, and use this to target the intended audience of beginning teachers and to provide information about upcoming workshops and the program of YPS workshops being offered by PITA.*

4.2 Recommendation: *Workshops should be scheduled on weekends after school is in session, or on professional development days. If possible, provide a schedule of upcoming workshops well in advance so that individuals can plan their time appropriately.*

4.3 Recommendation: *Workshops should be free to beginning teachers, part of professional development funds, or offered at a low cost.*

4.4 Recommendation: *Provide workshops on topics that have been addressed as priorities for participating teachers.*

5. Further Develop the Online Community to Better Serve and Engage Target Audience. Findings suggest that beginning teachers are interested in this type of support, but that participation in the online community is currently low. Perhaps more investigation is needed in order to determine the most effective format for YPS participants, a format that would depend on the overall vision for the online community.

5.1 Recommendation: *Involve beginning and experienced teachers in the design and development of the online tool.*

5.2 Recommendation: *Include an evaluation component in order to solicit feedback from other users that will continuously provide information to improve the accessibility, use and service of the online tool.*

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APPENDIX A: FINDINGS OF PRELIMENARY REPORT

Follow-up surveys were administered to participants involved in both types of workshop programs offered through the YPS. The preliminary results from the analyses are identified in this section.

The closed-ended survey responses were analysed using a software program, SPSS 14.0. The comments were also analysed by researchers for recurring themes and patterns in the group overall, and then according to the teaching status the participants currently held: teacher candidate, teacher on call, or classroom teacher. Researchers sought similarities and differences between these groups in order to reaffirm general trends in the whole group analysis.

To date there have been 124 collected surveys analysed from a variety of workshops offered to help early career teachers start-up their classrooms successfully and build-up their programs. The majority of participants identified themselves as teacher on call, in their second year, teaching Grades 4 to 7, working full-time, and female (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Information

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher Status		
Teacher On Call	**42**	**33.87**
Teacher Candidate	37	29.84
Classroom Teacher	31	25.00
Unidentified	14	11.29
Years of Teaching		
First Year	22	17.74
Second Year	**47**	**37.90**
3 Years or more	22	17.74
Unidentified	33	26.61
Grade		
Grades K-3	25	19.69
Grades 4-7	**56**	**44.09**
Grades 8-12	10	7.87
Elementary	3	2.36
Unidentified	33	25.98
Full-time/Part-time Status		
Full-time	**13**	**19.7**
Part-time	6	9.1
Unidentified	47	71.2
Gender		
Female	**43**	**65.2**
Male	2	3.0
Unidentified	21	31.8

All the *Build-Up* workshop participants were asked to rate their sessions on a scale from 1 to 5, where "1" was the lowest rating and "5" the highest. Overall, of the participants who responded to this question (n=54), the majority gave the workshops the highest rating of "5" (n=43 or 79.6%), and the remaining participants gave the second highest rating of "4" (n=11 or 20.4%).

Using the same scale from 1 to 5, participants were asked to identify how well prepared they felt about teaching their workshop topic prior to the workshop, and then how they felt about teaching the topic after the workshop, as well as how confident they felt about teaching the topic (see Figure 1 below). On average, most participants indicated that they would place themselves in the middle of the scale in terms of feeling prepared prior to the workshop (average 3.15), and after taking the workshop the average increased to 3.90 in terms of how they felt now about teaching, and an average of 3.93 in terms of their confidence level in teaching after taking the workshop.

Figure 1. How Participants Feel About Teaching the Topic
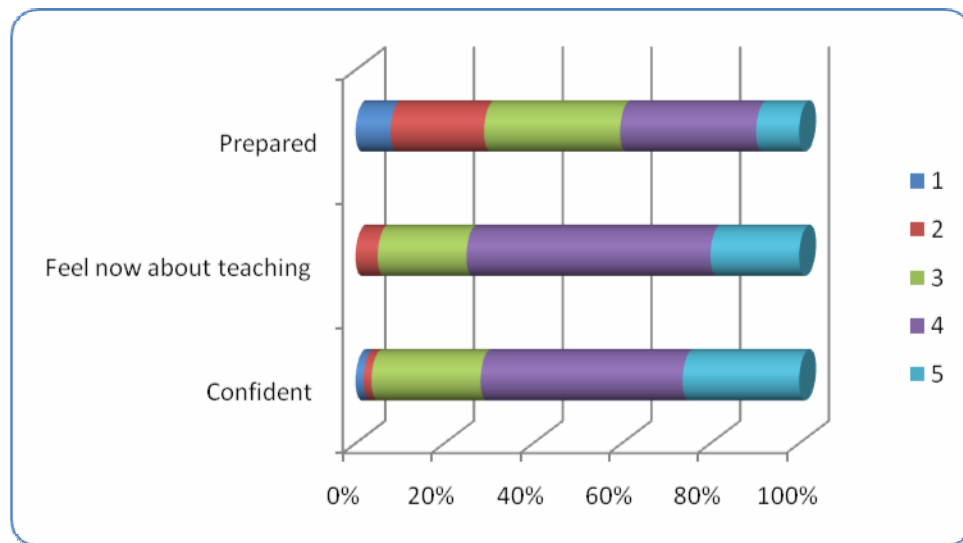
When asked what words would best describe how well prepared participants' thought or felt they were about teaching after taking the workshop, the top five words reported were, 1) excited, 2) confident, 3) nervous, 4) good ideas/resources, and 5) motivated/inspired.

Participants were also asked to comment on the degree to which they felt prepared for teaching in general. Comments from the three groups (teacher candidates, teachers on call, and classroom teachers), reflected similarities that varied by degree. The majority of the comments across all groups reflected simultaneous excitement and nervousness about teaching. For some of the teacher candidates, this nervousness was alleviated by the fact that their education program was not complete: "I still have one more year left of my practicum; therefore I feel I will gain more confidence and knowledge." Many of the

comments from the teachers on call and the classroom teachers highlight anxiety about resources and general preparedness: "We are asked to reinvent the wheel in teacher education, we need to know where to find the resources so we can focus on learning how to teach" (teacher candidate); "I am just trying to gather lots of resources so I am prepared" (teacher on call); "I would be more prepared if I had more resources available to me" (classroom teacher); "After teaching last year I am excited to return but feeling like I am only half prepared" (classroom teacher). The last statement is reflective of comments made from many classroom teachers that indicate the need for continued support in their second or third years. Feeling prepared in terms of resources is a source of confidence for participants: "I feel quite confident in my teaching ability; it really helps to be planned and prepared" (classroom teacher). Comments also reflected general anxiety about the first week of school: "I'm specifically afraid that my efforts will be in vain, of failure, and that my expectations won't get across to the students and they won't like the opening activities I choose" (teacher on call). All participants demonstrated an appreciation of the workshops in terms of provided resources: "I am leaving feeling confident and excited about the coming school year" (classroom teacher); "I feel as though I have good access to information and support" (teacher on call).

Participants were also asked to comment on priorities they would like to see the YPS program focus on. In these sections, the issue of resources was again a dominant theme. The next priority for all three groups was assessment: "I have trouble coming up with my own forms of evaluation" (teacher on call); "I don't feel comfortable with assessment and evaluation yet, hopefully we will have more training in that" (teacher candidate). Many teachers also identified classroom management as a priority: "Classroom management, how to enforce and keep the class following them" (classroom teacher); "I am unsure about how I want to structure class management with what may be a more challenging class" (classroom teacher). The latter comment reflects an additional priority for the participants, that of differentiated instruction: "How do you teach a split class?" (classroom teacher); "Teaching special needs, individualized program plans, assessment, strategies" (teacher on call). General planning instruction, particularly unit planning, was also identified as a need for most participants. Many comments focused on all of the above: "Resources – units online – ready and in everything, time management, coaching, planning assessing, tracking, classroom management, behaviour" (classroom teacher).

Participants involved in the *Start-Up Your Classroom Successfully* sessions were asked to identify the subject areas they felt most and least prepared to teach. The majority of participants felt they were most prepared for teaching Math, Social Studies, Sciences and language arts. The most common subject areas participants felt least prepared to teach were French and Math.

These participants were also asked to rate on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) how prepared they thought they were for the different aspects of teaching such as classroom management, evaluation, unit planning and knowledge of available resources. Figure 2 indicates their ratings on each of these class aspects.

Participants involved in the *Build-Up Your Program Successfully* workshops were asked to evaluate components of the YPS program such as, the workshops/fall conference, forum/wiki, and subject start-up sessions. A large percentage of participants thought the YPS program would be very useful (63.6% of participants rated it a "5" and 25.8% rated it a "4"). When asked what words they would use to describe the YPS program, the most common words suggested were, 1) informative, 2) practical, 3) useful, and 4) resourceful.

When asked to comment on the potential usefulness of the YPS program, many participants responded with comments related directly to the workshop they were attending. However, some preliminary insights can be gained from those participants who did comment directly on the potential of the YPS program. Most commonly, this type of support program was identified as a general and immediate need: "There isn't a ton of cohesive support for early career teachers other than this. Last year was crazy difficult and I think it could have been made easier with some of this support" (classroom teacher); "I think this is a wonderful program and we need more like it" (teacher in an unidentified position). Additionally, there were several comments on the practical nature of the program: "I am excited about this program because it gives you very practical support and ideas for your classroom" (classroom teacher); "These kinds of workshops could be very practical and useful for us student teachers" (teacher candidate).

Figure 2. Evaluation on Aspects of Teaching
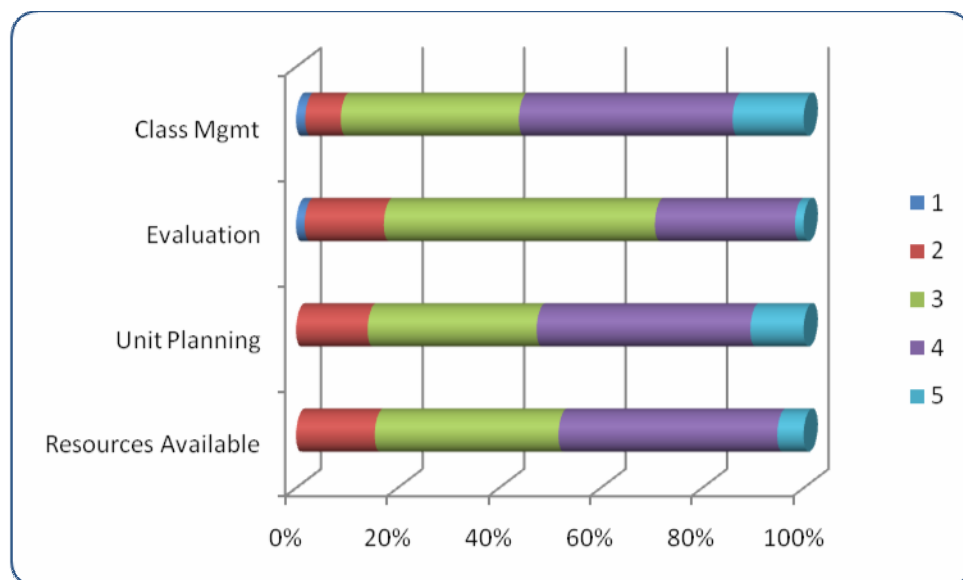
Figure 3. Evaluation of Components of the YPS Program
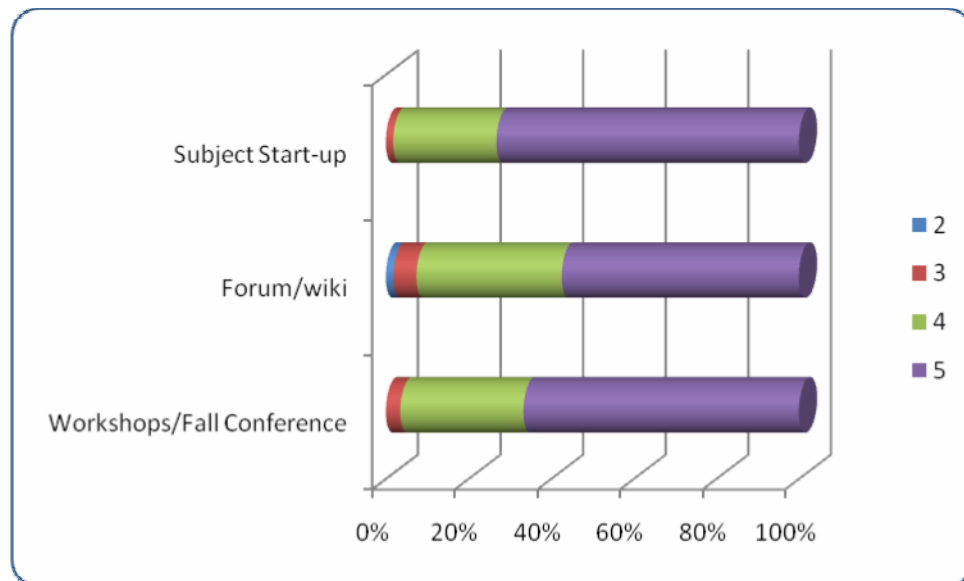
All participants were also provided an opportunity to offer comments or suggestions that would help guide the future of the program. Positive comments were again made in reference to the practical and resource-based nature of the workshops. The majority of suggestions in this section were focused on advertising, workshop scheduling, and the online community. A few participants commented on the fact that the workshops had not been advertised to them directly: "Advertise through flyers because I wouldn't have known about this if it wasn't for my friend" (classroom teacher). The comments on workshop scheduling were mainly in support of the Saturday sessions: "I personally like that the workshops are on the weekend, otherwise I would not be able to attend" (classroom teacher). The comments on the online community were mixed. Having access to resources was viewed positively: "it would be great to have all the workshops on the wiki" (classroom teacher); "I really believe that the wiki would be useful and could aid many early career teachers" (teacher on call); "If the wiki is used by many it will be very useful" (teacher candidate). However, participants had some reservations about the online community as well: "I think the forum could potentially be a valuable source but I worry that the format may result in a convoluted and repetitive source of information. Some serious thought will have to be placed in the organization" (teacher on call); "The website is awkward – not set up to invite exploration and spend time on/in it" (classroom teacher).

Participants were also asked to comment on the ways in which they would be willing to participate in the online community. Teacher candidates demonstrated a great deal of enthusiasm about both posting resources and searching for resources on the wiki. The teacher on call group showed a more modest interest in participating, and the classroom teacher group did not respond at all to this question.

Four main barriers to participation in the YPS program were identified by participants: time, scheduling, distance, and adversing. Time was by far the most pressing concern: "So much to do already! Teachers are feeling overwhelmed with the new expectations! Not sure how to overcome these barriers!" (teacher on call). Comments on scheduling reinforced the preference of participants to have weekend workshops. Many participants who mentioned distance as a barrier also mentioned that it was difficult to travel to Kelowna for the PITA conference this year where many of the YPS sessions were held, and some mentioned that "webcasts would be helpful" (classroom teacher). The final concern was that of staying informed about YPS workshops: "I didn't get access to the info until a few days ago" (teacher candidate); "We really have no idea when to look for information on workshops" (teacher candidate).

At the end of the survey, participants involved in the *Build-Up Your Program Successfully* workshops were asked overall how confident they felt about teaching. Most participants identified their confidence level at a "4" (n=26 or 48.1%), while the remaining large minority of participants were split between a "5" or "3" (24.1% and 22.2%, respectively). Their results were analysed by teacher status (classroom teacher, teacher candidate or teacher on call). On average, the teacher candidates indicated the least amount of confidence (average rating of 3.52), followed by the teachers on call (average rating of 4.07), while the classroom teachers indicated the most amount of confidence (average rating of 4.20 SD .632).

4.0   Evaluation – Next Steps

This report presents preliminary outcomes from survey findings collected to evaluate the YPS program. Overall, the results of the surveys are very positive, and indicate broad interest in this multifaceted professional support program. There is evidence that the YPS program is reaching its intended audience of beginning teachers, and there is also much demand from teachers on call and teacher candidates.

These preliminary results also indicate several areas where further inquiry is warranted. Preliminary surveys did not elicit information regarding whether or not participants who attended a YPS workshop continued to participate in the YPS program. The continued participation of workshop participants would imply that the program is meeting the needs of beginning teachers. If participants did not continue to participate in the program, investigation into reasons why (poor advertising, undesirable location, etc.) would give the YPS program clear areas for growth. Further investigation is also needed into the efficacy of the online community. There is currently no information regarding whether or not any participants made use of the email assistance offered by YPS workshop leaders, nor is there any direct evidence to support whether or not this is an effective support strategy. Preliminary findings also indicate a great degree of interest on the part of teacher candidates in participating in the wiki community, but no interest from the

classroom teachers. Does this represent a shift in the perceived benefits of an online community or does it perhaps represent a shift in time constraints? Again, more investigation is needed.

Our goal in the next phase of the evaluation of the YPS program is to identify further, through qualitative and quantitative means, the degree of the program's success by:

- analysing additional participant feedback on workshop-related activities;

- analysing feedback from beginning teachers on their reactions to the YPS program plan for the 2009/2010 year;

- reviewing feedback from participants to gauge satisfaction with the impact of the dissemination processes and outcomes;

- and conducting one-on-one interviews with workshop participants to evaluate the nature of professional supports, partnerships, and workshop follow-ups.

The one-on-one follow up interviews will also allow for some analysis of the enduring efficacy of the program's support strategies.

Additional research goals also include identifying the impact of network activities and partnerships on program effectiveness, the motivating factors for program participation, the role of a sense of community in the program's operation and initial success, and the expandability of the YPS program to provide support to early career teachers in their first four years of teaching.

APPENDIX B: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT SURVEY
Workshop Feedback Form

This workshop that you attended today is part of the pilot project, "Year of Professional Support," (YPS) for early career teachers, which is supported by the Professional Intermediate Teachers Association (PITA). We are asking that you take some time to provide to us with feedback about today's workshop that will help guide the development of the overall program of support. **Your participation is voluntary, and all information collected will remain confidential.** Your input is very important to us. Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.

A. About you

1. Please indicate which best describes your **current** position.

- ○ Teacher Candidate
- ○ Teacher on call
- ○ Classroom Teacher
- ○ Librarian
- ○ Other *(please explain)*

_____

2. What grade(s) do you teach? _____

3. Please identify the following:
District # _____ ○ Independent/Private
              ○ Public

4. Work Status:
- ○ Full-time   ○ Part-time

5. Are you:
- ○ Female   ○ Male

6. Please check the box that best describes your experience level in your **current** position.

- ○ Less than 1 year   ○ 5-8 years
- ○ 2-3 years   ○ 8 + years
- ○ 4-5 years

7. Please check the box that best describes your experience level overall in your teaching career.

- ○ Less than 1 year   ○ 5-8 years
- ○ 2-3 years   ○ 8 + years
- ○ 4-5 years

8. Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent you felt **prepared** for your current teaching assignment **prior to taking this workshop**?

○   ○   ○   ○   ○
Not at all   A great deal

B. Reactions to the Workshop Session

9. How did you learn/hear about this workshop?
_____
_____
_____
_____

10. Besides this current workshop, how many other workshops for the "Year of Professional Support for Early Career Teachers" have you attended?

- ○ This is my first one   ○ 5 other workshops
- ○ 1 other workshop   ○ 6 other workshops
- ○ 2 other workshops   ○ 7 other workshops
- ○ 3 other workshops   ○ 8 other workshops
- ○ 4 other workshops

11. Do you plan on attending other YPS workshops in the future?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Uncertain

12. What did you find **MOST** useful about today's workshop?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. What did you find **LEAST** useful about today's workshop? *(e.g, what could have been shortened or cut?)*
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. What would make the workshops more useful to you?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

15. How well did the information presented meet your expectations?

   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○
  A little   A great deal

16. What wasn't covered in today's workshop that you expected?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

17. Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent do you think you can apply the information presented today to your work?

   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○
 Not at all   A great deal

18. For my experience level, the workshop was…
- ○ Too basic
- ○ About right
- ○ Too advanced

19. Would you recommend this session to others?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Uncertain (please explain)

_____

C. Workshop Logistics

20. How would you rate the following about today's workshop?

	Poor				Excellent
Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Registration	○	○	○	○	○
Location	○	○	○	○	○
Facilities	○	○	○	○	○
Fees	○	○	○	○	○

21. Was the time of the workshop convenient for you?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If you answered no, please indicate when a more convenient time would be for you.

_____

22. To what extent was the workshop facilitator...

	Not at all				To a great extent
	1	2	3	4	5
Well organized	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledge of subject	○	○	○	○	○
Encouraged participation	○	○	○	○	○
Answered questions well	○	○	○	○	○
Used appropriate examples	○	○	○	○	○
Generated a desire to learn	○	○	○	○	○
Included practical exercises	○	○	○	○	○
Kept the session interesting	○	○	○	○	○

D. Perceived Changes in Confidence /Abilities

23. Below is a list of things that some people have gained from taking part in a workshop like this. Please indicate if any of these are true for you as a result of taking the workshop today.

- ○ More prepared for teaching
- ○ Greater confidence
- ○ Increased morale
- ○ Felt supported by others
- ○ Motivated to do something different in teaching
- ○ Learned something new that will help me teach
- ○ Increased my knowledge of this topic
- ○ Other (please explain below)

_____

F. Future Programming

24. Would you like more information on the topic covered today?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If you answered yes, please describe what type of information you would like.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

25. Would you like more information about future workshops and activities in the Year of Professional Support?

○   Yes
○   No

If you answered yes, how many?

○   1 more   ○   5 more
○   2 more   ○   6 more
○   3 more   ○   7 more
○   4 more   ○   8 more

26. Do you think you will participate in the online community of teachers (the wiki) after this workshop?

○   Yes
○   No
○   Uncertain

27. What might be some barriers to your participation in the wiki?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

28. What might be some barriers to your future attendance of YPS workshops?

_____
_____
_____
_____

29. In preparation for our next sessions, what would you like to see addressed at future workshops? _____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____
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_____
_____
_____

30. If there are any other comments you would like to make about today's workshop, please use the space below and on the back of the page.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

We invite you to participate in a brief follow-up telephone conversation about the program, "Year of Professional Support," for early career teachers. This additional information will help with future planning of the program. If you are willing to participate, please list the best number to contact you at: _____

and the best day of the week and time: _____

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback, it is very much appreciated!

Year of Professional Support Feedback Survey

Provincial Intermediate Teacher's Association (PITA) is piloting the Year of Professional Support Program (YPS) this year. As we reflect on this year and prepare for next, we are asking for input about the Program from beginning teachers. Please take a few moments to read the program description below and to answer the accompanying survey questions.

The Year of Professional Support Program (YPS) aims to support beginning Intermediate teachers in Starting Up and Building Up their classes. In the fall, beginning teachers will have the option to participate in up to 4 half-day workshops. During each workshop, an experienced teacher will guide beginning teachers through the process of starting up a single-subject area in their classroom. Ideally, each participant will leave the workshops with enough material and planning to start-up and continue teaching in that subject area until October. Throughout the year, Build-up workshops will be held that will provide continued planning support in most subject areas. After the workshops, the workshop presenters will be available for continued support via the YPS online wiki. You will also be able to connect to colleagues with similar teaching loads on the wiki in order to share resources and support.

The current schedule for the workshops is as follows:

1 full day workshop available in **August** (just before school starts)	Beginning teachers attend 1 full day workshop about **classroom routines and first week start-up.**	Offered during the last week before classes start
2 half-day workshops available in **August** (just before school starts)	Beginning teachers attend 2 Start Up workshops related to two different core teaching areas. Workshops offered in **6 different subject areas.**	Offered during the last week before classes start
4 half-day workshops available in **September**	Beginning teachers choose between **6 different subject areas**	Offered on Saturdays in mid-September
4 half-day workshops available in **October**	Beginning teachers attend Build UP workshops. Workshops offered in **8 different subject areas.**	Offered on the October Professional Development Day
2 half-day workshops available in **February**	Beginning teachers attend Build UP workshops. Workshops offered in **8 different subject areas.**	Offered on the February Professional Development Day

After reviewing the above information about the YPS program, please answer the questions on the reverse of this page. To be entered in our draw, please complete the information below. **This information is optional**.

Name: _____

Email: _____

❍ Please enter me in the draw

❍ Please add my name to the PITA email list

A. About you

1. Please indicate which best describes your **current** position.

- ○ Teacher Candidate
- ○ Teacher on call
- ○ Classroom Teacher
- ○ Librarian
- ○ Other *(please explain)*

_____

2. What grade(s) do you teach?_____

3. Please identify the following:
District # _____
- ○ Independent/Private
- ○ Public

4. Work Status:
- ○ Full-time
- ○ Part-time

5. Are you:
- ○ Female
- ○ Male

6. Please check the box that best describes your experience level in your **current** position.

- ○ Less than 1 year
- ○ 2-3 years
- ○ 4-5 years
- ○ 5-8 years
- ○ 8 + years

7. Please check the box that best describes your experience level overall in your teaching career.

- ○ Less than 1 year
- ○ 2-3 years
- ○ 4-5 years
- ○ 5-8 years
- ○ 8 + years

B. Reactions to the YPS Program Plan

8. Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent you felt **prepared** for your current teaching assignment?

○   ○   ○   ○   ○
Not at all   A great deal

9. To what extent do you feel you have material specific enough and complete enough to meet your immediate teaching needs?

○   ○   ○   ○   ○
Not at all   A great deal

10. To what extent do you feel this professional planning support will meet your needs as a beginning teacher?

○   ○   ○   ○   ○
Not at all   A great deal

11. To what extent are you interested in participating in the YPS program?

○   ○   ○   ○   ○
Not at all   A great deal

12. For each of the possible workshop times, list the relative convenience for your schedule:

	Not Very Convenient				Very Convenient
Weekday (before school's in session)	○	○	○	○	○
Weekend (before school's in session)	○	○	○	○	○
Weekday (before school's in session)	○	○	○	○	○
Weekend (before school's in session)	○	○	○	○	○
Professional Development Day	○	○	○	○	○

13. To what extent are you interested in participating in an online community of peers beginning and senior teachers?

○   ○   ○   ○   ○
Not at all   A great deal

14. Please indicate which of the following (if any) would encourage you to participate in the YPS program (workshops and online community)

Fee Waivers or Refunds   ○
Certificate of Completion   ○
Free Classroom Resources   ○
Other (please specify below)   ○
_____

15. What else do you think YPS program planners should know, consider adding, changing, or removing from the program?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for Beginning Teachers

Before I get into the specific questions, I would like to get a general sense of your experience. Please tell me about your current position:
(TOC/full-time/part-time; Grade level/Subjects; Number of years in teaching)

In general, how is your experience teaching so far?

Has teaching been what you expected? Why? Why not? What did you expect before you entered?

What do you see as being some of the greatest challenges for beginning teachers?

What strategies have you used to meet those challenges?

During the time you spend working outside of class time, what do you spend most of your time on?

Can you describe any formal support you've received as a new teacher, either within the school or the district?

Can you describe an informal support you've received?

Is the support, either informal or formal, that you have received what you expected?

What was the nature of your participation in the YPS program?

Did you find the workshop/program valuable?

How were you able to integrate the workshop supports provided into your teaching?

What else might have been valuable to include in the workshop/program?

How did you become aware of this workshop/program?

Were the times and places of additional YPS program workshops made available to you?

What would be the best way to get this information out to new teachers?

Were the times/places of YPS workshops convenient for you? What would be ideal?

Did the YPS session leader provide you/offer additional support via email?

Did you make use of this support? why/why not?

Did you check out the online community created by PITA?

If yes, did you participate in it either by obtaining resources or by adding your own?
If no, why not?
Do you think this kind of online community is an effective support strategy for new teachers? (What could make it better?)

What additional supports could PITA offer in order to better support you as a beginning teacher?

In general, what do you feel would aid your growth as a beginning teacher?

If you were in a position to help create a new teacher support system, what kinds of supports would you most strongly advocate for and why?

As you move into your (second, third, fourth) year of teaching, what kinds of ongoing support would be valuable to you?

Questions for Experienced Teachers

Before I get into the specific questions, I would like to get a general sense of your experience. Please tell me about your current position: (TOC/full-time/part-time; Grade level/Subjects; Number of years in teaching)

What do you see as being some of the greatest challenges for beginning teachers?

What strategies do you think new teachers could use to meet those challenges?

What do you see taking up the most time for beginning teachers?

Can you describe any formal support your school or district offers to beginning teachers?

Can you describe any informal support you see new teachers at your school receiving?

Where do you think more support might be valuable?

What was the nature of your participation in the YPS program?

Did you find the workshop/program valuable?

How were you able to integrate the workshop supports provided into your teaching?

What else might have been valuable to include in the workshop/program?

How did you become aware of this workshop/program?