Summary of Teacher Induction Program for Graduate Credit

In fall 2013 USU Uintah Basin initiated an informal partnership with Uintah and Duchesne County School Districts to obtain graduate credit for teacher induction courses taught by qualified school district educators. Assistant Professor Vini Exton worked with Uintah School District literacy coaches to develop graduate syllabi, and Associate Dean Derrik Tollefson spearheaded the effort to develop an MOU. Dean Marti Dever of USU’s School of Teacher Education and Leadership (TEAL) granted graduate credit in January 2014, and the first cohort of local teachers was registered in February 2014. The full induction program consists of three courses, with professional development graduate credit paid for by the school districts:

- Classroom Management (Year 1 teachers)- 3 credits
- Professional Learning Communities: Instructional Strategies (Year 2 teachers)- 3 credits
- Curriculum and Assessment Design (Year 3 teachers)- 2 credits

Teacher mentorship and induction programs are common throughout public education for first year teachers, but few school districts (none in Utah) currently offer a three-year induction program for new teachers. The rationale for developing this program was to encourage K-12 teacher effectiveness and satisfaction, to create supportive learning communities among new teachers across the curriculum, and, hopefully, to retain teachers by offering them a chance for advancement through graduate credit. A teacher who completes all three years will have eight graduate credits of professional development to apply towards a Master’s degree or other advanced degree.

The three-year program of teacher induction courses, currently serving over 100 K-12 teachers, was developed by administrators and literacy coaches at Uintah School District. First-, second-, and third-year teachers meet once a month, September to May, plus receive mentoring (observation and feedback) from literacy coaches in classroom visits during the intervening weeks. Duchesne County School District will begin offering the Year 1 course in 2014-15, Year 2 in 2015-16, and Year 3 in 2016-17. Uintah School District will offer all three courses in 2014-15. USU will continue to provide oversight and assistance as needed.

-Prepared March 25, 2014 by Vini Exton (vini.exton@usu.edu)