

Why Use Santa Cruz?

Santa Cruz enhances the performance of beginning teachers.

- Mentors help beginning teachers thrive versus survive their first year in the classroom.
- The program focuses on improving the knowledge and skills of beginning teachers, as well as promoting high achievement for all students.
- Mentors meet on a weekly basis with their beginning teachers to observe, coach, and assist with planning and analyzing student work.
- The program promotes teaching as a career-long developmental process that involves a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and reflecting.

Santa Cruz dramatically increases teacher retention and improves student achievement.

- Teacher retention data showed a 94% retention rate of beginning teachers in districts using the Santa Cruz model, as compared to 50% in other districts over a seven-year period (Strong and St. John, 2000).
- A study examined test scores of elementary students of new teachers from three California school districts. In the district implementing the Santa Cruz model, 74% of new teachers had students who made test score gains in reading over the year, compared with 47% and 41% in the other districts (Strong, Fletcher, & Villar, 2003a).
- Students of beginning teachers involved with the Santa Cruz model showed achievement gains comparable to those of veteran teachers in the same district, despite being assigned larger proportions of low-achieving students.

Santa Cruz promotes professional growth of both beginning teachers and mentors.

"The portfolio process has supported me in many ways. It gave me an understanding of where I was, a vision of where I was going and how to get there. Without some way of focusing during those overwhelming first years of teaching, you can feel as if you are not moving forward. The reflection and documentation helped me see the progress I had actually made."

-A second year beginning teacher

"In working with [my colleagues] in a reflective manner, I am becoming more reflective about my own practice and its effects on students. And through our work to implement various strategies, my own repertoire of teaching methods is ever-increasing. When I return to a classroom of students, I will bring with me an enriched and stronger practice."

-A Santa Cruz mentor

More information can be found on the New Teacher Center website:

www.newteachercenter.org