
While the other resources reviewed in this edition of *Research Roundup* include primarily information for mentors, this one focuses on the new teacher. In Portner’s view, a “proactive protégé” is more likely to benefit from the mentoring relationship, and in this brief and easy-to-read book he provides suggestions for ways in which a new teacher can be more proactive.

For example, the chapter titled “Chart Your Course” is organized into four main sections:

- Find out what you don’t know;
- Set priorities;
- Identify resources; and
- Use the power of planning.

Portner ties these elements to a new teacher’s efforts to learn how to “teach better,” pointing out: “The processes of discovering what you don’t know, setting priorities, identifying resources, and deciding how and when to carry out your plan are, in and of themselves, dynamic learning experiences.”

As a principal, you might be saying to yourself, “That makes sense, but my new teachers just don’t have the time to read anything else.” However, consider this scenario provided by Portner in a section titled “Check Out Your Perceptions”:

*Mentor*: Your students were really focused today.

*New teacher*: Oh, you mean today was an exception—that my students aren’t usually focused?

*Mentor*: On the contrary. Your students are usually engaged. I consider what you did today, however, to have been exceptionally good.

Now think about another way this situation easily could have gone after the mentor’s initial comment. The new teacher says nothing but goes away concerned about the “today’s an exception” possibility—distracted and with diminished confidence about her teaching abilities. On balance, the time it would take for a new teacher to read this book—or, better yet, to read and discuss it with other new teachers—could certainly be worthwhile.