In *Fast Start: Training Better Teachers Faster, with Focus, Practice and Feedback*, TNTP shares how it has radically changed its approach to teacher preparation to emphasize four essential skills that first-year teachers need to be successful.

As the nation continues to grapple with the question of how to improve teacher training and accelerate student learning, *Fast Start* offers teacher preparation providers a starting point for useful discussion of new approaches. The report raises questions about how to sequence new skills for pre-service teachers, provide ample time for hands-on practice, and ensure that teachers in training get the feedback they need to be successful from day one.

**Pre-Reading and Discussion Structure**

1. Propose *Fast Start* as a starting point for discussion about innovative approaches to teacher preparation and development.

2. Ask participants to download and read *Fast Start* by sharing this guide and this link: [tntp.org/faststart](http://tntp.org/faststart) (or you can request hard copies at [tntp.org/request](http://tntp.org/request)).

3. Assign a discussion facilitator to help guide the conversation, using this guide as a resource. Consider assigning someone else to take notes.

4. Revisit the topic at a subsequent meeting to give participants an opportunity to share how their thinking around the content, sequencing and structure of teacher preparation has changed.

**Suggested Discussion Questions**

*Use these questions or add your own to spark the discussion. Encourage participants to be specific and focus on concrete examples from their experience and the report.*

- **What skills are the most important for novice teachers to master?** Are the four skills identified in *Fast Start* the right ones, or are there others that you think need to be mastered before more advanced techniques? What new approaches could you use to identify a more strategic sequence for skill-building? How do these skills align to your local teacher observation rubric?

- **How do the principles outlined in *Fast Start*—focus, practice and feedback—fit with your current approach?** Do you find these principles useful, or not? Could any of them be integrated into your current model in ways that would benefit your teachers? Which elements of your program do you believe are helping new teachers the most? Which are helping them the least?

- **How effectively do you think your current approach to teacher training balances hands-on practice with theory?** Does your program dedicate time to explicit training on skills? Do your teachers have opportunities to try out these skills and receive feedback from peers, mentor teachers and faculty?

- **How does your program address the gap between “getting it” and “doing it”?** Do you see new teachers struggling to execute skills they have learned once they’re in the classroom? What new strategies can you try to help them bridge the gap between their understanding of instructional skills and their ability to execute those skills in the classroom?

- **Do your teachers have access to high-quality feedback on their performance?** How often do you see teachers in training at work in real classrooms? Do you feel prepared to give teachers clear, direct feedback on their execution of essential instructional skills? Do you have ample time to observe teachers in action?