DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 267 SP 020 420

AUTHOR Burden, Paul R.
TITLE Developmental Supervision: Reducing Teacher Stress at Different Career Stages.
PUB DATE Feb 82
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (Phoenix, AZ, February 15, 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Responsibility; Attitude Change; Beginning Teachers; Developmental Stages; Helping Relationship; Professional Development; Self Concept; Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Stress Variables; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Supervision; *Teaching Experience; Vocational Maturity

ABSTRACT

Teachers have different job skills, knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, and concerns at different points in their careers. A number of these characteristics follow a regular developmental pattern. Three stages of teacher career development have been identified, with different developmental characteristics at each stage. In the survival stage, which occurs during the first year of teaching, the major concern of the teacher is meeting professional responsibilities and adjusting to the school environment. The second, third, and fourth years of teaching are years of adjustment, growth in classroom techniques, and increasing confidence. At the mature stage, from the fifth year on, most teachers feel professionally secure. School administrators can help teachers meet the stresses in each of these developmental stages in many ways. The confusion and uncertainty of the first stage can be allayed by direct supervisory assistance, with the supervisor assuming primary responsibility in helping the teacher. A collaborative supervisory approach is appropriate at the adjustment stage, with the supervisor and teacher taking equal responsibility for meeting the teacher's needs. Stress which teachers experience in the mature stage of teaching appears to center on the teachers' ability to keep teaching interesting for themselves and to meet changing educational expectations. A nondirective supervisory approach is appropriate at this stage. The supervisor listens, encourages, clarifies, presents, and helps to solve problems, while the teacher assumes the primary responsibility for improving instruction through self assessment. (JD)

Developmental Supervision: Reducing Teacher Stress at Different Career Stages

Dr. Paul R. Burden
Kansas State University
Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction
233 Bluemont Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
Office: (913) 532-6158 or 532-5550
Home: (913) 539-1204

Presented at the Association of Teacher Educators national conference, Phoenix, Feb. 15, 1982

A growing body of research indicates that teachers have different job skills, knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, and concerns at different points in their careers (e.g.-Burden, 1979, 1980; Fuller, 1969, 1970; Fuller and Bown, 1975; Newman, 1978; Peterson, 1978). Studies also show that many of these changes follow a regular developmental pattern. Therefore, teachers in their first year may have a predictable set of developmental characteristics; fourth year teachers, for example, have an equally predictable, but different set of developmental characteristics. Because of the changing developmental characteristics, teachers are likely to experience stress from various sources at different points in their careers.

One responsibility of school administrators and supervisors is to help classroom teachers improve their instruction and facilitate their development. Supervisors should provide different types of supervisory assistance and vary their supervisory strategies when working with teachers at different developmental levels.

A discussion of teachers' developmental characteristics is provided here along with a discussion of sources of stress and various supervisory practices that would be appropriate when working with teachers at various stages of development.

Teacher Career Development

Teacher career development deals with the changes teachers experience throughout their careers. These changes occur in the teachers': (1) job skills, knowledge, and behaviors - in areas such as teaching methods, discipline strategies, curriculum, planning, rules and procedures; (2) attitudes and outlooks - in areas such as images of teaching, professional confidence

and maturity, willingness to try new teaching methods, satisfactions, and concerns; and (3) job events - in areas such as changes in grade level, school, or district; involvement in additional professional responsibilities; and age of entry and retirement.

Teachers' perceptions of their personal and professional development for their entire careers were revealed in an interview study with experienced teachers (Burden, 1979, 1980). Details concerning research design, methodology, and findings can be found in these earlier reports.

In Burden's study, public school teachers provided rich details about their professional lives, and in doing so revealed characteristics of their professional development.

Information about job skills, knowledge, and behaviors were reported in five areas: (1) knowledge of teaching activities, (2) knowledge of teaching environment, (3) professional insight and perception, (4) approach to curriculum and instruction, and (5) obtaining assistance and new ideas. Changes in teachers' attitudes and outlooks were reported in four areas: (1) changing images about teaching, (2) professional confidence, security, and maturity, (3) willingness to try new teaching methods, and (4) career plans. Changes in job events included changes in grade level, school buildings, and school districts. Table 1 displays a summary of the teachers' perceptions of their professional development.

The information provided by the teachers in the above categories indicated that there were stages of teacher career development.

Stage I will be called a survival stage, which for this group of teachers occurred during the first year of teaching. Stage II was an adjustment stage, which for this group included the second, third, and fourth years. Stage III

was a mature stage, which for this group included the fifth year and beyond. It should be noted that the teachers in this study had some common demographic characteristics (e.g.- all started public school teaching in their early 20's) and that might have been a factor in the similar developmental characteristics being expressed by most teachers. Other teachers may express similar developmental characteristics but take more or less time at each stage.

Stage I, the survival stage, seemed to be distinct because it presented unique conditions and experiences for the teachers. Many of the professional characteristics exhibited during the first year were intertwined. For example, feelings of confusion and uncertainty existed concurrently with the teachers' limited knowledge of the teaching environment and activities of teaching. At this time the teachers adhered to a previously formed image of teachers and teaching, and taught in a traditional manner. They were unwilling to try new teaching methods until they had mastered the traditional methods. They had little insight into the complexity of their teaching environment. It appears that because they did not recognize the complexity of the environment and had limited knowledge and skills, they taught the subject rather than the child.

The teachers recalled their first teaching year as a time of concern about themselves in relation to their professional responsibilities. They were primarily concerned about their adequacy in: (1) maintaining classroom control, (2) teaching the subject, and (3) improving their teaching skills -- lesson planning, organizing units and materials, grading, and knowing the curriculum and what to teach. Many teachers expressed feelings of inadequacy in each area and consequently were concerned about their success as a teacher.

The first year concerns expressed by the teachers are in line with characteristics discussed by other researchers and teacher educators. Unruh and Turner (1970) suggested that the problems of the novice include discipline, routine and organization, scoring and marking papers, and curriculum development. Fuller (1969, 1970) and Fuller and Bown (1975) suggested that early concerns about the self and personal survival focused on content adequacy, capacity to control the class, and the ability to survive as a teacher in the new school situation. Applegate and associates (1977, and Ryan et al., 1980) reported first year concern for the self when managing a classroom, confronting discipline problems, evaluating student progress, and worrying about his/her own competence in teaching a particular subject.

Many teachers were concerned about surviving each day and completing the school year. These findings are in line with the first year survival focus discussed by Fuller (1969); Fuller, Parsons, and Watkins (1973); Katz (1972) and Lortie (1966, 1973).

Several teachers approached the early years of teaching as a trial period. They were not certain if they wanted to make a career of teaching in the early years and used their experiences to determine their future course of action.

Stage II, the adjustment stage, was a time when the teachers learned a great deal but did not feel like they were able to handle everything that happened in the classroom.

Just as in the first year of teaching, many professional characteristics which the teachers displayed in Stage II in the second, third, and fourth years are intertwined. As teachers became more knowledgeable about

the teaching environment and teaching activities, they were more relaxed and confident. They had mastered some initial teaching skills and were confident about trying new teaching methods. They knew more about the children and were starting to perceive the complexities in teaching them. They also knew what did and did not work and could abandon their preconceived images of teacher behavior.

The teachers in this second stage became less concerned with the teaching situation as a problem area. This confirms the stage of teaching situation concerns expressed by Fuller and Bown (1975).

There were several notable differences in the teachers' professional characteristics when comparing their second, third, and fourth years (the adjustment stage) to their first year (the survival stage). The teachers were much more comfortable with their teaching in this second phase of development. They were more relaxed and not as nervous as they were the first year. They stopped worrying about themselves and started looking at larger concerns in the teaching situation. As they started to see the complexities in the children, they sought new teaching techniques to meet the wider range of needs they were beginning to perceive in their second, third, and fourth years. Also, the teachers expressed more of their own personalities in the classroom by letting themselves be more open and genuine with the children. Their experience increased their knowledge and abilities, and the teachers felt they were developing skills and meeting the children's needs more capably.

Katz (1972) called the second year the consolidation stage in which the teacher consolidates the overall gains made in the first stage and differentiates specific tasks and skills to be mastered next. Teachers

in this study exhibited these characteristics in the second, third, and fourth year period. Katz did not discuss what the specific tasks and skills were whereas the teachers in this study identified specific professional characteristics for this time period. Katz further labeled the third or fourth years as the renewal stage where the teachers tire of doing the same things and look at innovations in the field. Teachers in this study sought different teaching techniques in this period primarily to meet the children's needs rather than to break away from worn out methods as Katz had noted.

Stage III, the mature stage, was a time when most of the teachers felt that they were mature teachers and felt they could handle anything that happened in their teaching.

Many of the professional characteristics exhibited in Stage III in the fifth year and beyond were intertwined. When the teachers had a good command of teaching activities and understood the teaching environment, they felt confident, mature and secure. They used what worked for them and abandoned the image of a teacher they thought they had to fulfill. Since they had mastered many of the initial teaching skills and were confident with new situations, they were continually willing to try new teaching methods. As they became more perceptive, they recognized the complex needs of the children ar adopted a more child-centered approach to curriculum and inst tion.

The teachers in their fifth year and beyond were concerned with meeting the needs of the children and with their relationship to the children. This confirms the stage of concerns about pupils reported by Fuller and Bown (1975).

Teachers in the mature stage knew what they were doing, where they were going, and what they wanted to do. They felt secure with the teaching duties and were competent in their performance of them.

The teachers accepted change as a continual process rather than a threat. Their reasons for trying new teaching methods were different at this stage as compared to earlier stages. Earlier, the teachers were either unwilling to try new teaching methods or tried them to better meet the needs of the students. By this mature stage, the teachers had become skilled in a variety of techniques and continually tried additional techniques to increase their competence, to passively accept change, and to keep teaching interesting for themselves. The teachers focused on their own personal improvement and challenge.

The last reason for trying new teaching methods in the mature stage -- to keep their teaching interesting for themselves -- significantly affected the behavior of some teachers. The teachers felt they were meeting the needs of the children but also wanted to meet their own needs. To prevent boredom, they sometimes changed grade levels, schools, or aspects of their classrooms (learning centers, room arrangements, schedules, etc.).

Information from this study seems to confirm characteristics of the maturing period as described by Unruh and Turner (1970). Teachers in this study generally exhibited the acceptance of change as a continual process early in this last stage (around the fifth to seventh years) as compared to the fifteenth year or later as suggested by Unruh and Turner.

Feelings of professional maturity were experienced in the first decade of teaching, thus confirming Newman's (1978) description of teachers at that stage of career development. Newman indicated that teachers

in the end of their second decade of teaching felt like they were "getting into a rut" and changed schools and/or grade levels in an attempt to revitalize themselves. The teachers in this study expressed these concerns much earlier, as early as the fifth year in some cases.

Teachers in the early years, years one through four, were primarily building knowledge and skills, and were determining if they wanted to make a career of teaching. This information concurs with Super's (1975, pp 28-29) description of the exploratory stages (ages 15-25) of career development when individuals determine their aptitudes and interests, and attempt to find a satisfactory occupation through a variety of activities, roles and situations.

Teachers in the fifth year and beyond generally became more committed to their careers and were satisfied with their chosen profession. Super (1957, chapter 9; 1975, p 29) described the establishment stage (ages 24-45) of career development as a time for deciding what seems to be the best occupational choice, and for stabilizing and advancing a career. Information seems to confirm these career development characteristics for the teachers in this study.

Teachers in Stage III expressed a growing concern for themselves and their own well being. They wanted to improve and be challenged and yet they were concerned about the tension resulting from teaching. Since they did not want to take job tensions home with them, many teachers tried to separate their personal and professional lives. They also found ways in their personal lives to release the tension they had experienced in teaching.

Most changes in acquisition of necessary job skills and behaviors were reported for the first four years of teaching; in fact, the distinctions were clear enough to identify two yearly groups (first year; and second, third, and fourth years). The teachers identified more of their skill acquisitions during the years when they were mastering their skills (in years one through four - the survival and adjustment stages) compared to the years after they mastered the skills (the fifth year and beyond - the mature stage). Teachers were learning new skills in their later years through workshops and other means but did not identify those changes in the same detail as they had for their early years.

Most changes in attitudes and outlooks came gradually, with more changes being identified in the first four years. Many teachers by the fifth year had become committed to a particular philosophy for dealing with children; by this stage they changed only their techniques rather than their philosophy.

Most changes in job events (grade levels, schools, districts) occurred within the first several years and the teachers then made relatively fewer changes. There were more changes in job events such as involvement in extra activities in the fifth year and later.

The teachers' accumulated experience appeared to significantly affect their personal and professional development. As they increased their knowledge of children, the subject matter, teaching techniques and other aspects of teaching, the teachers had more resources to draw upon when confronting new situations. When the teachers increased their knowledge, their attitudes changed about their teaching, which subsequently led to a change in abilities and job performance. The teachers, for example,

reported that their first year was very important because they learned so much about teaching. That knowledge affected their attitude toward teaching when they discovered they were deficient in performing many aspects of the job. With the increased knowledge and changes in attitude, the teachers changed their abilities and subsequently their job performance to meet the job demands better.

The teachers' knowledge accumulated yearly, leading to changes in job performance. Knowing they had this expanding repertoire of knowledge and skills, the teachers felt confident and mature in their fifth year and later years.

Stress at Career Stages

Stress which the teachers experienced can be understood by examining their feelings of professional confidence, security, and maturity at various career stages (see Table 1).

Teachers in Stage I, the survival stage, were uncertain and confused about many aspects of the job. They didn't feel confident and were not certain how the situation would improve. They often were not sure how to deal with certain problems, were frustrated, and wondered if they were "measuring up." They also expressed the need to feel confident, effective, and competent in the first year but apparently did not achieve these feelings at that time. Because of the teachers' feelings of uncertainty about themselves, they were hesitant to try different teaching techniques and sometimes did not know what to do or how things would get better.

Much of their uncertainty in the survival stage resulted from their feelings of inadequacy in: (1) maintaining classroom control, (2) teaching the subject, and (3) improving their teaching skills. The teachers' feelings

of stress, therefore, were primarily a result of concerns about their job skills, knowledge, and behaviors.

There were additional areas of stress in the first stage. The teachers were attempting to confirm their career decision. Also, the teachers experienced stress because their professional responsibilities (e.g. - time for planning, preparation, grading, reviewing the curriculum) took a great deal of time and cut into their personal time during evenings and weekends.

Teachers in Stage II, the adjustment stage, were gaining confidence and were more comfortable with what they were doing, with the subject matter and with the teaching techniques they were using. The teachers were more relaxed and sure of themselves but still didn't feel capable of handling any situation which might arise.

The adjustment stage was a time when the teachers started to see the complexities in the children and sought new teaching techniques to meet the wider range of needs they were beginning to perceive. Their feelings of stress at this stage often centered on their adequacy in varying their instruction and meeting the wide range of student needs. They were less concerned about themselves and more concerned with meeting individual students' needs.

Teachers in Stage III, the mature stage, felt that they were mature teachers. They felt confident, competent, and secure. They felt that they could handle any situation that might come along. They were willing to try new techniques, to learn more things, and to continually grow and develop to become better teachers. The teachers were able to vary their instruction and meet the needs of individual students by this time. Stress which teachers experienced in the mature stage seemed to center on the teachers' ability to

keep teaching interesting for themselves. Stress was also experienced because of changes in school procedures and educational expectations (e.g.-dealing with mainstreamed children, paperwork required by the district).

Suggested Supervisory Practice

Since teachers have different needs and skills at various points in their careers, the type of assistance and the supervisory approach should be different for teachers at different developmental levels. Table 2 provides a summary for suggested supervisory practice. Some of the ideas discussed here are similar to those Glickman (1981) proposed after he reviewed Burden's research (1979) and other related research studies.

Teachers at Stage I, the survival stage, need assistance in many technical skills of teaching (e.g.-lesson planning, record keeping, teaching strategies, handling discipline). Despite training and experience in these areas during preservice teacher preparation, teachers still felt weak in these areas and needed a person to come in and show them how to perform and refine certain skills. Beginning teachers also needed specific information about the curriculum and school rules and procedures. A directive supervisory approach may be the most helpful at this survival stage. The supervisor would present, direct, demonstrate, and reinforce when interacting with the teacher at this stage. The supervisor would take primary responsibility in helping the teacher with the identified concerns.

Teachers at Stage II, the adjustment stage, have learned from their first year experiences and have acquired job skills and information in a number of areas. They are more able to look at their needs more objectively and seek out assistance. A collaborative supervisory approach would be appropriate at this stage where the supervisor and teacher take equal

responsibility for meeting the teacher's needs. The supervisor would present, clarify, listen, problem solve, and negotiate when working to meet the teacher's needs at this stage.

Teachers at Stage III, the mature stage, have a good command of the job skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary to be effective. They feel confident and mature and they are interested in varying their instruction to meet individual student needs and also to add variety for themselves. Teachers at this stage have competence in many job skills and behaviors and are capable of objectively assessing their performance. A non-directive supervisory approach would be appropriate at this stage where the supervisor listens, encourages, clarifies, presents, and helps problem solve. In this way, the teacher assumes the primary responsibility for improving instruction through self-assessment.

Conclusion

A number of research studies show that teachers have different job skills, knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, and concerns at different points in their careers. A number of these characteristics follow a regular developmental pattern. Burden (1979) reported three stages of teacher career development with different developmental characteristics being expressed at each stage. Because of these various developmental characteristics, teachers experience different types of stress at various points in their careers. Supervisors could facilitate teachers' development by providing different types of assistance and by varying their supervisory approach for teachers at different developmental levels.

TABLE 1

TEACHERS'PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

	PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	STAGE 1 SURVIVAL STAGE First Year	STAGE 2 ADJUSTMENT STAGE Second, Third, and Fourth Years	STAGE 3 MATURE STAGE Fifth Year and Beyond
JOB SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND BEHAVIORS	KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES	Limited knowledge of teaching methods, lesson planning, record keeping, motivating and disciplining students, and organizational skills	Increasing knowledge and skills in these areas	Good command of these teaching activities
	KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING ENVIRONMENT	Limited knowledge of children's characteristics (e.g. personalities, behaviors, attention spans, achievement levels), school curriculum, school rules and regulations	Increasing knowledge and skills in these areas	Good command of the teaching environment
	PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT AND PERCEPTION	Limited insight into the children or school environment; unable to see themselves objectively; wrapped up in their own activities	Gradually gained insight into the complexities of the professional environment; saw children in more complex ways and were able to respond to their needs more capably	
	APPROACH TO CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	Subject-Centered curricular approach; limited personal contact with the children	Transitional period with more concern for the child's self-concept	Child-Centered curricular approach; more concerned with teaching the individual child and creating a positive classroom environment
ATTITUDES AND OUTLOOKS	CHANGING IMAGES OF TEACHING	Adopted an image of what a teacher should be and conformed to that image; taught traditionally	Gradually stopped conforming to the image and started using techniques that worked best for them; let their own personalities come out more	
	PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENCE, SECURITY, AND MATURITY	Feelings of inadequacy; uncertain and confused about many aspects of the job; worried about how to teach and about not teaching correctly	More comfortable with subject matter and techniques; more relaxed and sure of themselves	Feelings of being a mature teacher; confident and secure
	WILLINGNESS TO TRY NEW TEACHING METHODS	Unwilling to try new methods while trying to master initial skills	Willing to continually experiment with different techniques after mastering some initial skills; saw the need to use more methods to meet children's needs	Willing to continually experiment with new techniques to increase their competence, to passively accept change, or to keep teaching interesting for themselves

TABLE 2

VIEWS OF SUPERVISION

	STAGE 1 SURVIVAL STAGE First Year	STAGE 2 ADJUSTMENT STAGE Second, Third, and Fourth Years	STAGE 3 MATURE STAGE Fifth Year and Beyond
ORIENTATION TO SUPERVISION	Directive	Collaborative	Non-directive
SUPERVISOR'S BEHAVIOR	Presenting, Directing, Demonstrating, Standardizing, Reinforcing	Presenting, Clarifying, Listening, Problem Solving, Negotiating	Listening, Encouraging, Clarifying, Presenting, Problem Solving
PRIMARY METHOD	Supervisor Delineating Standards	Mutual Contract Developed Between Supervisor and Teacher	Teacher Self-Assessment
SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY IN SUPERVISION	High	Moderate	Low
TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY IN SUPERVISION	Low	Moderate	High

REFERENCES

Applegate, Jane H.; Flora, V. Randall; Johnston, John M.; Lasley, Thomas J.; Mager, Gerald M.; Newman, Katherine K.; and Ryan, Kevin. The First Year Teacher Study. New York: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 135 766, 1977.

Burden, Paul R. "Teachers' Perceptions of the Characteristics and Influences on Their Personal and Professional Development." Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1979. Dissertation Abstracts International, 1980, 40, 5404A. (University Microforms No. 8008776)

Burden, Paul R. Teachers Perceptions of the Characteristics and Influences on Their Personal and Professional Development. Manhattan, Kansas: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 198 087, 1980.

Fuller, Frances F. "Concerns of Teachers: A Developmental Conceptualization." American Educational Research Journal 6 (March 1969): 207-26.

_____. "Personalized Education for Teachers: An Introduction for Teacher Educators." New York: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 048 105, July 1970.

Fuller, Frances F., and Bown, Oliver H. "Becoming a Teacher." Teacher Education, the Seventy-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, pt. 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

Fuller, Frances F.; Parsons, Jane S.; and Watkins, James E. Concerns of Teachers: Research and Reconceptualization. Austin, Texas: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas, 1973.

Glickman, Carl D. Developmental Supervision: Alternative Practices for Helping Teachers. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1981.

Katz, Lilian G. "Developmental Stages of Preschool Teachers." Elementary School Journal 73 (October 1972): 50-54.

Lortie, Daniel C. "Teacher Socialization: The Robinson Crusoe Model." In The Real World of the Beginning Teacher, pp. 54-66. Report of the Nineteenth National Teacher Education and Professional Standards Conference. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1966.

_____. "Observations on Teaching as Work." In Second Handbook of Research on Teaching, pp. 474-97. Edited by Robert M.W. Travers. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1973.

Newman, Katherine K. "Middle-aged Experienced Teachers' Perceptions of Their Career Development." Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1978. Dissertation Abstracts International, 1979, 39, 4885A. (University Microforms No. DEL 79-02196)

Peterson, Anne R. "Career Patterns of Secondary School Teachers: An Exploratory Interview Study of Retired Teachers." Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1978. Dissertation Abstracts International, 1979, 39, 4888A. (University Microforms No. DEL 79-02204)

Ryan, Kevin; Newman, Katherine K.; Mager, Gerald; Applegate, Jane; Lasley, Thomas; Flora, Randall; and Johnston, John. Biting the Apple: Accounts of First Year Teachers. New York: Longman, 1980.

Super, Donald E. The Psychology of Careers. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957.

_____. "Career Education and Career Guidance for Life Span and for Life Roles." Journal of Career Education 2 (1975): 27-42.

Unruh, Aldolph, and Turner, Harold E. Supervision for Change and Innovation. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970.