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AUTHOR Young, Beverly L.; And Others

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ABSTRACT

The possibility of diffe ences between beginning teachers and intern teachers (alternatively certified) during their first years of teaching in the elementary classroom was explored. Data was collected from 66 beginning teachers (recent graduates) and 58 intern students (intern teachers) from a California State University campus regarding certification background, classroom performance, and self-perceptions about their concerns. Seven school districts in Southern California were represented. The intern teachers were in a teaching intern program in which the University agreed to provide educational coursework, instructional seminars, and classroom supervision, while the school district provided a paid position, a district mentor, and district supervision. Data were collected through classroom observations, telephone interviews, and a teacher concern survey. Although there appeared to be no differences in the classrooms of beginning teachers and intern teachers at the end of their first year, beginning teachers continued to demonstrate much higher levels of concern and insecurity about their abilities compared to interns. It is possible that this concern is an indicator of a greater focus on the teaching profession, rather than a manifestation of insecurity. Longitudinal follow-up of these teachers may clarify these results. Two tables present study data, and there is a 20-item list of references. (SLD)

Regularly and Alternatively Credentialed Beginning Teachers: Comparison and Contrast of Their Development

Presented by

Beverly L. Young, Ph.D

Ruth A. Sandlin, Ph.D

Belinda Dunnick Karge, Ph.D

American Educational Research Association

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Regularly and Alternatively Credentialed Beginning Teachers: Comparison and Contrast of Their Development

It has been suggested that achieving expertise in teaching is a developmental process (Fuller, 1974). The formal process begins with coursework and student teaching, progressing through the first employed teaching experience, and then finally to continued years of teaching. Formal education and evaluation during the critical transition from preservice education to teaching is a necessity. Furthermore, continued professional development must be sustained for teachers to develop proficiency (Berliner, 1988). The process of teaching involves a continuum of learning, unlearning, and relearning. Teacher education can not be segmented into an artificial preservice-inservice dichotomy; rather it should be viewed as a lifelong process.

Several researchers have documented the transition from preservice student to practicing teacher as difficult for many teachers (Brooks, 1987; Huling-Austin, 1990; Huling-Austen, Odell, Ishler, Kay, & Edefelt, 1989). Many states are initiating entry-year and induction programs to assist novice teachers. However, too often they rely solely on the goodwill of experienced teachers who also have full teaching loads. Legislative authorization without fiscal appropriation is often standard practice. As a result, many beginning teachers suffer numerous

problems and varied amounts of stress during the transition period. In turn, the quality of instruction for many youngsters may be less than it should be.

To compound the issue even further, there is a personnel shortage in education. National reports and surveys continue to document the shortages in the overall supply of teachers (Futrell, 1989; Lauritzen, 1990; Smith-Davis, 1991). The teacher shortage has prompted states to adopt alternative routes to certification by preparing individuals to meet revised certification requirements. This more often than not leads to relatively early placement of candidates in teaching positions (Darling-Hammond, 1988). Current studies find between 33 and 48 states have implemented alternative route programs. Alternative routes are intended to reduce the number of emergency certificates issued, while filling positions with trained personnel. The impact of the teacher shortage has strongly contributed to the restructuring of teacher education programs.

Although, some states have been collecting outcome data on alternative certification routes for several years, many of the alternative routes are new, and thus a complete picture of the effects of such programs is not yet available (Smith-Davis & George, 1989). Only on a limited basis does the literature provide longitudinal studies describing the impact of teacher shortages on various preservice and inservice

approaches. Hawk, Coble, and Swanson (1985) question whether even traditional state certification requirements have ever been examined for their relationship to teacher effectiveness.

With alternative certification programs being used as a major economic policy to credential teachers nationwide, it becomes increasingly important to compare program effectiveness of traditional credential programs to that of alternative credential programs. What is happening to teachers who are credentialed through an alternative certification program? Are these teachers having similar experiences as that of regularly certified beginning teachers or are their experiences somehow different? Do alternatively certified teachers feel more competent in their teaching or do they feel less prepared and concerned about the quality of their teaching?

In states like California, these questions may be of paramount importance. California is experiencing an overall population growth rate of impressive proportions, a phenomenon which is creating a substantial shortage of credentialed teachers (Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) , 1990; Honig, 1990; Winget, 1989).

Analysis of the California Basic Education Data System indicates that the demand for new teachers is far exceeding the number of new teachers completing credentials in the state. The need for new classroom teachers is projected to increase by 9.4% (Smith-Davis,

1991), while the existng data confirms that there is an ever decreasing supply of trained teachers available in the state (Doorlag, 1991). This situation is compounded by the increasing problem of attracting underrepresented groups into the profession, and the discouraging rates of early year teacher attrition. It has been reported that 15 % of all teachers in California are not fully qualified to serve in their current position because they are teaching under alternative permits (CTC, 1990).

California offers five alternative routes to becoming a teacher: state (1) The University Intern Credential (a teaching intern program with an Institute of Higher Education (IHE); (2) The District Intern Certificate, formerly the teacher trainee program; (3) the Emergency Teaching Permit, whereby only 6 semester units of education credit are needed; (4) an eminence credential or waiver, a one-year renewable certificate for exceptional cases; and (5) the Sojourn Credential, allowing foreign country and out-of-state credentials by reciprocity or discretionary review. CTC has reported that from 1983-1984 to 1988-89 there has been a 139 % increase in the number of teachers working in general education on the basis of an alternative permit (1990).

Of the five California options, the teaching intern program with IHE supervision is the most attractive to school districts due not only to the ability to increase the recruitment and selection options of districts

when filling positions, but also because the university and school district share professional responsibility for the intern (Sandlin, Karge, Young, Nix, & Scott, 1989).

California compares with that of other states in that few studies have been done on the effectiveness of internship programs to other regular certification routes. Those that have been done (Oliver & McKibbin, 1985), have only followed teachers for one or two years. The investigators believe longitudinal studies need to be conducted for at least five years and perhaps longer to determine whether in fact, internship programs are a viable alternative in the training of teachers for the future.

Although teacher shortage has led to use of alternative credentialing in many states, teacher attrition is also of major concern. Nationally and in California, approximately 50% of new teachers are leaving the classroom by their fifth year (Smith-Davis, 1991). By examining not only their performance in the classroom, but teacher concerns and beliefs about teaching, we may discover new insights about not only the credentialing process, but about some of the factors that may contribute to teacher attrition.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the possibility of differences between beginning teachers and intern teachers during their first years of teaching in the elementary classroom. Data has

been collected regarding credentialing background, classroom performance, and self perceptions about their concerns. Teacher concern information was collected in relation to Fuller's (1974) work on the developmental progression of teacher concerns in stages relating to teacher's professional growth.

Method

Subjects

Sixty-six beginning teachers and fifty-eight intern teachers were randomly selected from a pool of intern students and beginning teachers (recent graduates) from a California State University campus. Seven school districts in Southern California were represented.

For the purposes of this paper, a beginning teacher is defined as a first year teacher who has recently completed coursework toward their credential and has completed traditional student teaching under the direction of a master teacher and a university supervisor. The intern teachers in this sample were enrolled in a Teaching Intern Program. The program is defined by a contract among the intern, the university, and the school district. The university agrees to provide the educational coursework, instructional seminars, and the classroom supervision of the intern, while the school district agrees to provide the intern with a salaried classroom teaching position, a district mentor, and district supervision. All of the interns in this study had

documentation of two years paid field experience prior to entering the program and had taught a demonstration lesson for the faculty at the University where their internship was to be fulfilled. These admissions criteria are characteristics of a more stringent and structured program.

The subjects teach in grades kindergarten through sixth. The subjects range in age from 23 to 50, the mean age is 33. The study included 19 males and 105 females. Ethnic diversity included: Caucasian (n=84), African-American (n=3), and Hispanic (n=37). The subjects reported minimal experience in teaching, the reflected mean is 1.3 years. Their assigned class size ranged from 26 to 36, the mean is 28 students. Only one subject had a Master's degree. All others have a Bachelor's degree plus graduate units.

Instrumentation

A nationally standardized performance based teacher evaluation instrument, the Teacher Evaluation Scale (TES), (Hawthorne Educational Services, 1990) was utilized for the classroom observations. The TES has standardization data reflecting administration to over 2,200 teachers. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient of $r=.96$ ($p<.01$) indicates a substantial degree of test-retest reliability. Additionally inter-rater reliability coefficients range from .91 to .95. The test manual also reports strong content and construct validity.

Additionally, a survey was conducted to assess teacher concerns. The Teacher Concern Survey (TCS) was taken from Rogan's (1988) work and modified for the present sample. Rogan constructed this scale based on Fuller's work on the developmental progression of teacher concerns (1974). Fuller hypothesized the stages of concerns were developmental and related to teacher growth. The hierarchy is delineated into three stages: (1) Self- focus on daily survivial; (2) Task- actual teaching duties; and (3) Impact- one's abilities to be successful with students and the teaching/learning process.

Procedure and Results

The investigators designed a longitudinal study to compare and contrast developmental processes of California beginning and intern teachers in their first years of teaching in elementary classrooms. The data collection the study was threefold: (1) classroom observations; (2) follow-up telephone interviews; and (3) teacher concern survey.

Classroom Observations

A protocol for classroom observations was established. A research coordinator contacted the subjects, explained the blind review process, and set up site visits. Reviewers with experience in supervision of teachers visited the subjects' school sites and conducted on-site

observations. Demographic data, perceptions of teaching abilities, and teaching styles were previously collected via written subject questionnaires and self-report questionnaires. The observers' only role was to watch and record classroom activity.

Using the TES, classroom observations were conducted at three points in the 90-91 school year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Observation scores of beginning teachers indicated a lower score on 5 of the 16 items on the Fall assessment. Statisitical significance was .05 or better. These five items were spread across the categories of classroom managment and instruction (Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

At the mid-year (Winter) observation, beginning teachers were significantly lower on only 2 of the 16 catagories. The two categories were consistent with the original five low scores; they were from classroom management and instructional categories. By the year-end assessment, the two groups scored at virtually equivalent levels, showing no significant differences across the categories.

The investigators interpret these findings to relate to the fact that the intern teachers started the school year with an advantage over

beginning teachers, in that they had all had some sort of paid experience in working with students, by virtue of the admission criteria into the intern program. As the year progressed, and beginning teachers gained independent experience, the observed differences lessened, until by the completion of a full year of teaching, no classroom management or instructional differences were detected by the trained observer.

Telephone Interviews

Approximately 13% of the sample was randomly selected, stratified on the basis of teaching status. These individuals were asked to participate in structured telephone interviews. These interviews were conducted by a trained assistant who was naive to the status of each participant. A format of questions were constructed, and additional comments were encouraged. These data were evaluated in terms of their qualitative nature, as in depth narratives, rather than by any statistical means. Even with the relatively small sample, the following trends emerged.

When asked to describe what they felt best about and what was the hardest for them during the year, both groups were overwhelmingly positive about their students and the progress they had made during the year. This response reinforces the findings of the concern survey, where Impact items scored highly, as will be discussed later. When

asked about the biggest challenges, interns seemed to struggle most with time, organization, and paperwork. A typical comment would be: "It was difficult trying to fit everything I had to do. Between the school site requirements, the university, the district mandated requirements, and the certain things I wanted to do, it was very difficult trying to get it all in." (Susan, Intern teacher, June, 1991.) For beginning teachers, challenges seemed to center on organizational issues and self-confidence. For example: "I had a hard time feeling confident in my assessment with the kids, especially in their reading comprehension. I had a hard time seeing if I was effective." (Stacee, Beginning teacher, June 1991.)

By the end of the year, both groups expressed the feeling that they had been adequately prepared for the job, with Beginning Teachers' crediting their university program and Interns crediting their experience. None of the interns felt that they would have been better prepared if they had experienced a regular credential route (student teaching).

In terms of support during the first year, beginning teachers listed on-site sources of support (principals, mentors, other teachers), and district inservices as being useful to them. Intern teachers additionally credited their semimars, the University supervisor, and their peer groups. All of the beginning teachers had suggestions for additional

types of support that they felt would have been helpful to them, while only two interns felt that anything else would have been useful.

Teacher Concern Survey (TCS)

Seventy teachers were asked to complete the TCS, responding to the stem, "When I think about teaching, am I concerned about this?" Responses were gauged by a six point Likert scale, and several differences between groups were noted. In an analyses of variance, 15 of the 45 items were statistically significant at the .05 level. This information is displayed in a table showing the mean, standard deviation and item score (Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

Both the work of Fuller and Rogan proceeded on hypothesis that there existed a developmental difference in type of teacher concerns: Self, task, and impact. It has been suggested that teachers move through these categories of concern in an hierarchical progression, only focusing on "Impact" concerns when they had progressed in teaching experience. If this hypothesis is true, it would be expected that our two teacher groups would have similar levels of concern, focused on self and task concerns as they completed their first year of teaching. Instead the investigators found that of the ten concerns

listed, both groups ranked six impact concerns as their highest priorities. Five of the six concerns were shared by both groups, with each group having one additional impact concern in the top ten. Beginning teachers listed self concerns highest, especially focusing on worry about evaluation--from supervisors, principals, and peers. Interns listed both task and self concerns as a high priority.

Additionally, beginning teachers ranked all items as being of greater concern to them. Across all categories, beginning teachers were generally more concerned about all elements of their teaching abilities than were the interns. According to Borich (1992) the most effective teachers will demonstrate a high level of concern with student impact items, usually corresponding with teacher experience.

Discussion

This finding may be interpreted in at least two ways. First, these high levels of concern may be seen as an indicator of high levels of insecurity about their teaching competence, which would be interesting when one remembers that observations of these teachers found no demonstrated differences in indicators of teaching. In other words, although there appear to be no differences in the classrooms of beginning teachers and intern teachers at the end of their first year,

beginning teachers continue to demonstrate much higher levels of concern and insecurity about their abilities.

Another possible, and contradictory interpretation may be made. Perhaps instead of high levels of concern being an indicator of insecurity, it may be instead an indicator of greater focus on the teaching profession. Rogan's confirmation study of the identified factors of teachers' concerns, (1988), (self, task, and impact) found that concerns with self items decreases as teachers gain experience. However, experienced teachers showed the highest levels of concern with task and impact items. Rogan hypothesized that the stages of concern then were not hierarchical, but were instead related to levels of teacher growth. Teachers may return to previous levels of concern as their professional development progresses, reflecting differing foci of their assignments. Beginning teachers, by showing themselves to be generally more concerned about all elements of the teaching task, may be indicating a higher level of involvement and developmental growth.

The determination of which of these interpretations is correct can only be determined through time. Longitudinal follow up of these teachers, especially in their continuing levels and categories of concerns about teaching and their years of retention in the teaching profession, will shed light on which interpretation of these early

findings are accurate.

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Table 1

Comparison of Intern Teachers and Beginning Teachers

Teacher Evaluation Scale

Category	Intern Teacher mean	Intern Teacher SD	Beginning Teacher mean	Beginning Teacher SD
Classroom Management Item 2	4.067*	1.280	3.667*	1.291
Classroom Management Item 10	4.200*	1.014	3.867*	1.125
Instruction item 29	4.000*	1.512	3.533*	1.246
Instruction item 30	4.067*	1.280	3.733*	1.223
Instruction item 34	4.778*	.441	3.700*	1.494
Classroom Management Item 10	4.571*	.646	4.133*	.834
Instruction item 29	4.857*	.363	4.600*	.737
Classroom Management Item 1	4.154*	.801	3.786*	.802
Classroom Management Item 9	4.154*	.899	4.571*	.514

*$p \leq .05$

Table 2
Comparison of Beginning Teachers and Intern Teachers Teacher Concern Survey

Category	Teacher Concern Item	Intern teachers mean	Intern teachers SD	Intern teachers F value	Beginning teachers mean	Beginning teachers SD	Beginning teachers F value
Task	6. Having too little control over the curriculum.	2.812	1.074	281.0*	3.227	1.307	306.8*
Self	7. Getting students to behave.	3.277	1.05	302.5*	3.500	1.263	324.1*
Impact	8. Increasing students' feelings of accomplishment	3.683	1.174	325.6*	4.045	1.09	338.1*
Impact	22. Diagnosing student learning problems	3.614	.927	313.2*	4.045	1.463	337.3*
Self	23. My peers may think that I am not doing an adequate job.	2.505	.82	290.2*	2.864	1.356	293.5*
Impact	29. Seeking alternative ways to ensure that students learn content.	3.788	1.043	327.8*	4.364	1.293	336.8*
Impact	33. Whether each students is reaching his or her maximum potential.	4.010	.927	339.8*	4.636	1.293	336.9*
Self	34. My ability to prepare adequate lesson plans.	3.200	1.155	314.9*	3.636	1.432	326.9*
Self	35. Managing my time efficiently.	3.550	1.192	313.1*	4.273	1.518	335.7*
Impact	36. Adapting myself to the needs of different students.	3.470	1.029	273.1*	3.909	1.231	303.9*
Task	40. Improving testing and grading procedures	3.550	1.158	284.6*	3.909	1.54	329.9*
Task	45. Working with too many students each day.	3.570	1.183	284.8*	3.818	1.468	327.7*

*$p \leq .05$