DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 225 SP 034 473

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TITLE Beyond the Induction Year.
PUB DATE Feb 93
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (San Diego, CA, February 24-27, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Beginning Teacher Induction; *Beginning Teachers; College School Cooperation; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Teachers; Faculty Development; Higher Education; Inservice Teacher Education; *Institutional Role; Mentors; *Problem Solving; *Teacher Educators; *Teacher Improvement; Teaching Experience
IDENTIFIERS California New Teacher Project

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a study that looked at the concerns of elementary school teachers in their second year of teaching and explored the role that institutions of higher education (IHE) might play in this phase of teachers' development. The sample was comprised of two groups of second year teachers (N=25); one group had participated in a university course, "Issues in First Year Teaching," during the induction year; the second had participated both as first and second year teachers in the California New Teacher Partnership Project, a cooperative effort between two IHEs and six local school districts. Structured interviews revealed the following concerns expressed by second year teachers: more pressure to conform; a real dissonance between how they were taught to teach in teacher education, and how they were expected to teach in year two; time management problems both in and outside the class; how to deal effectively with parents, peers, and administration; and how to teach diverse populations. All teachers reported seeking help from principals; only one reported getting help from a mentor teacher. Both groups noted that much help had been received from IHE faculty members with whom they felt safe discussing any issue, indicating a strong role for teacher educators from IHEs in the continuing development of teachers, both as trusted and wise confidants and as bearers of current classroom research. (LL)

AACTE
February 24, 1993
Beyond The Induction Year

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Recently much emphasis has been placed on the induction year as a critical year for teachers. However less attention has been paid to the needs of teachers beyond the induction year: How do their needs differ from those of the first year teacher? Are the current staff development opportunities meeting these needs? Where do they seek help? Is there a role for higher education in the development of these professionals?

This paper reports the results of a study that looked at the concerns frustrations, and pressures on elementary grade teachers beyond their first year and explores the role that institutions of higher education (IHE's) might play in this phase of teachers' development.

Substantial work has been done on the developmental stages of teachers. Fuller's work is probably best known in this area. She proposes (1975) a developmental sequence of teacher concerns. During the preservice phase, teachers identify clearly with pupils but only in a fantasy form with teachers. In the second stage, they are more grounded in reality and are concerned about their survival as teachers--class control, content mastery. By the time they emerge from this stage, their concerns center around their over all

teaching performance and the frustrations and demands of their own teaching situation. In the fourth stage, they focus on the learning and social-emotional needs of their students and on their ability to meet these needs Adams (1982) reported on a five year longitudinal study which, while in general agreement with Fuller's findings, suggested that there was no significant difference in the teachers concerns about their impact on students across the stages. Yarger & Mertens (1980), Katz (1972), Unruh & Turner (1970) are among the many others who have studied stages of teacher growth.

Paul R. Burden's chapter on teacher development (1990) in the Handbook of Research on Teacher Education provides a thorough summary of this field of study and several helpful tables comparing studies for those new to this field of inquiry.

This study involved 25 second year teachers. Ten had participated during the previous year in a university course, "Issues in First Year Teaching" geared to the needs of first year teachers, and 15 had participated both as first and second year teachers in the New Teacher Partnership Project (NTPP) funded by the State of California, (the California New Teacher Project). This particular project was cooperative between two IHE's and six local school districts. The two groups were similar in that they all had substantial support during their first year of teaching provided by an agency based either totally or partially outside the school district. The groups are dissimilar in that the group which enrolled in the "Issues" class had only school district-based support during their second year.

A six question structured interview was conducted in which participants were asked to reflect on their concerns as a first year teacher and as a second year teacher, assess the similarities and differences in these concerns, state where they sought and received help in addressing the concerns, and finally to design a staff development program that would meet their needs as second year teachers.

In addition, the 15 participants in the New Teacher Partnership Project were part of a larger group survey that assessed all offerings of the project via a questionnaire. Most of the 25 were in the same school as they were the prior year and 2/3 were teaching the same grade.

The results of the study with respect to the concerns of the first year teacher were consistent with Fuller's basic findings and Adam's modification of them: concerns about classroom management, curriculum, and time management pervaded. The teachers sought help often from their principals, fellow teachers in a few cases, but reported seeking and receiving the most help from the university faculty who were involved in the support classes or projects. There was a bimodal response with respect to the value of the principals' help that was consistent over both years of teaching. Principals seem to be like the proverbial "girl with the curl in the middle of her forehead." When they were good, they were very, very good. When they were bad, they were horrid. During both the first and second years of teaching, principals either 1) showed no interest in helping, were perceived as not knowing how to help, were too busy to help, gave poor advice or 2) were extremely supportive, were very

current in their thinking, spent adequate time with the teacher and gave useful help. There seemed to be little middle ground. One teacher described her Principal as "a nice guy--easy to talk to, but nothing ever happens."

With respect to concerns, second year teachers generally faced a different set of problems than first year teachers. During their first year, most of the teachers reported other teachers in their school as reasonably helpful if asked and tolerant of their mistakes. Once the new teacher had completed the first year, the toleration often ceased. They were no longer excused from violating the norms of the school (being "too creative", calling parents in for multiple conferences; changing their bulletin boards too often; doing a hands-on science program; staging a musical theatre performance; taking children outside for recess at an unscheduled time.) The second year teachers often felt great pressure to conform and a real dissonance between how they were taught to teach in teacher education and permitted to teach in year one, and how they were expected to teach in year two. Most often these new expectations were voiced casually in hallways and teachers' lounges. None of the teachers felt secure enough to confront the issues head-on with the principal and those in the NTPP spent much time discussing them with the university faculty member who worked with them. During the second year, many teachers reported feeling a "sink or swim" atmosphere. Interestingly most of those who had changed schools reported being treated as a "new teacher" again. This may indicate that the issue is one of "first year in the school", not first year teacher.

Another major concern voiced by second year teachers was time management both in and outside the class. Several felt that they had tried to do too much during their first year and were nearing "burnout." One said, "The more I do, the more there is to do." The time management concern overlapped curricular concerns. Knowing what to teach, how much time and emphasis to give to specific areas, and determining where integrating the curriculum could save time, were areas often mentioned.

Dealing effectively with parents, peers, and administration were relatively new concerns for the second year teachers. During the first year, the teachers' problems were mostly classroom-centered: how and what to teach, discipline, etc. These concerns remained during the second year, but, as one said, "I'm in the fine-tuning phase of those now." The new areas stretched beyond the classroom - how to best enlist parent support; how to conference effectively with a disinterested or angry parent; how to handle a principal who is non-supportive of "recent trends"; how to handle senior teachers who resent a newcomer "rocking the boat."

Also more common the second year, but still present during the first, are concerns about how best to teach diverse populations. This issue may be more severe, though, in California than in some other states due to our widely diverse populations. Several teachers reported having in one class, students who spoke up to five different languages and little to no English; students with four distinct cultural backgrounds (in one class Hispanic, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Indian,) and students living in severe poverty. Compounding their concerns were special education students who were

mainstreamed into the classes for portions of the day. During the first year of teaching, the teachers mainly tried to "live through it." By the second year, they felt the need to do something to meet the children's needs, but they weren't sure just exactly what. Three mentioned that they either had already begun or were soon to begin taking Spanish classes. One noted that she had a Spanish-speaking aide, but that she was very worried about the quality of reading instruction the children were receiving since she was unable to monitor it.

Where did these second year teachers seek and receive help? Those in the NTPP reported receiving substantial help from peers in the project and from the IHE faculty member who led their group. They both sought and received less help from their principals and other teachers in their schools. Some of those in the Issues in First Year Teaching class reported keeping in contact with faculty from the class and with each other. All teachers from both groups reported seeking help from principals - the results of their efforts are described above.

Curiously missing from the sources from whom help was sought were Mentor Teachers. In California, experienced teachers, selected cooperatively by the Administration and the teachers' union for their teaching expertise are paid a stipend of $4,000 per year to mentor inexperienced teachers in their school district. They are to provide instructional and curricular assistance to the newer teachers. The state is committing substantial funds to this effort, and it is not clear from these data, that the state is getting much value for its dollar. Only one of 25 teachers reported any help from

the mentors. One noted that she is in a 900 student school, and no mentor teacher is assigned to the school, while another smaller, nearby school has two mentors. Another noted that the mentor "came in when I really didn't need help." A third noted that for mentors to make much difference, she'd need about two hours a week from the person, and no teacher working full time in her own class has that much time to give.

Uniformly, those interviewed noted how much help they had received from the IHE faculty. They stated that they got current, state-of-the art information and that they felt safe discussing any issue. Many said they were very reluctant to discuss the problems they were having with the principal or other teachers with anyone except the IHE faculty for fear that it would "get back to " the problem person. A neutral person who is trusted seems to be a very valuable part of the teachers' needed assistance.

If they were designing their own staff development program, the pervasive view was that it needed to be personalized. Very few felt they needed more sessions on literature-based reading or cooperative learning; they felt well-prepared for such areas from their teacher education programs. Rather they needed a sounding board for interpersonal issues and a source of help for context-based issues the "How is it done in this school?" and "How do I deal with this principal or teacher?" kind of questions.

The one area where there was consistent need which could be met by a group in-service was educating the linguistically and culturally diverse student.

These interview data are consistent with questionnaire from a larger sample of 2nd year teachers in the NTT. They rated very highly an advanced topics Seminar which, while encouraging participants to reflect on their own practice relative to educational research also dealt extensively with the individual concerns of the participants. They rated much lower the subject-specific seminars which overlapped what they perceived they had already learned in their teacher education programs. The curricular seminars that were highly rated were in areas that in California get little attention in the basic teacher education curriculum, for example physical education.

While this study was limited to teachers working in an urban or suburban environment in Southern California, all of whom participated in a support class or seminar for first year teachers, several conclusions and worthy of further exploration seem evident. First, rather than the stages of teachers' concerns being linear, as Fuller proposes, it may be better viewed as a concentric circle model where 1) pupil and classroom concerns remain throughout the years but grow in complexity as the teachers' knowledge and experience expand 2) the sphere of concerns expand beyond the classroom to the parents and the social context of the school (and perhaps at a later stage to the community.) Second, there is a strong role for teacher educators from IHE's in the continuing development of teachers, both as trusted and wise confidants and as carriers of current classroom research.

The implications for schools and IHE's as they plan for teachers' staff development is clear: a true partnership is needed in which both providers trust each other to hold teachers' and pupils' best interests foremost and in which each has useful assistance to offer.

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