ABSTRACT
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childhood special educator in an urban setting and the other an elementary
educator in a suburban setting. The teachers confronted the same problems and
challenges, but within two widely disparate school cultures that reside on
opposite ends of the continuum. While both teachers had to deal with
curriculum dilemmas, the themes that emerged from their journals, their
observations, their comments, and their affective responses could be
categorized as relating to politics, personnel, and parents. The three
components of culture, conflict, and communication created a context for
reflection on those emerging themes. This study seemed to support the
conclusion that novice teachers who have direct and continuing access to
teacher educators can gradually realize their visions. It was concluded that
the ability to understand one's organization, how to effect change in that
organization, and how people within that organization is an essential
component of preservice and inservice teacher education. (Contains 32
references.) (Author/ND)

Running head: DODGING BULLETS AND BMWS

Dodging Bullets and BMWs: Two Tales of Teacher Induction

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Abstract

Enroute to exploring the role which school culture plays in the teacher induction process, this study compared and contrasted the induction experiences of two exemplary beginning teachers, one an early childhood special educator in an urban setting and the other an elementary educator in a suburban setting. They confront the same problems and challenges, but within two widely disparate school cultures that reside on opposite ends of the continuum.

While both teachers must deal with curriculum dilemmas, the themes that emerge from their journals, their observations, their comments, and their affective responses deal primarily with **politics**, **personnel**, and **parents**. The three components of **culture**, **conflict**, and **communication** create a context for those emerging themes.

Purpose

According to Glasser, "Teaching is a very hard job that needs ample compensation and considerable on-the-job training for the lifetime of the teacher. Less than this will not suffice" (1992, p. 24). Teachers seem to receive and endure more unsolicited and uninformed criticism than most other professional groups. However, those, such as Glasser, who offer opinions informed by first-hand observation and/or experience generally conclude that teaching--when done well--is one of the most difficult and challenging enterprises in which one can engage. How is it then, that until relatively recently, few formal efforts were undertaken to assist novice teachers with the induction process (e.g., Bey & Holmes,1990; Caccia, 1996; Chester & Beaudin, 1996)?

Although the challenges and pitfalls of the first few years of teaching are fairly well acknowledged, significant assistance with the enculturation process has been slow in coming. Also commonly acknowledged is the high attrition rate among teachers new to the profession (Glasser, 1992). In spite of what is known, this fall how many first-year teachers still will face their first day of class and their first year of teaching with only the most minimal guidance (e.g., Lunch is at 11:20; You have hall duty every Wednesday.)?

Two of the authors of this proposal, from their vantage points as teacher educators, have the opportunity to predict the success rates of fledgling teachers whom they have observed and worked with throughout their initial teacher preparation programs. The criteria they use to predict success are not limited solely to survival. They also ask questions such as, "Who is most likely to serve as change agents?" and "Who will be quick to fold, rather than bother with the struggle to articulate clearly their rationale for using approaches and strategies which more experienced teachers may doubt?" Questions such as these led to the study described in this paper and to the development of the following objectives, which guided the study.

1.   Explore the role that school culture plays in the teacher induction process.

2.   Compare and contrast the induction experiences of two exemplary beginning teachers, one

      an early childhood special educator in an urban setting and the other an elementary educator

      in a suburban setting.

3.   Study the teacher induction process through the windows of self-analysis, reflection,

      journaling, and observation.

Review of Literature

Launching them from the premise that effective teaching is a difficult--if not the

most difficult--task, it is at the least curious and at the most disturbing to note that,

historically, little attention has been given to the enculturation process which new teachers

experience as they begin their careers. In the absence of teacher induction programs,

novice teachers have been left to fend for themselves and to discover for themselves the

answers to the question of "how we do things here." However, in many instances, not

only has the system done nothing to assist new teachers with the transition process, it has

routinely set up road blocks for them as well. These road blocks have taken a variety of

forms, such as being invited to serve as the cheerleading sponsor, having the least user-

friendly teaching schedule, and being given the honor of teaching the classes no other

teachers want. (Jensen & Kiley, in press)

Emergence of the Study of School Culture

While much was written in the 1980s regarding the impact of organizational culture on the

development of business (e.g., Davis, 1984; Deal, 1986; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Denison, 1984;

Ernest, 1985; Koprowski, 1983; Marshall, 1982; Metz, 1986; Schwartz & Davis, 1981), the

literature on the relationship between school culture and the professional development of teachers is

more recent (e.g., Arends, 1990; Dana, 1994; Fullan, 1990; Joyce, Wolf, & Calhoun, 1994).

Reflecting on the emergence of school renewal and professional development since the late 1950s,

Joyce, Wolf, and Calhoun (1994) point to the changing titles of yearbooks of major education

organizations as an illustration of changing paradigms.

> The title of yearbooks of major education organizations reflect the evolution
>
> of staff development in school renewal. The 1957 yearbook of the National
>
> Society for the Study of Education was *Inservice Education.* The 1981
>
> ASCD yearbook was *Staff development/Organizational Change,* and the
>
> 1990 ASCD yearbook was *Changing School Culture Through Staff*
>
> *Development.* (p. 16)

Early concepts of innovation and inservice education were limiting and unidimensional. As

an understanding of school culture has emerged, however, school improvement has been seen as

an embedded feature of the organization. It is now recognized that changes in curriculum and

instruction are extremely complex and require social organizations that are willing to be involved in

continuous professional development. If inservice education is to be meaningful, it must be

designed in tandem with the continuously changing school culture. Like a ship on water, water

that is sometimes calm and tranquil and water that is sometimes boisterous and rough, professional

development for teachers must be a vessel that is responsive to change in the organizational culture.

Emergence of the Study of Teacher Induction

The focus of this paper is on the professional development of novice teachers in their first

three years of classroom teaching. This professional development process, often called teacher

induction, is best understood as a rite of passage into the culture of teaching (Berman, 1994).

Vonk (1995) presents a conceptual framework which describes the various dimensions and factors

that constitute the processes of novice teachers' professional development, beginning in the

preservice program and extending into the induction period. This framework contains three

dimensions: the personal dimension, which comprises issues that relate to teachers' development

as people; the knowledge and skills dimension, which comprises issues that relate to the

development of teachers' content knowledge and professional knowledge and skills; and the

ecological dimension, which comprises issues that relate to the environment in which teacher development is taking place. The personal dimension includes issues such as maturation, emotions, the development of knowledge about self, and the use of oneself as an instrument. The knowledge and skills dimension includes elements such as the development of academic and pedagogical content knowledge, the development of classroom management skills, and the development of all the issues that are related to the socialization of teachers in a certain school context (e.g., adaptation to a certain school culture, meeting the demands of colleagues, school administrators, parents and the like).

Darling-Hammond (1992) describes a paradigm for professional development in teaching which envisions opportunities for teacher development residing in collegial work settings, team teaching environments, school improvement networks, and school-university collaboratives. Expanding on this paradigm, Lieberman and Miller (1992) offer a framework which focuses on developing a culture of inquiry within the school setting. This framework considers professional growth activities that are in synchrony with the school culture. Furthermore, Lieberman and Miller discuss the importance of recognizing specific dilemmas and problems experienced by beginning teachers, while still maintaining and supporting their professional development.

Shifting attention to the role of the university connection, Aaronsohn (1996) concluded that when novice teachers have direct and continuing access to teacher educators for support as their students and they work at letting go of traditional assumptions, they can work gradually toward realization of their vision. In light of this conclusion, it seems critical to ask the question: "What models are most effective for fostering the university connection in teacher induction?". Dunifon (1985) presents such a model, which features teams of colleagues from P-12 schools and the university. Team members are selected on the basis of the individual and collective strengths required to facilitate the personal and professional development of beginning teachers. This team works with teacher inductees in assessing learning strategies, designing classroom environments, and creating an awareness of the school culture. Furthermore, the team takes active responsibility

for helping inductees and the school system solve the problems and address the opportunities which emerge over time.

In addition to collaborating as team members, university faculty teach in P-12 classrooms while P-12 teachers reciprocate by teaching on the university campus. This arrangement facilitates the engagement of both university faculty and P-12 teachers in their own professional growth and development, as a consequence of their involvement with the induction process.

School Cultures That Facilitate Teacher Induction

The significant variable present in all successful teacher induction programs is the relationship between the novice teachers and the team or individual mentors involved in the process. In fact, it has been suggested that the effective pairing of novice teachers and support teachers is likely the most powerful and cost-effective intervention in induction programs (Huling-Austin, Putnam, & Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986). Many studies describe the positive outcomes of well-designed and well-implemented teacher induction programs. These programs facilitate the development of positive attitudes toward teaching; contribute to the retention of teachers; and, when focused on enhancing professional skills, can improve teachers' performance (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Huling-Austin, 1990; Klug & Salzman, 1991; Yosha, 1991).

While no one can guarantee the success of every beginning teacher, instructional leaders, administrators, and teacher educators do have opportunities to create cultures that support and facilitate the professional development of novice teachers. Given the critical role that mentoring plays in teacher induction, an obvious, but imperative, first step in establishing organizational environments which facilitate the development of effective teacher induction programs is for leaders to model the process by serving as mentors themselves. Another prerequisite step is for leaders to create an atmosphere of openness and trust within their organizations. Collaboration cannot thrive in the absence of clear communication, a shared mission, teacher empowerment, and consistent expectations (Jensen & Kiley, in press).

Leaders who wish to create school cultures which support teacher induction also must model the practice of assisting individuals in establishing successful mentoring relationships. Building administrators, lead teachers, and teacher educators are in positions to serve as intermediaries that match people who, because of complementary personalities, similar interests, and shared missions, have the potential to develop effective mentoring relationships. To succeed in this intermediary role, leaders must learn from, as well as about, novice teachers and master teachers by listening to them, observing them, and asking questions (Akin & Hopelain, 1986).

Leaders who engage in the behaviors and implement the practices described above clearly demonstrate to teacher inductees that they value their professional development and that the professional development process plays a pivotal role in their organizational environments. Although teacher induction involves a certain degree of trial and error, regardless of the approach taken, when cultures which facilitate the development of beginning teachers are created, there are potential pay-offs for students, novice teachers, experienced teachers, and the entire organization (Jensen & Kiley, in press).

<div align="center">Methodology</div>

Rationale

Occasionally teacher educators have the good fortune and the joy to facilitate the preservice preparation of remarkable individuals. Such was the case a few years ago when the paths of an early childhood education major, an elementary education major, and two teacher educators crossed. The preservice teachers both graduated with honors and their department's acknowlegement that they were the top students from their respective majors. As such, they constituted outliers, as opposed to being representative of the typical preservice teacher. They were typical only in terms of age.

Given their accomplishments, in combination with the positive and comfortable mentoring relationship that existed between these preservice teachers and the teacher educators involved, it seemed logical to continue the working relationship that had begun. Teacher induction provided a

logical focus of study. After all, if the best and the brightest experience painful transitions into the field of teaching, how are those with minimal competencies expected to survive?

Data Sources

Sensing that this opportunity would not soon pass their way again, the teacher educators who had developed mentoring relationships with these novice teachers initiated the steps that would evolve into the study this paper describes. After several informal discussions regarding the teacher induction process, as well as discussions regarding the very different school environments these two new teachers would be entering, a course of action was determined with the knowledge that one of these novice teachers would be involved in what could be described as a formal teacher induction program, while the other would not.

The course of action featured the novice teachers keeping journals throughout their first year of teaching, in which they recorded their experiences, observations, and reflections. It also included: site visits by the teacher educators; campus visits by the novice teachers; presentations to preservice teachers by the novice teachers; and a great deal of informal, free-flowing discussion.

Results

Overview

At this writing, the two teachers who served as the focus of this study are completing their third year of teaching. Both are still at the schools where they began their teaching careers. The early childhood special educator has grown accustomed to, although not comfortable with, the sound of bullets ricocheting near her urban school's playground as she invites her young students, many of whom speak only Spanish, to join her on the carpet--away from the windows and, at least for the moment, out of harm's way. The elementary educator, from the perspective of his fourth grade classroom in an affluent suburb, comments that he spends his time dodging BMWs rather than bullets. A direct impact by either has similar results.

That metaphor characterizes the different experiences of these two teachers. They confront the same problems and challenges, but within two widely disparate school cultures that reside on

opposite ends of the continuum. While both must deal with curriculum dilemmas, the themes that emerge from their journals, their observations, their comments, and their affective responses deal primarily with **politics, personnel**, and **parents**. Subsumed under those three headings is a variety of expectations specific to the communities and the clientele they serve. The three components of **culture, conflict,** and **communication** create a context for those emerging themes.

For example, the early childhood teacher encounters the challenge of getting parents to attend staffings and conferences. When they do attend, she struggles to communicate clearly with them, since most of them speak little or no English, and her Spanish proficiency is limited. By contrast, the fourth grade teacher has very involved parents. However, some of that involvement takes the form of uninformed criticism, unrealistic expectations, and/or unwarranted fears (e.g., a score on a fourth grade math assignment blemishing a student's academic record and consequently his or her chances of getting into the Ivy League college of his or her choice).

The cognitive and affective dissonance experienced by the two teachers profiled in this study can serve as indicators of pressure points which may accompany the teacher induction process. That dissonance also reveals the high--and sometimes unrealistic--expectations they have of themselves. It highlights their need to find a balance between what their hearts want to do and what their heads know they can do.

Community Contexts

Inner city context. Driving through the neighborhood where Lara's school is located brings to mind every stereotype of urban blight one can imagine. Gang graffiti provides the only contrast to the drab colors that accompany poverty, depression, and the absence of hope, while abandoned buildings, burned out cars, and scattered litter provide the backdrop for a school that serves as the only safe haven many of its students know. Barred windows and locked doors greet visitors, who must ring a buzzer and identify themselves prior to being allowed to enter.

Once inside, the harshness is softened somewhat by colorful displays of student work and friendly greetings. However, the institutional feel is perpetuated by the simple fact that the building is occupied by many more students than it was designed to accommodate comfortably. Over crowding is due, in large part, to an influx of Hispanic students. Many of these students and their parents speak little English and some fall into the illegal alien category. Both teachers and materials are in short supply, because funding has failed to keep pace with student enrollment.

Suburban context.   Driving through the neighborhood where Mike's school is located brings to mind every stereotype of suburbia one can imagine. The upper middle class to upper class clientele which the school serves are housed in comparative opulence and are chauffeured to and from their various lessons and after-school activities in a variety of luxury class vehicles, ranging from Toyota Pathfinders to Cadillacs and, yes, BMWs.

The school itself is remarkably plain and not as "well-healed" as the neighborhood which surrounds it. In fact, many of the textbooks in use have exceeded the typical "shelf life." However, security concerns do not overtly intrude on the physical environment, and both inside and outside there is room to breathe.

Year One: Survival of the Fittest

While Lara, employed as an early childhood special education teacher, fended for herself during her first year of teaching until she was adopted by an experienced teacher, Mike, employed as a fourth grade teacher, was matched with a mentor who was close to his age. However, once his principal made the arrangements which initiated Mike's relationship with his mentor, little else was done by way of conducting a formal teacher induction program.

Politics, personnel, and parents.   As is true for many first-year teachers, survival emerged as Lara and Mike's primary objective. In fact, when asked to identify the best things she did her first year of teaching, Lara responded, "I didn't give up." A content analysis of the journals Mike and Lara kept throughout their first year of teaching reveals that most of their joys and celebrations resulted from student interactions, while most of their frustrations and challenges

resulted from their engagement with politics, personnel, and parents. However, for Lara and Mike, the manner in which the variables of politics, personnel, and parents impacted the teaching/learning process differed because their school cultures are different. Inasmuch that communication styles and strategies for coping with conflict are subcomponents of organizational culture, they also differ at the two schools.

During her first year of teaching, Lara's survival concerns featured her program assistants. As a young teacher working in a supervisory position with two women more than twice her age, Lara quickly discovered that most of the decisions she made were questioned. In addition, her program assistants chose not to implement some of Lara's decisions. Their constant questioning had the effect of causing Lara to question her own decisions, along with her ability and her sanity. For example, Lara's journal reveals that after hearing her own supervisor's conclusion regarding one program assistant, Lara reflected: "I got another confirmation that I am not crazy; she is a difficult person to deal with."

Meanwhile, Mike's version of school politics juxtaposed parents and his fellow fourth grade teacher in an uncomfortable rendition of "good cop, bad cop." Although a five-year teaching veteran, Mike's colleague had spent each of those five years at a different school, a fact that apparently was common knowledge for the fourth graders' parents. Consequently, even though parents questioned many of Mike's decisions and strategies, they also created a compare and contrast paradigm between Mike and the other fourth grade teacher. It was a comparison that generally favored Mike and left him in the unenviable position of being caught in the middle of a conflict that eventually led to his colleague's dismissal.

During his first year, Mike also discovered the role that competition and parental pressure play in his school's culture. The conflict that parents' unreasonable expectations can create is aptly characterized in one of Mike's journal entries that describes a parent interaction he experienced shortly after a fourth grader did not perform well on a social studies assignment and subsequently dissolved in an ocean of tears and fears.

B is the perfect child. Handsome, smart, etc. Mom is a very prominent PTO mom, so I had her come in to talk about what happened. She told me that B has several aunts and uncles who went to Yale and Harvard and that her husband went to Northwestern. The family members have told B that they would love to take him to these colleges. B wants to be a doctor, of course. But--here's the sad thing--Mom and Dad have told B that he can go to any college he wants, but if he wants to go to Harvard or Yale, he has to get all As. Yes, this is fourth grade I teach...Her kid is going to get ulcers...

I tried to tell her how I want B to enjoy what he is doing and not freak out about the grades. He was sure that an 87 he received a couple of weeks ago was the worst grade anyone could get. It's sad, but the competition is fierce up here. It's all a game, whose kid does what. Not in my room...

First year summary reflections.   In reflecting on their first year of teaching, both Lara and Mike identified victories, which often took the form of invaluable growth opportunities they never would have asked for. Lara recollected obstacles she overcame, such as: "standing up to my program assistants, gaining respect from my principal, becoming confident in my abilities to complete paperwork efficiently and accurately, and overcoming my fear of the neighborhood and transportation problems." Lara's summary reflection begins:

It's been a week since I said good by to my first group of students. I felt more relief than grief to be ending the year. There were many challenges I had to overcome-- many of them outside the four walls of the classroom. My initial fears of the neighborhood were put to the background, while problems with program assistants came to the forefront. Of all the issues that sprang up, that one seems to stand out above the rest. After months of trying various professional approaches to tactfully inform and inspire them, with the intention of having them become more productive and appropriate in the classroom, I resorted to an unprofessional solution that worked.

Lara then goes on to describe a rather loud conversation she had with one of her program assistants. Her message was received, and Lara did see evidence of positive change in the manner in which her program assistant interacted with students. The entire experience of dealing with program assistants motivated her to invest a great deal of the summer between her first and second years of teaching to writing a program assistants' manual. That manual provides a clear job description for program assistants and outlines Lara's expectations for them. In addition, the manual articulates Lara's philosophy of working with special needs children and, with resounding clarity, answers the question of why she implements particular instructional strategies.

In recollecting positive first-year events, Lara described her experience of serving on the school improvement committee. Although parts of that process were frustrating (e.g., "people who don't listen and who must always talk"; "reinventing the wheel"), other parts brought feelings of satisfaction (e.g., "being an integral part of the group with new/fresh ideas to offer"). Lara also stated there was "...satisfaction in getting to know the movers and shakers in the district" and that the process was "helpful in understanding political climate and in developing my decision making, as well as offering good networking with an involved staff."

Mike's summary of his first year of teaching features his affective response to his experiences. Rather than attempt to paraphrase it, and in so doing alter the intent and the message, his summary is presented here in its entirety.

> I will never forget my first week. I had dark circles around my eyes. I felt like I had no clue. Not much has really changed. The circles are lighter. I still have no clue. I've learned so much it is unreal. I have so much to learn it is even more unreal. College prepped me well, as well as it could probably. But the majority you cannot learn until you struggle with it. You cannot begin to call yourself an educator until you are so tired because you are working twelve-plus hours a day. You cannot call yourself an educator until you sit awake worrying that you aren't doing enough. You cannot call yourself an educator until you are depended upon by 20+ young people to be there each and every day.

You cannot call yourself an educator until you have sat at home feeling like crud because you didn't accomplish a thing that day. You cannot call yourself an educator until you see students smile because you helped them. You cannot call yourself an educator until you have to scrap your best laid plans because they just won't work. You can't call yourself an educator until you are convinced you are insane for wanting to become one.

I've said this before. From 9:05 to 3:35, I am the happiest person there is. Dealing with the students makes it worthwhile. The outside pressure, politics, and administrative crud make me hate what I do. Fortunately, in the yin-yang of things, the students have the upper hand and make me enjoy what I do more than I hate it. When the day comes that the other half of my world gains the momentum, I will need to find something else to do. It may be 20 years from now. It may be two years from now. I don't know. I do know that I will never learn more about teaching than I have learned in this first year. I will learn each and every day I step in the classroom, but I will never learn more in a year's period than I have this year.

If I were to tell prospective teachers anything about their first year, it would be this:

You will hate what you do.

You will be exhausted physically and mentally.

You will think there is no way out.

You will have no idea what you are doing or why, at times.

You will wonder how anyone does this for an entire career, year after year.

You will think you are the worst teacher ever, some days.

You will see demise directly resulting from your actions.

--And things will change, slowly--

You will begin to predict problems and correct them before they occur.

You will think and make more decisions in a single day than most people do in a week.

You will see success that is a direct result of your actions.

You will become strong as a result of your responsibilities.

You will learn how to fail in order to succeed.

You will learn how to ask questions and who to ask them of.

You will understand what you are doing and why.

You will learn to adapt.

You will be proud to be a young professional educator.

You will love what you do.

There is one catch. You will not realize any of the above until you have lived it. You cannot give up or pass judgment after one month or two. You have to survive the worst year of your career--your first year. It will probably not be the most enjoyable year of your career. But it will undoubtedly be one of the most beneficial.

I could talk for quite some time about what I have learned and observed. I hope this journal has given a glimpse of the changes I have undergone. The metamorphosis of a first-year teacher is pretty much like that of a butterfly, if all goes right. You start out ugly. You end up pretty decent looking. You can also fly if you want to.

Year Two: Confident? Yes; Comfortable? Maybe; Complacent? Never

Lara and Mike reacted similarly at the conclusion of their first year of teaching. Lara talked of feeling "more relief than grief" when reflecting on saying good by to her first group of students, while Mike stated that his reaction to the end of his first year was "an anxious sigh." However, both began year two with heightened confidence and increased comfort levels.

Parents and politics. Lara's concerns regarding program assistants were remedied with the hiring of two new program assistants and the implementation of the program assistant manual she developed over the summer. With her students, as well as with program assistants, Lara established high expectations, defined roles, and set limits. However, frustrations involving politics and parents replaced her first-year frustrations with personnel.

While she was pleased with the progress her children made in their literacy development and with the fact that she helped open the eyes of some staff and parents regarding the potential of the special needs children she taught, Lara became disenchanted with prevailing parental attitudes and school politics. Reflecting on lack of parent involvement, Lara wrote:

As much as I have grown to love the Hispanic children I teach, I've also become frustrated with what seems to be a cultural tendency for parents not to acknowledge the role they can play in their children's education. As a whole, the parents I work with respect educators--probably more so than most Americans--but they do not assist educators or recognize themselves as educators of their own children. They say: "You are the maestra; you teach my child. I love and feed and protect my child."

...Most of us feel we do our best with the children when they are in our classes, and we leave the rest to the powers-that-be. What happens to them as young adults when their neighborhoods tempt them with gangs, drugs, and guns? Have we prepared them to think with their futures in mind, or are they focused solely on the present? Are they confident? Do they set goals and work to achieve them? Do their parents know where they are and what they are doing? Do the children feel their parents care? These are all things parents need to do to carry on what a teacher works on in the classroom. How do we teach the parents who don't know this that their role is vital? The needs are many, and I am only one. Although I believe I will find my niche in this business, and I will find the team to help me lead the children, I will not be satisfied until I see the family become an active part.

Lara's journal also reflects her frustration with the absence of a structured and well-planned response to the need for parent education. Focusing on this need, she stated:

Many places have programs for parents. Not getting support from the district on this matter is of great concern. We talk about parent involvement but still do not implement a structured program. I think this task could be a full-time position in my district. Fearful for the safety of teachers, the district does not encourage home visits. The parent lending

library, which had some success, was cancelled at mid-year when the space we were using was needed to create another early childhood classroom. Our attempts to offer parenting classes to 60+ early childhood families were only attended by a handful of parents. I think the administrators who were trying have themselves become discouraged.

We do have a handful of dreamers, but they are disjointed. Perhaps we need better leadership within the groups of concerned teachers who realize the importance of parent involvement. Perhaps we need risk takers who will act first on some issues and ask later about which rule they broke for the sake of educating. We need more support. It won't be found financially, so we'll need to find it another way.

Balancing and building.   Mike's second year of teaching can be characterized as a continuing process of building on the experiential base he acquired in his first year and attempting to achieve balance between many conflicting and competing interests. For example, Mike explains that his first year "...was a constant reorganization of my professional perception as I struggled to find the balance between theory and practicality. In my second year, I was able to finally build off a base of practical experience." Mike's reflections also indicate that, in his second year of teaching, he came to value the role that experience can play. Mike recollected that evolution in the following excerpt.

I never used to give experience the credit it deserved. I was, in many ways, bitter towards those in the profession who had many years of experience. I thought that experience didn't make a good teacher (and it doesn't automatically). There was a part of me that wanted to be an instructor because I had horrible experiences as a student. I saw instructors who did the same things, year after year--instructors that paid no attention to their actions and didn't listen to their students. During my own teacher preparation, I saw some of the same. I still see the same today. But I also have seen many individuals who do pay attention and do listen. I have seen individuals who have not repeated their first year of experience for the last 20 years. I have seen and worked with individuals who have

experiences that I crave. They are wise, if that doesn't sound flippant. The knowledge

they hold as a result of their experiences is invaluable. It is gold.

But their experiences aren't what made them good teachers--reflecting upon and

using their experiences for future decisions has. And it took me awhile to really understand

the role my experiences played on a daily basis--how vital it was to look, listen, and reflect.

It took me my first year to realize that I needed to do myself what I asked my students to

do. Although I may hold the title of teacher, I am just as much a student as the ten-year-

olds I teach.

What I was then able to do in my second year fascinated me. I now was able to

begin to recall and apply. I was able to predict and "preact" instead of react. I had gained

experience. More importantly, I had learned to utilize the experience I had gained.

Mike's first year of experience also helped him cope with the "red tape" of teaching and

find a "comfortable and consistent way" to deal with pressure. For him the solution lay in

identifying and utilizing his strengths in the areas of humor and the ability to question. Mike also

relaxed; laughed with his students; remembered to enjoy teaching; and became more comfortable

when intereacting with staff and parents, as well as with students. As Mike's comfort level

increased, his interpersonal skills improved, thereby having the effect of "compounding self-

confidence." Of course, as confidence increased, anxiety decreased. Mike made a conscious

decision to focus on variables he had some control over (e.g., his classroom, instructional

decisions) and to devote less mental energy to variables over which he had little or no control (e.g.,

administration, parents, school politics).

As Mike began to relax and enjoy himself at work, he began to relax more at home as well.

Mike also experienced an important "a-ha."

I realized that teaching was a part of my life and not my whole life. I found that I

had to say "no" to working some nights. I had to have fun during the week, too. So I

experimented until I found a level and balance I was comfortable with. Yes, undoubtedly,

I was not the uptight, do-your-job-24-hours-a-day-or-you-will-get-fired guy I was the first

year.

Mike's second year of teaching brought with it another "a-ha" that involved finding a

balance in the area of instructional planning. He reflected:

> I finally understood that I had been making my plans to someone else's
>
> expectations instead of mine. Some days I felt unprepared though. I could taste the "easy
>
> way" out. It only took a few times for me to realize I was setting myself up to mimic those
>
> instructors whom I did not fully respect. I also quickly saw how my actions would affect
>
> the most important reason I teach--the students.

Year Three: Circle of Concern Versus Circle of Influence

Passionate, perseverant, and perplexed are three descriptors that characterize Mike and Lara

as they conclude their third year of teaching. Having transitioned from the inward-looking stance

of the survival years, the outward-looking stance they now employ offers them a broader vantage

point and provides a different perspective. Translating that to "Covey terms," their circle of

concern has expanded significantly, leaving them with the onerous task of determining how far-

reaching their circle of influence actually is--or is not (Covey, 1989).

The big picture.   The challenges and problems Lara and Mike see confronting

children, families, and society are daunting and huge. Even a cursory look at the big picture

reveals issues that require, as Mike put it, more than a quick fix or Band-Aid solution. During the

course of an informal review of their third year of teaching, Lara and Mike identified several such

issues, including: parent education, the impact illegal aliens have on school systems, unions that

protect incompetent teachers, correlations between tenure and complacency, obsession with test

scores in the name of accountability and standards, matching assessment with instruction,

curriculum coverage versus depth, and not being able to give students much-needed hugs due to

fear of wrongful accusations of inappropriate touching.

Mike and Lara exhibited a need to talk about the larger issues and challenges confronting education and a desire to listen to others' perspectives. They also acknowledged their need to identify issues to focus on and to address those which they believe they can do something about. In terms of coping with the dissonance such issues evoke, Mike and Lara indicated that, when possible, they work creatively within the system. However, sometimes their attempts to cope with ever-present, negative variables (e.g., child abuse, homelessness) involve emotional distancing. As Lara said, "Sometimes I sleep better when I'm numb to it all." Although Lara and Mike continue to struggle with on-going issues involving politics and parents, they also struggle to achieve a balance between what they know needs to be done and what they know they can deliver.

Plateaus.   Being somewhat perfectionistic, the fear of complaceny and the fear of becoming too comfortable motivate Mike and Lara to push themselves. Both identified comfort as a problem and spoke of the need for someone to challenge them. Only half-way through their third year of teaching, Mike and Lara talked about plateaus and the fact that they generally do not recognize they have hit plateaus until later. That lack of self-awareness seems to disturb them most. They feel a sense of responsibility which they occasionally wish they could abandon (e.g., "Leave me alone; I don't want to think."). However, mental tapes constantly goad them. Those tapes include the following: "Don't become what you've despised;" "I know better;" "Laziness isn't an excuse;" "I was taught better than this;" and "If there's no fire, I'm out of here."

Personal lives.   Significant others provide Lara and Mike with assistance in the process of accepting the difference between what their hearts would like to do and what their heads know they can do. Mike initially volunteered this conclusion, partially because he could reflect on the differences which having the sounding board and emotional support of a significant other made between his second and third years of teaching. Lara and he both elaborated on the important role that people in their personal lives play in helping them deal with job stress and helping them achieve balance between their personal and professional lives. They described the importance of having someone assure them that they "are not nuts," someone who knows them well enough to

recognize when they cannot handle any more than they already are carrying, someone who is willing to carry some of the load. For Mike and Lara, their significant others positvely affect their ability to cope successfully with stress.

Conclusions

What Lies Ahead

Their first year of teaching found Lara and Mike operating in the survival mode most of the time. However, while Lara characterized her year two as "make or break," Mike described his second year of teaching as a time to catch his breath and look forward, confident that year two had to be better than year one. Well into her third year of teaching, Lara has experienced a great deal of success and likes what she is doing. She has caught her stride and also seems to be in the process of defining her personal mission in life, a mission that likely will involve serving as a bridge between the school culture and the Hispanic culture. Mike, on the other hand, has made plans for the next formal phase of his professional development, which will involve completing both a master's program and a doctoral program. Although he still is passionate about teaching, Mike sees himself continuing in the teaching role within the context of higher education.

Coping with Culture

Mike and Lara both entered the teaching profession with better than average interpersonal skills and technical skills. While they had their share of struggles in those two realms, the majority of their struggles involved the realm of conceptual skills, which Hersey and Blanchard define as understanding one's organization and how one fits within that organization (1982). That definition overlaps significantly with Deal and Kennedy's (1982) definition of corporate culture (e.g., "how we do things here") and highlights the role that school culture plays in the teacher induction process. Consequently, one must ask why that role goes largely unacknowledged and why more attention is not paid to school culture in designing formal teacher induction programs.

Although Lara was not involved in a formal induction process, Mike was involved in a program that consisted of a school-facilitated mentoring relationship. However, it did not include a structured approach to assisting beginning teachers with the enculturation process.

Univeristy-School Connections

The study described in this paper seems to support Aaronsohn's (1996) conclusion that novice teachers who have direct and continuing access to teacher educators for support while they work with their students to let go of traditional assumptions can gradually begin to realize their visions. Lara and Mike's comments throughout the three-year process indicate that they valued the university connection and found that it challenged them to remain engaged in their professional development and reflective regarding their practice.

For example, the on-site visits by their university mentors produced in Mike and Lara a mixed reaction of excitement and panic. They were anxious to have these people who participated in their preservice development see the environments in which they were working and simultaneously were nervous about having them observe their teaching. Reflecting on this combination of euphoria and nausea, Lara commented: "You were the first people to walk in my room whose opinion of my teaching I valued and cared about. I didn't want to screw up." For his part, over two years later Mike still apologizes for what he perceives as the lack of quality and depth in the lesson he was teaching during this observation.

Teacher induction programs which feature school-university partnerships hold the potential for making significant contributions to the professional development of all involved: novice teachers, experienced teachers, administrators, and university personnel. Professional development schools offer a vehicle for implementing such programs.

Educational Significance of the Study

The challenges faced by the teachers who served as the focus of the study this paper describes often relate to the question of "how we do things here." Whether given the label organizational environment, school culture, or school climate, the ability to understand one's

organization, how to effect change in that organization, and how people within that organization relate to one another is essential. Consequently, both at the preservice stage and at the teacher induction stage, the subject of school culture must be addressed.

By attending to the variable of school culture, teachers can learn how to serve as change agents, as well as how to accommodate change. Teachers also can broaden their perspectives of school culture by learning about the cultures of the students and families they serve. An on-going commitment to creating school cultures that facilitate professional development and systemic change serves as a necessary pre-condition to teacher induction programs which succeed in assisting novice teachers in their efforts to construct answers to the question of "how we do things here."

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