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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how unprepared beginning teachers engaged in problem solving within the context of a community of practice, examining how they: defined and perceived classroom problems; negotiated the meaning of problems; and viewed the mentor teacher's role. Twelve alternatively certified beginning teachers participated. Each completed an initial descriptive interview, bi-weekly interviews, and an exit interview. They completed 15 weekly questionnaires, which had them describe: the three most important problems faced that week, who they sought advice from, and what action they ultimately took. Each participant's classroom teaching was observed six times. Participants' problems related to interpersonal relationships, school-related business/routines, classroom management, behavior management, time management, curriculum planning, and instruction delivery. Teachers turned to mentors or a variety of other people for assistance, particularly to other new teachers. Comparison of observed and perceived problems indicated that those who perceived the fewest problems had the most significant problems in teaching, and vice versa. When problems with interpersonal relationships dominated teachers' lives, their teaching effectiveness declined. All respondents expressed the need to be considered an accepted member of the school community, describing how membership influenced decisions that affected problems within and outside of the classroom. (Contains 31 references.) (SM)

WHEN, HOW AND WHO DO I ASK FOR HELP?: NOVICES' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND ASSISTANCE

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"When, How, and Who Do I Ask for Help?" :
Novices' Perceptions of Learning and Assistance

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The first year of teaching has never been easy. It's even harder when you've never had the opportunity to "practice" in a classroom. The current shortage of traditionally prepared novice teachers has led to licensing and hiring trends in many states which allow "alternative" (emergency) permits to be granted to anyone who holds a bachelor's degree (Education Week, April 7, 1998). While some alternative permit teachers have had varied school-based experiences as teachers' aides or volunteers, they represent, essentially, a population of teachers who are highly inexperienced. They have little knowledge about how to structure life in a classroom which will lead to student achievement.

Learning, for these teachers, is a central tenet in their daily lives in school, necessary for both survival and success . What will affect the learning process for them? Early cognitive theory treated "knowing" as the manipulation of symbols, and "learning" as the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Learning for teachers usually follows a cognitive theory approach in which the teacher attends an inservice to acquire knowledge and skill and is then expected to demonstrate knowledge by acting upon that knowledge in their classroom. It is a model that has received much criticism because application is rarely achieved (Hawley & Valli, 1999). Recently, social cognition theorists have challenged the cognitive theory of leaning and suggest that the physical and social contexts in which an activity happens are integral to the activity and the learning that takes place within it. The situational context of learning becomes a fundamental component of what is learned and the learning process (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

For alternative permit teachers, who are simultaneously acculturating to the school's work culture while learning to teach, the link between learning and situated cognition could be significant. Theories of situated cognition link learning with membership in a community of practice (Lave, 1991). In such a community, a novice's learning occurs as a result of a complex interaction of evolving forms of mutual engagement, learning to understand the enterprise, and developing a repertoire and style (Wenger, 1998). What is the relationship between membership in such a community and learning for novices?

Perspective

Alternative permit novice teachers bring a variety of experiences and needs to the classroom. School districts and teacher education programs share the burden of educating these teachers at the same time they are assimilating into a work culture and teaching children. In many states, the teachers are required to concurrently enroll in a teacher education program, administrated either by a school district, a teachers' union, or an

institution of higher education. They are also required to participate in some form of mentor teacher support program, usually implemented by the school district and funded by the state (Recruiting New Teachers, 1999). What does "learning on the job" look like for this population of novices?

Mentoring is the most common element of induction for new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, et al., 1999). Studies of mentoring have proliferated in recent years. Mentor teacher programs usually include an observation/replication/feedback cycle similar to that of a traditional apprenticeship student teaching experience, but enacted with much less frequency and less opportunity for the novice to observe effective teaching (Bey & Holmes,1990). Mentors are usually older, experienced teachers who enact a one-to-one mentoring relationship with a novice (Gold, 1996). The research base on mentoring describes how most mentored novices transition during their first year of teaching from being concerned with survival to focusing on analysis of teaching (Gold, 1996; Huling-Austin, 1990; Odell, 1987).

Many studies have looked at the development of teaching expertise from the perspective of the novice (Huffman & Leak, 1986; Nias, 1987; Veenman, 1984). Some discuss relationships between novices and mentors, mostly positive with some negative cases being described (Corley, 1998; Ginns & Waters, 1996; Gratch, 1998). Others track the kinds of technical assistance sought by novices, categorizing components of the teaching process such as classroom management, behavior management, resources and materials, planning, instruction and assessment (Perez, Swain, & Hartsough, 1997; Stroot, et al, 1999; Wilkinson, 1997).

A few researchers have investigated the link between novices' personal needs, their growth as a teacher, and their relationships to colleagues (Nias, 1998). According to Nias (1998), "throughout their careers teachers have one over-riding concern – the preservation of a stable sense of personal and professional identity....realized in varying ways at different times through the developing concerns of different 'situational selves' (p. 1258.) Teachers' needs include the emotional (Drummond, 1996; Gold, 1996) and a desire for an in-school reference group to reinforce and sustain their view of themselves (Nias, 1998).

The call for the education of novices who can be more successful teachers in today's complex, reform oriented school cultures continues to be heard (Darling-Hammond, 1997). The complex nature of the community into which novices must acculturate has been described in the literature base of school reform (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Miller, 1998). Power and group politics are both factors that affect school cultures (Fullan, 1993; Nias, 1998). Novices entering schools in low-performing urban areas face even more challenges. It is likely that they will enter a setting that reflects a culture where norms of uncertainty, isolation and individualism have dominated (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). How do novices meet their personal needs, access learning and acculturate into a school culture simultaneously?

New ideas about the nature of knowledge, thinking and learning identified as "situated cognition" are beginning to influence thinking about teacher learning. Social learning theory describes cognition as situated, social and distributed (Putnam & Borko, 2000). This theory proposes that the physical and social contexts in which learning takes

place represent critical components of what is learned. The process of learning and knowing includes: the ability to make *meaning* so that situations are meaningful; *practice*, which gives perspective to the learning; *community*, which gives definition and a sense of competence about what is learned; and *identity*, which describes the change in the individual because of the learning (Wenger, 1999). Interaction with others in one's own environment significantly influences what is learned and how learning takes place (Resnick, 1991). Learning includes the individual, other persons engaged in an activity, and the artifacts used to enact the activity (Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 1996). Situated cognition can serve as a lens through which the learning of novice teachers can be investigated.

According to the theory of situated cognition, when a novice enters a school culture, they are expected to participate in a community of practice where engagement in practice results in the development of meaning, a sense of community and becomes the vehicle by which learning takes place. Therefore, learning in practice requires, and is influenced by, the development of mutual relationships, definition of social identities, and alignment of engagement to be compatible with the community. (Wenger, 1999). The novice negotiates the development of these learning components by engaging in legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This type of learning is described as a way to understand " the relations between newcomers and old-timers,... activities, identities, artifacts and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice...A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). Learning, then, becomes quite a complex task for the novice. If all of the components of situated cognition represent required and influential aspects of the learning process for the novice, then mere apprenticeship with a mentor oversimplifies the nature of the learning process and the support needs of beginning teachers.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to investigate how unprepared novices engaged in problem solving within the context of a community of practice. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How does the novice perceive and define problems that arise in the classroom?
2. How does the novice negotiate meaning of a problem - what does the novice <u>do</u> when there is a perceived problem and <u>who</u> does the novice seek out to gain assistance as they attempt to resolve the problem?
3. What is the novice's perception of the role of a mentor teacher as a member of the community of practice?
4. How do the problems of simultaneously teaching without a sense of craft and acculturating into a practicing community affect each other?

Twelve alternative permit first year teachers participated in this descriptive case study. Ten were in their first semester of teaching; two were studied during the second semester of their first year of teaching. All taught in urban settings, with ten of the subjects teaching in a large urban school district, one teaching in a very small district, and one teaching in a state funded charter school. Each teacher participated in an initial

descriptive interview, completed a weekly questionnaire for fifteen weeks, and engaged in bi-weekly interviews. The questionnaire asked participants to describe the three most important problems they faced that week, who they sought advice and direction from in solving the problem and what action they ultimately took. Additionally, each participant's classroom teaching was observed six times for approximately one hour. Finally, each teacher participated in an exit interview at the end of the fifteen weeks.

Data was analyzed by coding reported problems according to the following categories: interpersonal relationships, school related business and routines, classroom management, behavior management, time management, curriculum planning, and instruction. Classroom observation data was coded and analyzed to triangulate data given in questionnaires concerning classroom-based problems and give descriptive explanation to the dynamics of reported problems.

Findings

When Do I Ask For Help - Perceived Problems

All of the reported problems fit into identified categories (see Table 1). Most problems were reported after the problem had occurred. In rare instances, teachers anticipated the potential for a problem and sought help in advance of having to deal with it. The majority of the teachers reported the highest number of problems with classroom management, behavior management and curriculum planning . Some patterns emerged and are described below:

- Perceived problems with classroom management focused on keeping students busy while working independently during small group activity (often during reading instruction). Most of the teachers were using small groups to teach reading, and keeping students busy during seat work was a continuous problem. This carried over into curriculum planning and time management when the same teachers reported having difficulty finding the time to create activities for seat work.
- Working with English Language Development (ELD) students was of significant concern to all of the teachers who had students with low levels of English speaking ability.
- The teachers believed they were supposed to complete all program components in commercial textbook based programs. Language arts and math programs often included multiple workbooks and worksheets. Including all components of the programs in the planned curriculum was difficult for several teachers and perceived as a problem.
- Interpersonal relationship problems significantly affected the lives of the teachers who experienced them. When relationship problems existed, descriptions of them dominated questionnaire space and interview time.

Who Do I Ask For Help? - Assistance

Teachers had two types of assistance available to them. One could be described as "assigned assistance". All but one teacher had an assigned mentor teacher for the duration of the study. The other type of assistance was described as "teacher selected assistance". Teachers reported going to a variety of other people to get assistance with problems, including other new teachers, grade level teachers, adjoining classroom

teachers, partner teachers (in shared classrooms), family members and professors in their teacher education program (See Table 2). Significant patterns emerged:

- Teachers most frequently sought out initial advice from another new teacher. After sharing the problem with that person, they often went next to a grade level teacher with whom they were building an interpersonal relationship.
- Mentor teachers were not the first choice of most of the teachers for soliciting assistance. They were sometimes approached after the problem was rehearsed with another new teacher. Problems included classroom and behavior management and curriculum planning.
- Physical proximity appeared to facilitate the choice of selected assistance. Teachers often reported going to the grade level teacher next door, and reported developing a relationship with that person.
- Of the grade level teachers who were often selected for assistance, and with whom the teachers reported building relationships, most were less experienced than mentors; they were teachers who had been teaching three to five years.
- Outside assistance, from family members and professors was sought when problems were interpersonal in nature.

The Relationship Between Perceived Problems and Assessed Problems

Observations of the teachers' classrooms and lessons added depth of understanding to the complex nature of problem solving for these novices. Table 3 summarizes observation data by category: classroom management, behavior management, curriculum planning, questioning, and instruction. Observations facilitated better interview questions asked of teachers at bi-weekly interviews. This, in turn yielded rich descriptive data of the specific situations each novice was working in. Comparison of perceived problems and observed practice resulted in noteworthy findings:

- The two teachers who perceived the fewest number of problems, Jessica and Rose, were described in the observation data as having the most significant problems with their teaching. At the beginning of the study, Jessica did not report any problems with management and the majority of her reported problems began during Week 7 when her principal announced she would have to trade students and become a split grade level due to norming problems at the school. Rose, who only perceived problems of student misconduct, was extremely rigid with classroom management and time, clocking lessons to the minute to maintain a time schedule.
- The teachers who were observed as having good instructional ability reported more problems with instruction and sophisticated classroom management strategies. Jack, Ann and Carrie were each successful at expanding their repertoire of strategies, and as they challenged themselves to increase their skills, they were continuously engaged in problem solving what wasn't working well. Jack was attempting to implement Writers' Workshop, Ann was attempting to modify difficult curriculum materials for ELD students and Carrie was modifying teaching strategies in an inclusion classroom of deaf and hearing students.
- When problems with interpersonal relationships dominated the lives of the novices, their teaching effectiveness declined. Terry became entrapped in a political controversy that involved her mentor teacher. Observations that took place during the time period in which the problem was escalating revealed significant changes in her lessons which resulted in decreased effectiveness.

Both Alicia and Jessica were forced to make major changes in their student population because of norming difficulties at their schools. Alicia lost her entire class of English speaking Kindergartners and received a class of non English speaking students bussed in from an overcrowded school. Jessica went from a straight first grade to a K-1 combination class and was required to exchange some of her first graders for kindergartners. In both cases, their behavior management was tested and progress they had been making toward setting up a system for managing problems was negatively impacted.

Patterns of Assistance

Three patterns of "assistance seeking" emerged as being most influential for the novices. They can be best understood by describing the context of specific cases.

Facilitated Assistance - The Case of Jack. Jack taught in a large year-round urban school. He was assigned a fifth grade class in which all 28 students had been reading in Spanish the previous year. Due to state legislation, all students began English only instruction in Jack's classroom. There were six new teachers at fourth and fifth grade, and Jack was assigned two mentors, a fourth grade and a fifth grade teacher, who shared the same track schedule as he had. The mentors required the six new teachers to meet with them every other week on Friday afternoons. Jack described the meetings:

> *"We get together, someone brings food, and we talk about the problems we are having. Our mentors really just act as facilitators; we're pretty good at giving advice to each other. When we can't figure out what to do they'll make a suggestion. They always try to have us think of alternatives and then think about what choice we want to make. I learn so much from hearing all the ways to solve a problem. I learn from the other new teachers' problems, even if I haven't experienced it. When I can't save a problem for Friday conference, I just talk about it at lunch. We all sit together, so the conversation really never stops. I think it's made a huge difference in my teaching."*

Jack was the only novice in the study who participated in a facilitated assistance "structure".

Assistance From A More Experienced Colleague - The Case of Ann. Ann taught in a large year-round urban charter school. She was assigned a fourth grade class in which all 28 students were ELD, and had been reading in English for one to two years. Ann was assigned two mentors, one who taught fourth grade on a different track, and one who taught a primary grade on her track. Originally, the mentors had proposed monthly meetings, but they never happened. She described difficulty in scheduling meetings, reporting that they were infrequent and not always at convenient times. The fourth grade mentor had come into her room and taught with her the first week of school because she (the mentor) was off-track, but had not followed up with subsequent visits. Within the first month of school, Ann began going to the teacher next door, who was in his third year of teaching, for help with problems. They were both struggling with new curriculum adopted at the school and they began planning together how to modify it for ELD students. She described the experience:

"We both have similar problems. We have students reading from Pre K to third grade levels and we are mandated to only use grade level curriculum materials from an experimental curriculum. We are struggling to teach the students the content and concepts, especially in social studies, when the materials are too difficult for our students. John also helps me with all the school business like report cards, IEP's, forms for the district, and letters to parents about things like Open House and parent conferences. When I have a problem I always go to John first. It's too much of a process to go to the mentors, one is on a different schedule so she's only here two months of the three months that I am, and I haven't really gotten good advice from the primary teacher."

Other teachers reported seeking advice from teachers with slightly more experience. Both Alicia and Carrie shared a room with a teacher slightly more experienced. Carrie also sought out the assistance from the teacher next door who had been teaching five years. Tamara sought advice from a teacher who had two years experience.

Assistance From Another First Year Teacher - The Case of Rose. Rose taught first grade in a very small urban school district with only three elementary schools. She was assigned a mentor teacher who taught fourth grade at the same school. Rose experienced many behavior problems with students. Rose described how she dealt with problems:

"I get very frustrated with students. Cindy doesn't seem to want to learn and she's got all kinds of problems. Her mother brings her late to school; she misses lots of days entirely. I have about five boys that can't pay attention. Those are my biggest problems. I talk a lot to the other new first grade teacher. We're the only two new teachers at the school this year. Her room is right next door to mine. We feel kind of different from the other teachers. Most of them have been here a long time, like ten years. Sharon and I figure out how to complete things; if we don't know what to do, we usually ask in the office. We also put our students together sometimes. Right now we are practicing for the school music program and our classes are singing together. It's actually better when we put our classes together. The kids seem to pay better attention. It's been great because when we talk about our problems we now know who we are talking about."

Alicia, Jessica, Susan, Beth and Kris all reported having peers who where in their first year of teaching with whom they spent a significant amount of time problem solving.

Acculturation into the Community

Membership is a very important component of community identity. To what extent did concerns about community membership influence teachers' decision making about how to resolve problems and who to seek out for help? Each participant was questioned in the exit interview about resolution of problems, patterns of assistance and plans of action as they related to their membership in the school community. All participants expressed the need to be considered an accepted member, and described how membership influenced decisions that affected problems based in and out of the classroom. A few examples illustrate the relationship between problems and membership issues:

- Mary implemented a management structure for reading that she didn't like because her mentor suggested it, spent a day in Mary's class rearranging furniture, and Mary was afraid to tell the mentor it was causing her problems.
- Ann had access to a resource center with language arts and social studies materials at lower reading levels that she wanted to use for her struggling ELD students, but she didn't want to check them out because the principal and leadership team had mandated that all students must complete grade level materials. She was "afraid they would see my name on the check out forms".
- Terry abandoned cooperative learning strategies which were more time consuming, but resulted in higher level thinking in social studies because, as she described it, the other grade level teachers began to express "jealousy" at the quality of student work that was being produced in her class, as compared to theirs. They ostracized her in the lunch room, at grade level meetings and faculty meetings.

Conclusions and Implications

Wenger (1998) describes the complicated relationship that learning and practice share in the maintenance of a community. "Learning in practice involves three processes: evolving forms of mutual engagement, understanding and tuning the enterprise, and developing a repertoire, style, and discourse" (p. 95). Conclusions about the novices' perceptions of problems, forms of assistance, and learning are organized using the processes. Implications for the design of support programs are described at the end of each section.

Evolving Forms of Mutual Engagement

Mutual engagement includes "discovering how to engage, what helps and what hinders; developing mutual relationships; defining identities, establishing who is who, who is good at what, who knows what, who is easy or hard to get along with" (Wenger, 1998, p. 95). Each community attempted to support the novices by assigning mentor teachers, a sanctioned and economically supported means of induction into the profession. Yet, mentor teachers were not the community members that the novices developed mutual relationships. Others, with whom closer identification was made, who appeared to be more accessible, or with whom trust was created, were sought out to develop mutual relationships and these people were the ones novices approached for solving problems and establishing "mentoring" relationships. This is consistent with professions which have purposefully structured elaborate systems of apprenticeship, such as medicine, in which someone at the next level serves as the mentor for the less skilled, while those members at the "master" level are used to demonstrate expert practice.

In addition, the novices put effort into creating and maintaining engagement in small sub-communities. They perceived the structure of those sub-communities from the perspective of shared experience (other novice teachers) or similar experience (grade level teachers). They were looking for and attempting to build collegial relationships.

The development of mutual relationships was the most important component of community membership, and when political problems became a focal point, it significantly affected the performance and decision making of the novices. The novices sensed, and a few experienced, that politics significantly shapes mutual relationships in a community. It appeared that this was a factor in their thinking about who could be trusted. It may be, that mentor teachers, by virtue of their higher levels of experience, and

therefore, their higher position in the political structure of the community, would need to work harder to gain the trust of novices. This was certainly the case for Terry, who after being coerced by her mentor to support her politically on school wide issues, wrote , "I do believe there may be something incestuous in the way mentor teacher-new teacher relationships are supposed to happen."

Programs of support should acknowledge that the need to develop mutual relationships is important to novices and should create opportunities for this to happen.

Programs of support should consider the value of "slightly more expert" teachers to the novice and systematically include their involvement in the mentoring of novices.

Negotiation of power structures in the community will dominate the lives of novices. This should be considered when designing programs of support . A shared responsibility for mentoring by multiple community members should be investigated as a way of limiting political impact of one-to-one relationships for novices.

Understanding and Tuning the Enterprise

Learning and improving practice involves "aligning engagement with the enterprise, learning to become and hold each other accountable to it; struggling to define the enterprise and reconciling conflicting interpretations of what the enterprise is about" (Wenger, 1998, p.94). Why did the novice teachers turn to other novices and those slightly more expert than themselves? They may have been attempting to define what the community was about. Their understanding about schooling and it's relationship to their practice needed to be established. The facilitated assistance that Jack participated in may have been providing the opportunity for this to happen. While the forum was advertised as a personal problem-solving enterprise, multiple perspectives were probably helping to give definition to what the community was about, what was important, and how to be successful in it.

A few of the novices quickly "learned" lessons about mutual accountability, or the lack of it, in some communities. They expressed shock when they learned from others how their class had been created – by other teachers each "giving" a few children who had demonstrated difficult behavior. Alicia had watched with amazement how the most experienced Kindergarten teachers were not affected by her school's reorganization effort, and she lost her entire class. These teachers learned interesting lessons about what the enterprise of schooling is about. They wondered aloud school-based community and accountability to each other.

Programs of support should consider the value of structuring facilitated assistance groups for novice teachers to facilitate the novice's learning about the enterprise as a functioning community.

School and district administration, and organizations such as teachers unions who have the power and responsibility for establishing the rules by which the "enterprise" operates, should carefully scrutinize policies that place novice teachers at the mercy of political and power based decisions. It benefits the entire community to structure the novice's experience so that they are not asked to work with the most challenging student

populations and experience changes in student population or grade levels during an instructional cycle.

Developing a Repertoire, Style and Discourse

These highly inexperienced novices were expected to assimilate into the community and perfect their teaching ability at the same time. Wenger describes a critical element of learning in practice as including the following processes, "renegotiating the meaning of various elements; producing or adopting tools, artifacts, representations; recording and recalling events; inventing new terms and redefining or abandoning old ones; telling and retelling stories; and creating and breaking routines" (1998, p.95.)

The novices in this study were aware of the need to "fine tune" their practice of teaching, but some were limited by their perceptions about "schooling" and their own practice. They chose to go to others experiencing similar experiences rather than expert mentors. To what extent did their behavior demonstrate a self-initiated quest for collegiality? Collegiality has been described from different perspectives. Little (1988) identifies authentic collaborative behavior as a critical component of collegiality. Lemlech and Kaplan (1990) describe collegiality as the establishment of a professional relationship for the purpose of service and accommodation through the mutual exchange of perceptions and expertise. Collaboration around similar experiences, shared meaning, and expectations builds collegiality. As novices engage in the process of developing a style of teaching and a repertoire of successful teaching strategies, it is likely that they would seek relationships that feel collaborative and supportive.

The mentor programs described in this study all included a component from a statewide assessment package for novice teachers called the California Formative Assess and Support System for Teachers (CFASST). While it was not a focus of the study, one questions whether including an "evaluative" component in which pre-observation lesson plans and conferencing, observation, and post-observation conferencing affected the novices initial perceptions of the relationship between the mentor and themselves. It would take time to build the trust necessary for the observation/feedback cycle to feel comfortable to the novice. It would need to feel like a collegial experience.

Programs of support should acknowledge the novice teacher's quest for collegiality and build program components to facilitate collegial development among peers.

Further study should investigate how observation/feedback cycles should be used to help novices investigate their own teaching. It may be that programs that identify additional collaborative and collegial ways to make teaching "public" may support improvement of practice more effectively than mentor teacher based observation.

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Table 1. Teachers' Perceived Problems

Perceived Teacher Problems* (total no. reported)	Interpersonal Relationships (no. of problems)	School Related Business/Routines (no. of problems)	Classroom Management (no. of problems)	Behavior Management (no. of problems)	Time Management (no. of problems)	Curriculum Planning (no. of problems)	Instruction/ Delivery (no. of problems)
Alicia (31)	(8) Problems with principal – change of class; problems with room partner		(6)How do you keep K's attention; how do you keep attention of non English speakers	(11)What to do with disruptive students		(3)How to adapt reading series to ELD students	(3)How to teach ELD students Sheltered Eng.
Jessica (13)	(6) Problems with principal – change of grade level	(2) Report cards;	(3) Trying to manage centers; problems with independent work by students	(2)Wants to know how to get parents to discipline students			
Susan (30)		(5) Meetings, construction	(6)Wants to know how to have interesting ideas for seatwork	(7)How to get students to be more attentive	(8) Time management; exhaustion	(4)How do you find time to teach science/social science	
Carrie (23)	(2) Has problem with principal – not supportive when issues with parents		(3)Managing multiple learners in small groups	(3) Has problems with few students – attention; attitude	(7) Spending too much time planning; neglecting family	(5)Integrating subject areas; literature based activities	(3)Including special needs students in lessons
Beth** (18)		(2) Report cards	(4)Want to do a better job with reading/ math groups	(5)How to get students to be more attentive	(3) Time for planning		(4) How to teach writing/ meet needs of ELD students
Ann** (18)		(6) School policy-textbooks;expectations for ELD students	(4) Management of small groups for differentiation of instruction			(2)Integrate subject areas	(6)Teach content and concepts to ELD learners
Terry (24)	(12) Mentor teacher, faculty relationships, principal support	(2)Report cards	(5)How to use cooperative learning more effectively	(3)How to meet needs of all students		(2)How to teach students about diversity	
Jack (24)		(4) Report cards – assessment/ school policy	(6)Cooperative learning (4) Writers' Workshop		(3) Spending too much time; neglecting spouse	(4)How to cover all subjects; SFA; meet needs of ELD sts.	(3)How to move away from teacher directed lessons
Kris (24)	(3) Teachers at grade level; pull-out teacher	(2) Completing report cards; how to assess for report cards	(7)Cooperative learning; on task-whole group; managing small groups during reading	(6)Individuals acting out during lessons; small group	(3) Can't find time to do everything	(3)Guided reading lessons	
Mary** (17)	(3) Mentor teacher expectations		(4)How to provide for seatwork during small group reading		(2) Time for planning difficult to manage	(8) How to include all subjects; how to teach reading;	
Rose (19)			(9)How to keep first graders on task; how to get them to do seatwork while with reading group	(10)What to do about the same students who are always disruptive			
Tamara** (21)	(3) Lack of support from mentor	(2) Report cards; other paperwork	(5)Keeping students busy during seat work while with reading groups	(9)Students who don't produce work – what to do to hold them accountable		(2)How to get all lessons in teacher's guide taught	

* Pseudonyms assigned to participants

**Questionnaires completed for only 11 weeks due to year round calendar and off-track time

Table 2. Assigned and Selected Assistance*

Teacher	Grade Level	Assigned Assistance	Teacher selected on-site assistance (no. of times sought assistance)	Teacher selected off-site assistance (no. of times sought assistance)
Alicia	K	Mentor-site based; not at grade level	Other new teacher (13) Partner teacher (4) Mentor (3)	Mother (8) Professor (3)
Jessica	1	Mentor-site based; not at grade level	Other new teacher (5) Grade level teacher (1) Mentor (1)	Spouse (4) Professor (4)
Susan	2	Mentor-site based; not at grade level	Other new teacher (8) Grade level teacher(10)	Professor (3)
Carrie	3	Mentor-site based; not at grade level	Partner teacher (20) Mentor (8)	
Beth	3	Mentor-site based; not at grade level	Other new teacher (13) Grade level teacher (8) Mentor (4)	
Ann	4	Mentors(2) –site based; one at grade level; not on same track	Other new teacher (4) Grade level teacher (18) Mentor (6)	Mother (4)
Terry	4	Mentor-site based; at grade level	Grade level teacher (8)	Professor(4) Spouse (6)
Jack	5	Mentors – site based; at grade level BTSA support provider	Other new teacher (18) Mentor (10)	Professor (2) Spouse (4)
Kelly	5	Mentor (4 wks. Only) –site based; not at grade level	Other new teacher (16) Grade level teacher (4)	
Mary	5	Mentor-site based; at grade level	Other new teacher (20) Mentor (7)	
Rose	1	Mentor – site based; not at grade level	Other new teacher (15)	Mother (8)
Tamara	5	Mentor – site based; at grade level	Other new teacher(16)	Professor (4)

*Numbers differ from Perceived Problems (Table 1.) Subjects sometimes indicated going to more than one person for assistance.

Table 3. Observed Teacher Problems

Teacher	Classroom Management	Behavior Management	Curriculum Planning	Questioning	Instruction
Alicia	Structured/ centers/ set up by room partner	Very poor. Doesn't communicate/reinforce behavior standards consistently	Textbook driven. Not considering developmental needs/ ELD needs	Yelling out a problem. Convergent questions. Needs to develop alternative response mechanism for ELD students	Direct instruction. Doesn't change lessons to accommodate developmental needs.
Jessica	Structured/centers/ basic routines consistent	Rigid adherence to system. Doesn't consider individual situations	Textbook driven. Many workbook pages, worksheets	Wait time poor. Convergent questions. Much teacher talk.	Direct instruction. Cooperative learning is controlled/ convergent.
Susan	Basic procedures/routines. Good environment. Small group organization good. Lots of student work.	Good. Sees potential problems. Communicates well with individuals	Textbook driven.	Good wait time. Communicates expectations. Consistently attempting to include divergent questions	Good reading instruction. Direct instruction.
Carrie	Whole class/small group; excellent at processing and responding to multiple events.	Excellent	Very creative with projects. Subject matter lessons lack depth of understanding	Wait time improved. Needs to improve wait time; include all students in discussions.	Direct instruction. Attempts inquiry; needs questioning to support it.
Beth	Basic procedures/routines. Poor room environment.	Good	Uses textbooks.	Convergent; wait time good. Needs to promote higher level thinking	Direct instruction
Ann	Structured/ mostly whole class/ routines in place.	Excellent rapport with students. Sees and acts upon potential problems quickly.	Integrates subjects. Creates own materials for ELD	Wait time improved. Promotes higher level thinking; multiple responses	Direct instruction; some cooperative inquiry
Terry	Structured with interest centers. Routines, good room environment	Excellent rapport with all students. Sees and acts upon potential problems quickly. Very aware of student needs.	Textbook driven	Poor wait time. Convergent questions. Some high level discussions about topics-with student opinions.	Direct instruction. Increased cooperative learning .
Jack	Whole class; excellent room environment;	Excellent	Creative. Uses enforced reading series; and finds time to add. Integrates language arts and social studies	Needs to increase wait time. High level vocabulary; shelters well for LEP students.	Direct instruction. Some cooperative work.
Kris	Whole class instruction – lack of awareness; poor physical environment	Good one-to-one interaction with students; Poor in class behavior management	Uses only textbooks. Plans passive learning experiences	Little questioning for thinking – convergent. Few questioning strategies	Lecture-recitation only
Mary	Well organized classroom	Excellent	Using textbooks and support materials from resource lab.	Good. Needs to promote higher level thinking. Wait time needs to be longer	Direct Instruction
Rose	Organized classroom with routines, procedures	Poor. Has difficulty analyzing what may be causing problems. Blames children, parents	Textbook; adds procedures/ routines for patterned memorization of skills	Poor wait time. Calls on same students who will give correct answers. Convergent	Lecture-recitation only
Tamara	Doesn't know how to plan for activity, room environment effectively	Good one-to-one interaction skills. Needs to reinforce.	Uses textbooks only. Plans passive learning experiences	Uses convergent questions. Wait time poor. Loses focus.	Lecture-recitation only

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