

Teachers' Induction Needs:
A Report of Ongoing Research
on New Teachers

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Over the past three years, a group of us in the Centre for Teacher Development at OISE/University of Toronto have been conducting a longitudinal study of the impact of preservice teacher education. In the first year of the project we interviewed faculty and student teachers in several elementary preservice programs at OISE/UT and in the next two years we studied graduates of these programs in their first and second years of teaching. We plan to continue to study the same new teachers in future years.

A major finding so far is that the new teachers see a need for preservice education to address more fully certain key aspects of teaching. These aspects include: program planning; pupil assessment; and classroom organization and community building. In this paper, we report the views of the new teachers on these topics and discuss how they might be attended to more adequately not only in preservice education but also in induction programs.

The Need for Priorities in Teaching, Preservice Preparation, and Induction

In a sense, new teachers today receive a great deal of direction on what and how to teach. In preservice education, they are taught a wide array of theories, principles, and strategies. After graduating, they are presented with detailed curriculum guidelines, extensive teaching materials, and mandated assessment and reporting systems. Further guidance usually comes from their school principal, experienced colleagues, and school district induction and mentoring programs. At a less formal level, teachers are also aware of the views of parents, politicians, and the public at large about how they should approach their role.

In practice, however, this guidance system breaks down. In the first place, teachers cannot possibly cover all the expectations laid on them, especially in the early stages of their career. As a result, they alternate between firm resolves to cover everything and half-guilty decisions to omit or de-emphasize certain topics. Second, the

guidance they receive is often inconsistent. Teacher educators' views vary even within the same preparation program, and these views in turn are often at odds with government and school system policies and practices. Third, the ideas presented in teacher education programs tend to be rather abstract, requiring new teachers to figure out by themselves what they mean and how to implement them. When examples *are* given, they frequently relate to a particular subject and grade level, and new teachers have difficulty applying the principles in other contexts.

What often happens (with the best of intentions) in preservice education is the following: On the one hand, coverage of educational theories and practices is so extensive that student teachers are unable to grasp what they really mean. The breadth of coverage makes depth of understanding difficult. As Paul, a first year teacher, said: "Literacy is so complicated...and I'm not sure we spent enough time [in the preservice program] on the theories of reading and writing. We talked a lot about great books, wonderful poetry activities, etc., but I'm craving to know what are the actual theories." And without sufficient theoretical understanding of what is being proposed, the new teachers have difficulty figuring out just what and how to teach.

On the other hand, to the extent that preservice students *do* understand what is being advocated, their program is so packed with lectures, seminars, assignments, and practicum requirements that they lack the time to select from among the various pieces and develop an integrated pedagogy of their own. They do not have time to make use of the wealth of ideas presented. Of course, new teachers do develop a pedagogy. But they do so largely "on the fly" and often with more attention to survival needs than to the ideas their preservice faculty hoped they would implement.

How can this situation be ameliorated? As the above analysis suggests, we believe the heart of the problem is a lack of priorities in teacher education. Preservice educators try to cover so much material that new teachers are unable to arrive at a focused, coherent pedagogy. Accordingly, the solution lies in identifying certain priorities and giving them pride of place in preservice programs, with considerable opportunity to understand them and figure out how they fit together. Teachers should emerge from their preparation program with a clear, integrated pedagogy that, to the extent possible for a new teacher,

they can understand, own, name, and implement (Floden & Buchmann, 1990; Goodlad, 1990).

In the literature on teacher education, an emphasis on prioritization is beginning to appear. In the past few years, several prominent teacher education theorists have argued that, rather than trying to cover a wide range of topics, teacher educators should address in depth certain key aspects of teaching (Grossman & Schoenfeld, 2005; Shulman, 2004; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). In this vein, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) maintain that instead of generating "lists of all the things that teachers should know," teacher education researchers should investigate "how knowledge deemed essential for beginning teachers can be incorporated into the initial teacher education curriculum" (pp. viii-ix). What is this "essential knowledge"? That is what we wish to discuss in this paper.

Context and Methodology of the Study

At OISE/UT approximately 700 elementary student teachers are admitted annually. All already have a bachelor's degree and many a master's degree. The average age is in the high 20's and many have had substantial career experience. About 600 enter the 1-year B.Ed. program, the remainder enrolling in either the 2-year Master of Teaching (M.T.) or the 2-year M.A. at the Institute of Child Study. The B.Ed. students are spread among 9 cohort programs, each with its own faculty team and a somewhat distinctive emphasis (although the course structure is the same in each B.Ed. program). In a sense, then, there are 11 programs in elementary teacher education.

In the first year of the study (2003-04), we interviewed all 11 literacy faculty involved in the OISE/UT elementary programs and 60 student teachers. Over the next two years (2004-06), we followed graduates of the programs (22 in Year 1, 20 in Year 2) into their first two years of teaching. The new teacher interviewees were all those 2004 graduates who had obtained elementary teaching positions in the greater Toronto area and surrounding school districts and who volunteered to participate in the follow-up study. One limitation of the study was that we did not have a larger pool of volunteers from which we could select in a random manner. The ratio of females (19) to males (3) in

particular was a function of who volunteered, and was slightly higher than the ratio typically found across the programs. The new teachers were from five of the OISE/UT programs, including both the master's programs. Almost all were teaching in schools with a highly multi-racial, multi-ethnic student population and a significant proportion of English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

In each of the years that we studied the new teachers, we interviewed them and observed in their classroom on two occasions. The first interview and classroom observation occurred mid-way through the year and the second toward the end of the year. The interviews were about one hour in length and were tape-recorded and transcribed. Over the four rounds of interviewing the questions were modified to reflect the stage in their teaching experience. In each round, the same questions were asked of all the interviewees, but probe questions were also asked and additional comment was encouraged.

Our research approach was qualitative, as defined by Punch (2005). For example, we had a relatively small sample of teachers (the 22, of whom 20 continued into the second year) whom we studied in depth, our interview sessions were largely open-ended, and the themes emerged as the study progressed. In analyzing the transcripts, we began by reading them several times to identify themes or "codes" related to the central issues of the study. We then developed a table of these themes matched to interviewees and, going through the materials again, recorded the pages on which reference was made to each topic; this table was then used in establishing frequencies and developing a structure for our report. As we wrote the report we kept going back to the materials for clarification, continuing to add, delete, and modify themes.

Key Aspects of Teaching Identified and Implications for Professional Programming

As noted earlier, the new teachers identified three aspects of their role as of crucial importance and as needing more attention in teacher education. In this main section of the paper we will examine each of these aspects in turn, together with implications for preservice preparation and teacher induction. We will conclude the

section with a brief discussion of another three priorities that the new teachers did not emphasize to the same degree but that we think should be highlighted in professional education.

1. Program Planning

a. The problem

Program planning was cited by the new teachers as their single greatest problem. In her second interview, Candice said that "in September, trying to prepare a year, I felt totally lost." A major challenge was creating the formal "long-range plan" that virtually all of them had to submit to their principal within the first few weeks. Anna commented: "I definitely needed to know...long-range planning [in September], which I did not know." Jody reported that in September she "needed to know how to make a long-range plan...that was the first thing I had to hand in [to the principal]. And the only reason I sort of knew how to do it was because of a summer institute [I went to]." Marisa said:

Probably the biggest problem I've faced this year was trying to create a long-range plan for my language arts program, because the language arts curriculum is so broad.... So you really have to use your best judgment and decide when to teach certain things, trying to figure out what skills to teach in September, and in January, and in June.

Apart from the formal requirement, most of the new teachers did not feel prepared to develop a comprehensive, working plan for the year: structured, balanced, integrated, and complete with schedule and routines. According to Tanya, "in the preservice program we talked about doing and trying a lot of different things, but they didn't suggest a particular type of structure or format." Liane observed:

[My literacy preparation] didn't suit my needs, unfortunately.... I would have preferred...a program that helped me learn to structure a balanced literacy program in very specific terms, in terms of long-range planning and that kind of thing, rather than here's a strategy, here's a strategy, here's a strategy. I can open a book and read how to teach kids to write a bio-poem, I don't need you to tell me that. I would rather you told me how I could implement that bio-poem idea inside a larger English program that meets the needs of the children.... I definitely could have used more assistance in developing balanced programs over long periods of time.

In June of her first year, Vera said: "Long-range planning is still very challenging.... It's hard to know where I should be and where the kids should be at this point in the year."

A specific difficulty in programming mentioned by nearly all the interviewees was dealing with the wide ability range in their class. Jeannie said that "the biggest challenge is their starting off point...some are already reading and some have no letter recognition at all." Anna observed: "It's hard to motivate students who can write very well to write even better when we have to take things slowly for the students who are falling behind... It's a challenge for me." According to Candice, "the diversity of student needs was talked about [in the preservice program], but not the how. There was lots of recognition of the problem, but solutions were lacking." She commented:

The language program I took last year was awesome...[but] I know too much and it paralyzes me.... Knowing what a perfect program would look like and not being able to put it into action was frustrating: not being able to...do all those things at the level at which all the different students need it.

b. Suggested solutions

Although initially taken aback by the extent and difficulty of their program planning role, the new teachers began to come to terms with it and, over the two years, offered a number of suggestions about how to approach this area.

Creating a formal long-range plan. The interviewees provided helpful information on the extent to which the long-range planning requirement varies from one school or school district to another. Some ask for a more comprehensive plan than others, and some give more attention to the nature of the plan and how closely the teacher keeps to it. Obviously at Candice's school teachers had considerable latitude in implementing their plan: "I did make the long-range plan, but I'm not so happy with some things that are happening...so it's constantly changing. I use the long-range plan and then do a weekly plan, looking at the topic we're studying and pulling out activities for the students." Similarly, toward the end of her second year, Wanda said: "I had to submit a long-range plan from September to June [but] it was easier than last year because...you get to understand that some of the things you expect to do the kids aren't developmentally ready for, so you learn how to pick and choose."

Variations were also reported in the help provided in developing the plan: in some cases new teachers have to do it largely on their own, but in others certain types of assistance are given. For example, Maria noted that at her school small groups of teachers do long-range planning "as a team, in all subjects. The only thing we do on our own is how we teach it; we use a lot of the same worksheets and do weekly and annual planning together." David said that he "started off with a long-range plan from a teacher who taught this grade last year who I worked with as a student teacher." Anna commented: "Right now I'm just using [a long-range plan] that I got from a teacher who had grade 5 plans. But I'm still working out my own.... We have a board resource disk where it's click and copy and paste.... It's got everything and every modification."

Establishing basic structures. Many of the interviewees stressed the importance of having a fair amount of structure in one's program, especially during the difficult early months. For example, Felicity commented (somewhat controversially):

The school has not bought spelling books and that has been a great source of frustration for me. Spelling is something the students like. It's predictable, they like the routine of it. They can take it home and do it for homework so it comes back half decent...and they get a lot of satisfaction from getting a good mark on it, so we keep it.

Marisa said: "Structure helps, especially in the first year, because you know what to do and you don't feel you are picking things out of thin air.... I find that the more structure I have, the easier it is to plan." Anita described how she moved from weekly planning to a somewhat more structured monthly approach:

I have found a system that works much better. Before I would plan week to week, but now I plan the whole [literacy] unit ahead of time. I spend maybe a weekend or part of a week planning and getting all the materials for that unit ready. And then I'll have a whole month when I won't have to plan anything, just do my marking. I still plan some of my lessons, grammar for example, a couple of days or a week before, with a short-term goal in mind. But the reading groups, once it's set up it just goes by itself...and the same with my poetry unit.

Being flexible. But while there is a place for structure, flexibility is also essential. Students can become tired of doing the same thing repeatedly, and some matters only need to be given priority for a certain period. For example, some of the teachers we interviewed emphasized word study (or spelling) in first term but not in the second;

others focused on reading in first term but subsequently placed greater emphasis on writing. Paul remarked:

I tend to think of a lot of stuff just on my own, looking at the curriculum and the students and what we have to work with, just coming up with activities, writing assignments, things they can read, poetry, music.... So I'm pretty flexible, and often I'll have something I'm going to do and it doesn't really feel like the right thing, so at the very last minute I'll adjust it and change it and hopefully it ends up being a little bit more appropriate.

John also emphasized the importance of setting aside routines on a particular day or week if a topic arises that is more important or timely. One of the reasons he gave was to help the students "learn how to learn." He said:

Well of course, we have our long-range plans which the grade 3 team put together, but really we're quite flexible in the way we implement it. A great example was a student just on Friday, he felt he hadn't fully understood how water runs from the roots up to the flower itself. So, I had made my plans for next week, but that will be my lesson for Monday because these are real questions that real children are asking. Who are you teaching to if you have a rigid program? You should have your long-range plan but you need to offer flexibility for real life questions that come forward, because as we always say we are trying to make children life-long learners and self-directed learners.

Materials: pick, choose, and create. One area of flexibility often mentioned was in teaching materials. Well chosen materials--including textbooks--facilitate teaching and also provide useful structure of the kind just discussed. But teachers must select carefully, according to the needs of their students, and most of our interviewees advocated "picking and choosing" from a wide range of sources. For example, Heather commented that her resources "come from everywhere...the most important skill [I learned in the preservice program was] how to find resources around you, where to find resources." Similarly, Nancy said she believes in "using different resources...giving kids different ideas or materials to use." Wanda reported that she gets her teaching materials "from the preservice program, teacher stores, the school library, talking to friends and colleagues and others who are teachers or have been teachers." Jody said:

I do a little bit of everything. I have an old phonics book from which they do one thing a week for 20 minutes; I have some ideas from my own kids' teachers because I know that it motivates them; I've got a lot of ideas from

my preservice program: I re-read my textbooks this summer to get ideas; I get stuff from the internet; and I have a really great book from [my old school board]: it talks about literacy in all the different grades.

John's advice to new teachers was be to

tap into different programs, as many as you can, and pick and choose for your kids.... You really need to tailor it to the kids you're teaching. And I'm not just talking about levels but about interest and ethnicity and that type of thing as well.

Many also spoke of creating their own materials and activities and borrowing materials created by other teachers. Maria commented that published worksheets

don't necessarily address the needs of your learners or fit in with what you're doing. I think it's usually more valuable to make them up; and I'll spend many a Saturday night making up worksheets. But I don't do it so much any more; rather I get together with the other teachers and plan, and we use many resources we already have.

And Marisa said: "I end up making a lot of the materials on my own because I just find I'm able to make them more specific to my kids."

Integrating the program. A vital aspect of developing a program is to integrate various parts of it, whether within a subject, across subjects, or in the culture of the classroom. The reasons for integration include saving time and increasing motivation. With respect to saving time, Paul said that by "integrating math, science, and language into one unit you will cover a lot of things in less time." Anita proposed saving time by integrating spelling into other language activities, supplemented by mini-lessons as needed:

I was doing spelling in a word study program at the beginning of the year, using a word study book. But I found that took up a lot of time and they weren't really using it in their writing, even though for some of them it did help them learn how to spell, certain patterns and words and things like that. So what I do now is just integrate it into my program; and if I notice they are reading in a particular way and need to be aware of certain word patterns, I'll make charts: like homonyms, or adding "ies," or irregular past tense. I just kind of make myself more in tune with what they're doing in their work and then bring those things up explicitly in class, either with the whole group or, if it's just a couple of kids, in a small group; but a lot of things are the whole group.

Interestingly, Anita later went back to a word study program, but this was because she felt she had found a way give it more impact by connecting it more closely to her writing program. The new teachers had differing views on the integration of spelling, phonics, and the like, but it seems this was largely because of different conceptions of how to do it.

Apart from saving time, many interviewees proposed forms of integration that they felt would increase student engagement. Paul combines language arts with science because "it's really much more motivating for them, it's something they're interested in instead of just learning about words and sentences." John said he tends to avoid formal spelling and grammar classes because they can stifle students' writing.

I don't want a child to spend too much time on spelling, even though I consider myself a great speller. I want them more to have that flow of energy to let the writing take form. If I'm stopping them every 2 words and saying "How do you spell that?" then their compound, beautiful sentences might go down to only a few words, because their confidence and risk-taking will obviously be minimal at that point.... I have a boy who came from Africa 4 years ago and the words he comes out with, I just don't know where he gets them from, and he understands the definitions. However, his spelling is horrendous.... But his ideas are brilliant, so my argument would be, should I make his brilliance stagnate and bring him back to the spelling? I do have a spelling program, but it's not at the forefront.

Jeannie's approach to spelling was similar to John's:

At the beginning of the year I started doing spelling and I found the kids were in tears, like not wanting to do it. So I stopped, and then in January I tried a different approach where we did a word family a week, with spelling words based on that plus one high frequency word. And now most of the kids are getting perfect on the spelling and also learning the word family.

As we saw earlier, Felicity was an exception in that she reported finding structured spelling lessons very motivating to her students. Perhaps the answer lies in how it is done: word study classes can be effectively integrated into a program.

It's okay to be different. In planning their program, teachers have to decide to what extent and in what ways to fit in with current programs and practices in their school. New teachers may be surprised to learn that they have this choice, but our interviewees indicated that they often did. For example, John said he chose to have a different style

from that of the teacher assigned to him as a mentor, and in fact the other teachers in his division "adopted a lot of what I've done." Similarly, Jeannie observed:

[When] I got the grade 1 job...there were three other grade 1 classes and the school is big on team planning.... So at the beginning we had similar literacy blocks, but now we've moved to what are more our own styles. At the beginning of the year...there was a big push to get literacy centres going and they wanted everyone to try them.... [But] after we tried them, we could say "You know what? They're not working."

Tanya, while underscoring the courage it took, reported being able to say: "No, I'm not going to do it. I understand that I'm new, but I'm not doing that worksheet or teaching it that way. I'm going to do it my own way." She said she felt new teachers should come out of their preparation program with the awareness that not everyone teaches in the same way, and feeling "competent in yourself" to teach the way you believe is best.

It is important, of course, to determine just how much divergence is permitted within one's particular school and school district. Also one should be diplomatic in following one's own path. David in his first interview commented that "as a first-year teacher, I can't rock the boat too much." By the time of his second interview he was taking a more independent position, but still said that teachers should integrate their activities to a considerable degree with the school district program, and should make clear that their activities are in fact "covering the [curriculum] expectations just as well as the school district resources are."

c. Implications for preservice and induction programming

At this stage in our inquiry we will just outline briefly some of the implications for professional education that we see arising from the new teachers' ideas and experiences.

i. Information and theory on the program planning role of the teacher. The fact that they have this extensive role should not come as a shock to new teachers, and they should understand why it is essential.

ii. Information on the formal long-range planning requirement: samples of plans, expectations, help available, how to negotiate the requirement.

iii. Discussion of the balance between structure and flexibility in programming. Often preservice programs over-emphasize program modification, leaving new teachers with too many variables to deal with at once. It should be explained that a degree of program stability--e.g., use of textbooks, daily routines--is legitimate.

iv. Information on the degree of freedom teachers have (or do not have) to design their program. Knowledge that it is often "okay to be different," although local conditions should be taken into account.

v. Emphasis on the importance of prioritization and selection. We cannot "do it all." It should be explained that total coverage is not feasible and not even appropriate as a pedagogical aim. New teachers should not feel guilty about being selective in their curricular emphases.

vi. More help on strategies of curricular integration, geared as far as possible to particular topics and grade levels. Teaching "across the curriculum" is usually emphasized in preservice programs, but more practical help is needed.

vii. Opportunities to watch strong practitioners in their program implementation, both as student teachers and as new teachers. The helpfulness of watching others teach was noted repeatedly by the new teachers, especially when they were able to choose the settings.

2. Pupil Assessment

a. The problem

Pupil assessment was another aspect of teaching identified by virtually all the new teachers as a major challenge and requiring fuller treatment in preservice education. Many reported having had little idea how to approach assessment in the beginning, despite in some cases having received considerable preservice instruction in the area. Marisa in her first interview commented that "assessment is this huge thing that is not

covered enough [in preservice].... [We needed to] look critically at some actual students' work and assess it." In February of her first year Maria said:

[Assessment], that's my issue. I don't know that we spent one day assessing writing at the faculty. I remember looking at things and just when we were getting into it, it was over.... I was lost. When report cards came up in first term I was like "Oh my god, how do I do this?" People have their theories and some you agree with and some you don't, and it's really hard. Assessment is huge, I'm still not comfortable with it.

Many reported not knowing how to do the standardized assessments required in their school district. For example, Jody observed:

We talked a lot about assessment [in preservice] but we never actually had training in the two main literacy assessment tools [DRA and CASI].... And as far as I can see, everybody is supposed to do it, and I have been doing it.

Vera said that although assessment "was a heavy focus in the literacy program," the instructors "would tell us about a tool but not show us how to use it, or when to use it, or what kind of information it's giving you, or how it's effective."

Many felt they had inadequate understanding of the nature and purpose of assessment. John noted:

Coming in, I really didn't know what I should assess, what I should be looking for.... I've kind of educated myself on it through reading and asking others. But I really think it should have been covered more...how is it done, why do we do it, and what is it important to look for.

David said in January of his first year that he still had "some questions" about assessment: for example, the government exemplars were well above what he was seeing in his students, even though they were doing quite well on the government standardized tests. So he felt he was getting "mixed messages."

Going beyond standardized assessment, many of the new teachers maintained that preservice programs should pay greater attention to types of assessment that would be feasible and useful in the classroom throughout the year. Jeannie said that "informal assessment" should be addressed more fully in preservice "because the DRA is so time-consuming." In Candice's view, "working assessment was definitely a hole [in the preservice program]."

Finally, many had difficulty with marking and reporting. Felicity stated that

marking language assignments [has been a problem]. I think we did quite well [in preservice] in terms of learning rubrics and things.... But I'm stuck with piles and piles of creative writing that I asked the kids to generate and I just have no idea how to find time to mark them. So I think I could have had more instruction on that.

A particular problem mentioned by several of the interviewees was the disparity between the current government assessment system and parents' understandings of grade values. Anita said: "I find there's a discrepancy between letter grades and levels. A lot of my kids get very discouraged if they're getting B's and their parents say they have to bring home A's.... Parents are used to A's being good or being the best, but in the government curriculum B is at grade level and is actually very good."

b. Suggested solutions

Over the two years the teachers arrived at important insights into how to do assessment. Some of their practices and suggestions are presented below.

Limit the emphasis on standardized assessment. Some of the new teachers suggested being constantly aware of the limitations of school system standardized tests and regarding them as strictly supplemental. For example, Sophia proposed saying to new teachers:

Don't be afraid [of it]...really there is no science to literacy assessment. DRA tries to be scientific, but it doesn't focus much on comprehension.... When I do my DRA's...I'm marking down comments on their comprehension [because often] they're decoding but not understanding a thing, and this is something DRA is not really taking into account.... So I haven't found a science to it but I think you have to almost feel it, go with the flow in a way, and do what you can.

Similarly, John saw the need to modify his running records to take more account of reading comprehension: "Is [what we're assessing] just decoding words? No it's not, it's reading comprehension.... I've got a boy in my class who can read a Level 4 text really well, but when you ask him what the book is about he can't tell you very much."

Use many kinds of assessment. Related to the previous point, teachers need to go beyond standardized testing and use a range of assessment methods, especially ones that can be implemented as part of everyday classroom activities. Some of the interviewees said that they use the guided reading groups as a means of getting to know the academic strengths and weaknesses of their students. In her first year, Wanda commented that

many of her students "have difficulty sitting and doing their own work. So a lot of my assessment comes from observation, discussion, work in class, just more of the formative type of assessment to see where the children are." Toward the end of her second year she said that, although she reads the students' writing portfolios and does some "diagnostic" work, her assessment "tends to be much more observational...talking and one-on-one conferences, sitting down with them and actually seeing what they can do." Similarly, Marisa said:

I do the DRA...but also I try as much as possible to...just listen to them reading and make sure they're reading something above their level.... [To a beginning teacher I would say] be on top of the students and keep pulling them aside for 5 minutes and listening to them read, because even that 5 minutes will give you so much information about what stage they're at and how they're doing.

Tanya reported that she does assessment during literature circles: "just sitting listening to them talk about the book gives me such great insight into their comprehension."

Individualize assessment. Standardized tests and other assessment practices can easily leave undetected important *distinctive* abilities and challenges among students. Anita observed that beginning teachers should "do some diagnostic assessing early in the year...just to find out what their students' strengths are and what they need to work on." Wanda spoke of the difficulties of assigning a level to a child for reading or writing when each child is different:

I think I'm learning to trust myself a bit more in terms of recognizing what I think Level 3 should look like... [When assigning a level] you're formalizing it...you're standardizing it. And I have a hard time with that because it's not black and white and there's going to be a lot of grey. So it's more just trusting my instincts.

At the end of her second year Nina observed:

I think I focused too much on reading groups through the year...I should have spent more individual time with the children, because it surprised me, each child's needs were just so different... [S]o this last term I decided to do more work one-on-one with the kids, to have a better sense of where they were and what they needed.

Marking: neither too much nor too little. Felicity, as noted earlier, commented on the problem of being overwhelmed by marking, especially in the first year. David

spoke of the need to maintain a balance in this regard: he said that "one challenge is just the regular first-year teaching load, keeping up with the marking, trying to avoid marking too little but also marking too much." Anita described how she found time for marking students' writing by scaling back in other areas.

First term, I spent a lot of time on reading and I didn't focus so much on writing, which I've changed this term. And honestly, I think I had a fear of being inundated with the children's writing; it takes a long time to go through, or I had that perception that it did anyway. Because it's their own thoughts, it's more difficult to go through than a Math test or some Math sheets... But this term I've jumped into it and now I'm marking their writing pretty much every night; I just do a little bit here and there and it's not so bad... So last term it was reading, this term it's writing.

c. Implications for preservice and induction

Once again, we will make just a few suggestions about the implications of the foregoing for early professional education, whether preservice preparation or induction.

i. Clearer understanding of the relationship between assessment and effective teaching. Until new teachers grasp this connection they will not understand the nature and purpose of assessment.

ii. Clearer understanding of the limited value of standardized assessment. Because they do not learn to be critical of standardized testing the new teachers give it too much attention, leaving insufficient time for other forms of assessment that are in many ways more important.

iii. Greater familiarity with everyday assessment methods in feasible forms. The assessment methods discussed in preservice--whether standardized or not--are often too time-consuming for use in regular classrooms. They need to be presented in a more feasible format or supplemented by other more practical types of assessment. Also, student teachers and new teachers need the opportunity to see expert teachers using a range of assessment methods linked to everyday classroom instruction.

iv. Clearer understanding of the need to get to know each child individually. New teachers are not sufficiently aware of how different students can attain the same expectations or "levels" in different ways, and how this is essential if optimal learning and development are to occur.

v. *Help with the theory and practice of marking and reporting.* New teachers need assistance in negotiating marking and reporting requirements without it taking up too much time and undermining their teaching.

3. Classroom Organization and Community Building

a. The problem

In the new teachers' preservice programs, much of the emphasis was on small-group learning, especially "guided reading" where the teacher works with one group while the rest of the class engages in other group activities. However, many of the new teachers reported having little idea at the end of their program what guided reading is and what the other groups should be doing while the teacher is with one group. For example, five months into her first year Vera commented: "I don't yet feel confident with guided reading.... You hear a lot and read a lot about guided reading, [but] it's different when you actually sit down to develop a program that works for your class, because there are so many ways to do it."

Anita felt the preservice program should have provided more detail on how to do group work (or alternatives) in literacy:

In the preservice program they didn't want to be prescribing... But I would have liked someone to say "This worked for me; here is one thing you can do, or a variety of things. There are many more out there but you can start with these and then see what works for you." I don't really feel there was enough practical knowledge being passed around... Like what's an alternative to literature circles? Because those things work great if you don't have a lot of behaviour kids. But if you have a lot of animosity within your class and haven't been able to build a strong community yet, how can you still make things meaningful for them and make it enjoyable *without* [working in groups]?

From Anita's point of view, then, group work is not always beneficial and other matters such as classroom management and community building must be weighed when deciding how to organize one's class. The issue of group work is more complex than was suggested in the preservice program. And this was the opinion of many of the other interviewees as well.

b. Suggested solutions

Despite their early difficulties, many of the new teachers made considerable progress in approaching the group work issue and related matters. Here we present some of their ideas and practices in this area.

Restricting group work to certain settings and times. Many of the new teachers came to the view that group work should only be used where it is clearly beneficial, and this will depend on the students involved and the time of the year. In December of her first year Tanya said: "I haven't been able to set up literacy centers and guided reading groups... Some teachers would start these in September, but I wasn't experienced enough to know how to set up these routines without the students having some independent skills." Nina, teaching Grade 2 in her second year, remarked:

One of the biggest issues I have in my class is behaviour...[and] guided reading in theory I love...you have your little reading group and everyone else is working in their literacy centres. Well, in my class that doesn't work...because kids were screaming, I had kids rolling on the floor... So what I've ended up doing is they do independent reading and I do guided reading with them [one-on-one], which is not what in theory is supposed to happen but it's what works in my class.

In June of his second year, Paul said:

I find that group work is really important, they need to learn how to do it. But it's hard - it's even hard for adults to get into groups not of their choosing and be able to work... I have one group, however, that works really well together and likes to work together, 4 girls who are very focused: 2 of them are extremely intelligent and just keep the whole group on task.

A modified version of ability grouping. Several of the interviewees noted that they preferred to avoid the standard type of ability grouping. For example, Paul commented: "I like to do things in groups [but] I think it's important to switch the groups, not to have the same groups all year, and give the students a bit of say in the groups."

Tanya said that her literacy groups

are random, they change.... I tend to have the same text but change the comprehension question, depending on the students I have. And I have students who are really strong in non-fiction but much weaker in fiction and vice versa, so I tend to change the [guided reading] groups just depending on the articles I'm reading.

Later Tanya added:

In no way do the students identify themselves with somebody else as being at their reading level.... In Grade 1 [last year] the students for the snuggle up program took home levelled books to read and they identified themselves as "I am a level F reader and I want to be a level G reader."... Whereas here [Grade 4] anybody can pick up any book they're motivated to read and read it. I'm loving being away from the levelled reader syndrome.

A balance between individual, small-group, and whole-class approaches. Many of the new teachers came to the conclusion that use of small groups should be carefully balanced with individual and whole-class approaches. For example, Wanda observed that "you have to appeal to all the different types of learners, so...I tend to [use] hands-on centres that allow students to do some work on their own and also include whole-group and small-group activities."

Tanya reported:

Every time it's a new concept I start with the whole class, model teaching. Then I break it down into shared work, sometimes group work, depending on the activity, and then individual work. So I try to balance it out...depending on how well the students are doing.

In his first year, Paul explained why he thinks the individual dimension of teaching is so important. He believes in

getting students going with responsibility, making them responsible for their own learning.... [I say to them] it's your choice, in the end you've got to make the decision.... If you're not good at spelling I can help you, but you have to figure out ways you can fix it yourself, or other places you can go to for help, because I'm not always going to be here.

However, in his second year Paul spoke also of the importance of whole-class work.

Because of all the [behaviour] problems [this year], we've been working more on just trying to get the whole class on the same page and working together... I would say it's probably been pretty balanced: a lot of group work, a lot of whole class, and a lot of independent work as well.

Candice felt that not enough attention was given to whole-class work in her preservice program. She said she "would have liked to have more resources that are acceptable to multiple levels.... You need to find ideas where everybody can come in and do something with it, including the ESL students and gifted students at the other end."

Nina described the rich interaction and learning she was able to foster at a whole-class level in her grade 2 class:

We have a [whole-class] sharing circle every day after independent reading time...where everybody takes a turn orally communicating: "I've chosen this book. This is what I found interesting."... At the beginning of the year it was very basic, "I like the drawings," but now they're saying "I like the drawings because of the colours they used, the expression on their faces." So I can see the development. I think they have also learned a lot of social skills... I really work on community building, and for the most part the children have made a lot of progress in being respectful to each other...they are not telling tales on other kids, bullying and that kind of stuff.

An emphasis on class community. Many of the new teachers stressed the importance of building class community as a basis for positive classroom interaction and learning of many kinds. John reported:

[E]very day we have a community circle where the students sit in a circular fashion, facing towards me and towards each other. And we'll just go around and there are rules of course, the right to "pass" and so on...it really makes them feel safe. And at the beginning of the year I had probably only half the class sharing, but now with the odd exception they are all freely sharing.... Sometimes we have some sharing time after silent reading or after writing.... Because a lot of times they really enjoy what they're writing or reading and it gives them an opportunity to share that verbally with their friends.

Anita said that "the biggest thing" she gained from her preservice program was "the sense that you have to have a strong community in your classroom before any sort of deep learning can take place." Wanda described how she works to build community in her classroom:

In terms of what do you expect a classroom to look like, I try to incorporate a bit of the Tribes training: the whole concept of building community, building a team, and understanding that we have to respect one another and have kindness and trust in the classroom. We sat down and looked at the type of classroom rules we want, what we expect of one another, attentive listening and behaviour. And that was a theme throughout the year... They got tired of hearing me say that the more friends you have the better off you are."

A broad approach to classroom management. Good classroom management is a crucial aspect of classroom organization and essential for learning and for teacher and

student well-being. Attempting to manage a class through rules alone is rarely effective: interesting curriculum content and learning activities are needed as well, along with a strong class community. At the end of his second year, Paul described how he relies on the class dynamics to help with classroom management.

There are students who are really good at class "citizenship": belonging to the community, getting along, finding solutions to problems; and there are other students who are not good at that at all. But a few students at the lower end have definitely developed some skills in this area over the year, so that's been good. It's just like if you live in a small town and you're new there. Even if people think you're weird and don't like you, eventually they accept you because they have to, because you're one of a few people. And you have to accept them because even if they don't like you sometimes and are mean to you, well, they're all you have. So I think in a way, my class has gone through that stage where now my one student who, in January, February, March, was not getting along with anyone, now has two or three friends. And everyone else can cope with his behaviour and has learned to deal with it. And very seldom now do people get really upset at him. So that's been really great to see. And I've seen a few student really shine: they know what to say to people and how to get the whole class calmed down or listening or doing what they're supposed to.

Teacher-student relationship a key. A close teacher-student relationship is necessary for learning, classroom management, and community building. Wanda spoke of the situation in her school as a whole.

There's a really good relationship, for the most part, between the students and teachers. There's a fine line, with the teachers having the students' respect because they're the teachers but also showing a lot of true concern for the students, and the students liking the teachers as well. So it's a good mix.

Later she explained why it is essential for teachers to get to know their own students well:

I can't say how I'm going to approach anything until I get to know the kids. And I think this is really important, both as a person and as a teacher: if you know the child then you'll understand what makes them tick... And that helps, whether it's with classroom management or picking books for the kids or just trying to find the big hook that's going to draw the child in.

Paul also stressed the importance of a close teacher-student relationship:

For me, teaching is a social skill. Not just the performance aspect but having relationships with people and developing those relationships...

And...you need to have a relationship with your students. Because when you tell a student, "You need to stop doing that, you need to do this, you need to learn that, you need to do your homework," if they really have no relationship with you or the relationship is negative, they're not going to follow what you say. And my students, some more than others, when I say something they listen because it's like, "Oh yeah, that person, I respect what they say and that person is honest and honorable. So I will believe what they say." It sounds old-fashioned but I think it's really true. And we talk a lot about respect in school but honestly not a ton of it gets shown. Teachers demand respect but some of the ways they treat students are not respectful and the students know it.

Inclusion and equity another key. Class community and a close teacher-student relationship are in turn dependent on respecting students' diverse personalities and backgrounds. Without such respect students will not participate in the community or like and trust their teacher. An emphasis on inclusion and equity was apparent in the new teachers' approach. Sophia stressed the importance of attending to "the different cultures and the different background experiences of all the students." Felicity commented:

We did a lot of diversity studies [in the preservice program] and although I haven't done enough of it this year, because it's been too hectic, I really want to be the kind of teacher who perceives literature that's not mainstream, that's diverse.... It's really important that the students see themselves reflected in the literature, or see other cultures reflected in it, not just the mainstream one.

Liane said that

the most valuable course I had in preservice, in terms of what to do in the classroom on a daily basis, literacy-wise and otherwise, was my multicultural education course.... It's an all-year course, and the value I gained from it was to be able to respond delicately, effectively, and critically when necessary, to issues in multicultural education.

John gave an example:

You need to tailor [your program] to the kids you're teaching.... For example, we made a quilt.... Not a lot of kids in my class celebrate Christmas, so I said "Well, for each square of this quilt, I want you to write about a special occasion in your religion for the year. So a lot of the kids wrote about Chinese New Year, a lot about Eids, that type of thing as well as Christmas. So I was able to bring us all together to really hold hands as a group, I guess, and put it together on a quilt that I've hung outside my classroom.

c. Implications for preservice and induction

Here again we will just suggest a few implications for preservice and induction, as a basis for further discussion and inquiry.

i. Fuller understanding of the connections between instruction, classroom management, and class community. At present, each of these topics tends to be treated in isolation. Classroom management problems have to be resolved, as they can take a heavy toll on instruction and teacher and student well-being. However, a "bag-of-tricks" or "set-of-rules" approach, on its own, is ineffective.

ii. Deeper, less doctrinaire understanding of group work and "guided" teaching. Group work has become something of a bandwagon, especially in literacy education, with inadequate understanding of its nature and purpose. We need to clarify the respective roles of individual, small-group, and whole-class dimensions of teaching.

iii. Greater emphasis on class community and the social and emotional aspects of teaching and learning. Community in the classroom is perhaps the single most important factor in effective teaching and in student and teacher well-being. It does not receive as much attention as it deserves.

iv. Greater emphasis on the teacher-student relationship. Again, as the new teachers have pointed out, this is vital to effective teaching yet it is not understood or emphasized sufficiently.

v. A more integrated approach to inclusion and equity. Inclusion and equity tend to be addressed in isolation from other aspects of teaching. New teachers need to understand the multiple ways in which these matters are connected to instruction, the teacher-student relationship, and the class community.

4. Other Priorities

Program planning, pupil assessment, and classroom organization and community building were the main aspects of teaching that the interviewees found challenging and thought needed greater attention in teacher education. In this final section we would like to note briefly three other topics that were not stressed to the same extent by the new teachers but that we feel should be addressed in both preservice and induction programs.

i. A vision for teaching

In order to develop a sound program, assess effectively, and establish an appropriate class culture and organization, teachers need a broad "vision" of teaching, a sense of the wider purposes, principles, and context of teaching. To some extent this was recognized by the new teachers we interviewed. One criticism of their preservice programs was that they sometimes focused on techniques and strategies to the neglect of theory and principles. When they talked about how to approach the more practical aspects of teaching, the interviewees often appealed to fundamental principles. Among the principles they mentioned were the following:

- ? Linking learning to broader life goals and experiences
- ? Social and emotional--as well as academic--learning
- ? A close teacher-student relationship
- ? Inclusion and equity
- ? Student engagement
- ? Integrated learning
- ? Teaching for depth

Of course, a common criticism of teacher education is that it focuses *too* much on theory and principles and not enough on practice. However, on the whole this was not the view taken by our interviewees. Rather, they wanted *both* theory *and* practice, the theory being made intelligible through practical examples and the practice guided and made coherent through links to theory. A comprehensive framework of this kind, embracing theory and practice, often appeared to be lacking. And this did not surprise us, as the first year of our study showed that the preservice courses tended to jump from topic to topic rather than offering a vision of teaching that connected the many principles and activities.

In considering the implications of our study for induction, then, we wish to stress that merely practical workshops on program planning, assessment, classroom organization, and so on would not fully meet the need. Treatment of such topics must be integrated with exploration of "the big picture" of teaching and learning. Teachers should be helped to see how their work is contributing to their students' daily life and general

development. This is necessary both to guide teachers' decision-making and to give them a sense of the significance of what they do.

ii. Professional identity

It is important for teachers at the beginning of their career to get on a sound path in terms of their approach to the profession and their self-perception as teachers. Here again, our interviewees had a number of insights although perhaps not a broad enough perspective. We believe this is a major area for induction work, usually in combination with the more substantive topics discussed earlier. The following are some key principles in this area.

Adopt a professional stance. Take charge of your teaching, be critical, be selective, prioritize. Be an inquirer, researcher, decision-maker. Take a stand on the importance of your role for students, their families, and society.

Look after yourself. This point was made often by the interviewees. New teachers were urged to "have a life," develop supports, and "not beat up on yourself," because you can only do so much.

Grow personally. As is often noted, "you teach who you are": students are influenced as much by teachers' personality and approach to life and learning as by what they say and formally teach. Accordingly, personal growth is crucial from a professional point of view. Growing personally is also important so teachers can survive, have the energy to teach, and continue to develop in their understanding of life (which in turn benefits their students).

Grow professionally. Teachers need to be constantly growing in the knowledge and skills relevant to their role. They also need a sense of the trajectory of their career in terms of their present position, leadership in their school and profession, and other possible roles in education in the future.

Get help from others. A large proportion of our interviewees had gained significant assistance from those around them, especially teachers at or close to their grade level. A common piece of advice for new teachers was to take strong initiative in seeking help from others.

Develop a strong teacher-student relationship. Seeing oneself as a professional does *not* require taking an authoritarian stance with respect to one's students. On the

contrary, it involves getting to know one's students' interests, needs, and abilities and trying to help them in a comprehensive way. This was emphasized again and again by the new teachers we interviewed.

iii. Subject knowledge

Finally, we wish to emphasize the importance of teachers continuing to grow in knowledge of the subjects they teach. Although this was not a common theme in the interviews, we believe it is implied by many of the principles of teaching endorsed by the new teachers.

Over the years, there has been something of a stand-off between arts and science faculty and education faculty on the matter of subject knowledge. Arts and science faculty on the whole have emphasized subject knowledge at the expense of general pedagogy, whereas education faculty have often had the opposite emphasis. We believe the time has come bring the two positions together.

While subject knowledge must never be construed as the only thing a teacher needs, such knowledge is a key factor in the following attributes of good teaching mentioned by our interviewees:

- ? Being selective about what to teach
- ? Engaging students
- ? Individualizing teaching and learning
- ? Teaching for depth
- ? Curricular integration
- ? Responding to the ability range in one's class

Continued growth in subject knowledge is also important to enable teachers to sustain their interest and energy over the years.

We would suggest, then, that induction programs include many opportunities for teachers to learn more about the subjects they teach, and that the value of such knowledge be constantly emphasized and explained. In addition, in workshops and courses where general techniques and strategies are studied, the implications for particular subject areas should be explored, as far as possible at the grade level at which the participants are teaching.

Conclusion

The new teachers we interviewed provided extremely valuable information and ideas about their challenges and needs and how these might be addressed. The aspects of teaching on which they placed greatest emphasis were program planning, pupil assessment, and classroom organization and community building. We have suggested that a close analysis of their comments also reveals the need to attend to vision for teaching, professional identity, and subject knowledge.

Our study was limited in that the new teachers were just from one school of education and were teaching in one geographical area, and we were reliant on volunteers for our sample. Furthermore, the views of new teachers need to be supplemented by those of more experienced teachers and other groups in the field of education. Nevertheless we believe the findings afford a very useful basis for discussion and further research.

At times the new teachers' criticisms of their preservice program sound rather harsh. It is important to note that the great majority of the interviewees were quite positive about their preservice program, and some were extremely positive. Our study does not provide support for a generally negative assessment of preservice education. However, it is clear to us (as preservice educators) that major enhancements are in order. Preservice education on the whole needs closer linkage of theory and practice, a stronger sense of priorities, and deeper and more integrated attention to priority areas.

Our sections in this paper on implications for professional education are quite brief, pending further analysis and discussion. In particular, more discussion is needed on the respective roles of preservice education and induction programs in meeting the needs identified. We welcome input on these matters.

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Increasingly, research confirms that teacher and teaching quality are the most powerful predictors of student success. Based on research in Texas, the importance of having an effective teacher instead of an average teacher for 4 or 5 years in a row could essentially close the gap in math performance between students from. Although stories like these are legion, in contrast, Wong (2002a) reported that, from 1999 to 2002, the Leyden High School District in Franklin Park, Illinois, hired 90 teachers and lost only 4, an attrition rate of 4.4%. This confirms the research of Hiebert, Gallimore, and Stigler (2002) that consistently supports the need for systematic induction of new teachers and the ongoing professional development of all teachers.

Presentation on theme: "1 Teachers' Induction Needs: A Report of Ongoing Research on New Teachers" by Clive Beck and Clare Kosnik. Presentation transcript. During the induction program? Can student teachers learn assessment theory and practice when they are working in someone else's class (during practice teaching)? Other questions or topics that you think are relevant.

Illinois New Teacher Collaborative Decreasing Attrition and Improving Instruction through Supporting New Teachers - Illinois New Teacher Collaborative Decreasing Attrition and Improving Instruction through Supporting New Teachers Illinois State Superintendents Conference | PowerPoint PPT presentation | free to view. North Carolina Mentor Training - North Carolina Mentor Training A Lifeline for North Carolina's Beginning Teachers | PowerPoint PPT presentation | free to view. A Brief History of Physics Education Research Among University Students - Title: PowerPoint Presentation Last modified by: gewichtheber99 Created Date: 1/1/1601 12:00:00 AM Document presentation format: On-screen Show Other titles | PowerPoint PPT presentation | free to view. While the New Teacher Induction Program includes teacher performance appraisal by the principal, the mentoring process you are about to embark on with your teacher-mentor is a non-evaluative process, and is distinct and separate from the teacher performance appraisal. programs have found that they provide a wide range of benefits including throughout the year as your needs change and develop. Mentoring is an ongoing relationship that extends throughout the first year of a new teacher's professional practice. The relationship is a supportive one, with the mentor acting as a role model, facilitator, coach and advisor, and sharing his or her experience and knowledge with you as a new teacher.