Beginning teachers’ achievements and challenges: Implications for induction and mentoring

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Reflecting on your first year of teaching

Discuss your achievements and challenges with a partner…
The reality may fall short of the dream

Many beginning teachers need to compromise between their idealistic dream and the realities of classrooms.
Stages of competency

1. I don’t know what I don’t know
2. I know what I don’t know
3. I grow and know and it starts to show
4. I simply go because of what I know

http://facilitativeleadership.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/4-stages_consciousness.png
Attrition rates – Beginning Teachers

- Costs (e.g., US cost $2.1bn)
- Reasons:
  - lack of appreciation from students, parents, colleagues
  - unsuited to teaching
  - unsatisfying working conditions, low salary
  - inadequate teacher preparation (uni vested interest)
- The need for ongoing renewal and support
Induction programs

- Assigned mentors – variable (e.g., Kardos & Johnson)
- Contextual (e.g., metro vs rural; specific school)
- Timely “intervention for retention” – (Sharplin, O’Neill, & Chapman, 2011, p. 136)... Aim to retain
- Community of mentors as support (vantage points)
What are beginning teachers’ achievements and challenges in their first year of teaching?

- 10 beginning primary teachers
- Extended written response questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions (2½ hours) April/Sept
- TEDD project (DEEWR)
Work-Life Balance
- Resilience skills
- Workload monitoring
- Intensive support in the first few weeks

Pedagogical Knowledge
- Guided planning (programs)
- Preparation (research & ICT)
- Behaviour management
- Assessment
- Viewpoints in forums

Assigned Mentor(s)
- Modelling pedagogical knowledge
- Feedback after observations of practice
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>April Achievements</th>
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Developing successful teaching practices
Behaviour management

- P9: “improving the behaviour standards of some specific students within the class”
- P6: “Getting a handle on behaviour management (especially the language) working out how to teach grade one”
- P3: “Developing a behaviour management program that works and has effective tangible results... dealing with extremely challenging kids that don’t fit into the standard classroom behaviour plan”

- They wanted assigned mentors to model practices, provide feedback after observing them teach
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Challenges as a beginning teacher
Working with parents

- “accomplishing parent-teacher interviews” (e.g., P 1, 3)
- Working with parents (issue in September)
- Those who do not send their children to school (P 8) and “cranky parents” (P 1, 6, 7, 9)
- Guidance on working with parents before crucial times
- Development of resilience skills
What is resilience?

“the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances”

(Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990, p. 425)
Conditions supporting resilience

Johnson et al., 2010
CHALLENGES

Challenges

- Lack of quality induction
- Contextual conditions
- Removal of creativity & enthusiasm
- Lack of support
- Not fully prepared
- Mismatch

Johnson et al., 2010
Roles and responsibilities of mentors

Challenges:
- Lack of quality induction
- Contextual conditions
- Removal of creativity & enthusiasm
- Not fully prepared
- Mismatch
- Lack of support

YOUR TURN
A beginning teacher’s professional identity is dependent on:

1. The way in which other teachers respond to them (e.g., mentors, principal, colleagues).
2. The comparisons they make between themself and other teachers (beginning teachers, experienced teachers).
3. The way in which they interpret and evaluate their own thoughts and behaviours (positive or negative perceptions).
There are various mentoring arrangements.

You may be a face-to-face mentor, working **one-on-one** with a beginning teacher at your school.

You may be a face-to-face mentor, supporting **more than one** beginning teacher at your school.

You may be an **online mentor**, supporting one or more beginning teachers online.
Achievements & Challenges

• Planning the curriculum
• Covering the curriculum
• Behaviour management
• Assessments and reporting
• Learning differentiation
• Embedding ICT capability

• Working as a team
• Building relationships and respect
• Student achievements
• Working with parents
• Work-life balance
• Others?

Discussion point...
• Focus on standards/competencies

1. Short-term development goals

2. Professional learning goals

• Focus on teacher performance review
• Transition to full registration

3. Career development goals

• Networking
• Professional learning
• Leadership development

4. School strategic goals

• Learning to help a team reach whole school goals
• Being accountable to school’s goals.
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