

CHALLENGES OF NOVICE TEACHERS

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Abstract

The first year of a teacher's career has a great importance since it gives a clue whether the teacher will stay in the field or not. Novice teachers' step into professional life from graduation might be worrying, because there is no gentle adaptation period into teaching profession. At the first day of school, the novice teacher has to stand in front of students. The novices should teach like experienced teachers, in addition have many roles. The expectation from both teachers is same. The novice is expected to learn the school environment, policies and procedures while becoming familiar with curriculum, testing and school. There are some issues in the class atmosphere as well like, students at different levels, pacing speed, workload, communicate with parents and students. Teachers may need a survival kit between their background knowledge, training and the realities of the classroom. Entering classroom with lack of experience can cause negative feelings for new educators. This can lead to a feeling of isolation which may later result in unwanted situation like losing the teacher in the field of education. When novice teachers feel overwhelmed by their practice that they need to improve upon, a training can ease their work and help them survive in the field.

Keywords: novice teachers, challenges, experience, training.

1. INTRODUCTION

Danielson (Danielson, 1999, p. 251–257) and Flores and Day (Flores, & Day, 2006, p. 219-232) said that novice teachers are competent in the field of education because they are fully equipped with a proper knowledge. However they are inexperienced and it is quite appreciable they need help. Seeking help discourage them since this would be seen as being insufficient. But if the teachers are in a supportive school environment they are better at understanding the means of effective teaching practices. Their personal ideas about teaching and learning can be better discussed in such an environment. (Langdon, 2001).

Novice teachers have an image of successful teaching practices. They generally know approaches to psychology, curriculum and evaluation. (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005, 358).

Many prospective headlines can be added into the orientation program of schools. If these topics are fruitful, all the students, parents, teachers and the management feel satisfied at the end of the year. Each topic should help the teacher in different way. A newly graduate teacher is equipped with information however being a novice teacher lack them to behave like an experienced teacher. What is expected from an experienced teacher is also expected from a novice teacher. Issues like time constraints, loaded curriculum, testing and marking, classroom management are the few basic topics in a teacher's daily routine. There are some other detailed headlines as well. For example culture of the institution, both written and unwritten, challenges in class due to misbehaved students.

The novices are expected to teach like experienced teachers. (Smith & Sela, 2005). It is obvious that novices do not have the same qualifications as the experienced teacher, however they are sharing the same atmosphere and sometimes they have a work load which is much more than an experienced teacher has. (Yalçinkaya, 2002). This creates another burden on novice teachers' shoulders. As a result, there are more novices who resign and leave the field than beginning workers in other careers (Wonacott, 2002). Having high turnover rates is not preferred instead a solution can be found.

Researchers found two main issues in relation to how novices evaluate induction programs: a practice shock and a cultural mismatch (Achinstein & Barret, 2004). Practices during the first years have important effects on novices. This may result in how they act in and out the classroom. When the novice teacher feels the lack of control about what is going around and has a sense of insufficiency, it directly affects their attitude to the profession and career.

Since first years in teaching business is extremely important, teachers needs help to support them, make them feel comfortable that they are on the right track and to reach the resources that they will continue working in a satisfying way (McCann & Johannessen, 2004).

Yalçinkaya (2002) stated common issues of inexperienced teachers like clashes between what is studied at school and real life applications, effort to finish tasks on time, fear of observation, and adaptation to school culture. Due to being inexperienced, difficulties may occur like classroom management, following the pace of curriculum, varying level of the students, using time in and out of the classroom, and learning the legislation and the rights.

Achinstein and Barret (2004) in their research studied three major problems of novices and their results are: the classroom management which was addressed in 93% of the cases; the human relations which was addressed in 100 % of the cases; and the political frame which was addressed in 87% of the cases. None of the results have numbers which can be underestimated easily. Some of the subheadings of these frames may have been studied earlier before graduation like; student 'behavioural problems, discipline, pacing speed, parents-students interaction, motivation, learning styles. Whereas others like culture of the school, sense of community, collaboration, prior knowledge and cultural understandings need to be learnt at that specific school. In other words a special training program has an utmost importance for the new comers and novices.

McCann, Johannessen, and Ricca (2005) conducted a study on a similar topic and classified the major challenges of novice teachers as: communicative problems; too much work, using time, and tiredness; curriculum; assessment and grading; management and inspection.

Wang, Strong, and Odell (2004) did a quite different research which is about the interaction among mentors and mentees and found three major problematic topics. They are teaching, topics taught, and students or a combination of the three.

Taneri (2004) focused on novice teachers' problems. Results show that major problems are: having diverse level classes; learning specific rules and regulations of the school; elementary school students; preparing teaching materials; and getting students attention to participate.

2. SAMPLE STUDIES ON NOVICE LANGUAGE TEACHERS

The term novice is commonly used for teachers. A novice is somebody who teaches for the first time (Farrel, 2012). Also there is no sharp time limit about the duration of that stage. Kim & Roth said that it is less than five years of teaching experience (2011). Haynes call it, two years of teaching experience or less (2011).

Being a novice teacher may depend on the working environment of a teacher. Since cooperation and collaboration has a prior importance in education business, the teacher might feel safe according to the effective time spend with the colleagues. If they are left alone during the first years of their profession, they might feel insecure due to work load, misbehaved students, demanding heads or likewise. At the end of such a scenario, it is not hard to think that the turnover rates of novice teachers are high. "25% to 50% of novice teachers quit their jobs during their first three years of teaching, and nearly 10% leave in their first year" (Öztürk, 2008, p. 20). It is obvious that these teachers need some kind of help. It can either be a well prepared induction program or a mentoring way of supportive behaviours.

According to the results of Brannan and Bleisten's (2012) research, novice teachers need support and what they mean by support is information about the psychology of young people, resources, and logistical knowledge provided by colleagues.

Mann and Tang (2012) also had a study on the effect age and experience between mentors and the

teachers. Having an experienced mentor was not a must. If there isn't much difference in experience or age between the mentor and the mentee, they are better at establishing a fruitful professional relation. They feel closer.

It might be better if these novice teachers have a chance to observe their mentors' lessons. Real life situation can be more helpful. Peer observations are beneficial for both sides to share ideas. So in this way, novices learn new ideas. In some cases, novice teachers cannot easily reach their mentors and have interaction with them which results in many unwanted situation. Professional development needs some dedication. Improving teaching skills comes as a reward after commitment to work. Richards (1998) discussed that observing experienced teachers can help to see the difference between effective and ineffective strategies in class.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Each school can have different expectations on teaching practices. A supportive induction program or ongoing training sessions during the year can be helpful. These can be relevant solutions for novices

1. Specific and intense training to novice teachers.
2. Schedules which leaves time for team teaching and classroom observation.
3. Mentoring to give and receive constructive feedback.
4. Partnership among schools and novice teachers to form a professional learning community that facilitates caring and sharing (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009, 825-841).
5. Using case studies and narratives of experienced teachers can be good examples of reflective teaching.

Experts state that mentoring or induction programs are good for caring novices because in that way, they do not feel exhausted, on the contrary they are effective. (Moir, 2009). These induction programs or mentoring mechanisms may show great differences among the schools. It depends on the need and background of teachers.

It is clear that there is an enormous need for induction programs. However, Smith & Ingersoll (2004) state that great variations among induction programs or mentoring system can be prevented for the safety of the novices. Otherwise, these teachers are already stressed and they will get confused. Actually it may not be easy to judge the development of a novice teacher depending on the program, whether it is a common or a unique one.

The major aim of all these programs are to help the novice become a well- equipped teacher who widens the world of students. In this sense, no such thing is as important as experience. Moir (2009) defines the function of mentoring and induction programs to foster new teacher development. On behalf of getting experience Fantilli & McDougall (2005) said that promoting student motivation and achievement and reaching a level of effective teacher will take few years.

Another important issue is deciding upon the right mentors. Mentors or teacher trainers should be properly trained as well (Moir, 2009). A fruitful program should not only have set of rules and implications but also have a reflective teaching section which the mentors can share their own experiences (Le Maistre & Pare, 2008). All these efforts will find it place if the school principal creates a supportive atmosphere and encourages them (Moir, 2009).

4. DISCUSSION

As a result, the main aim here is to bridge a gap between education life and work life of a teacher. The in service development program should be prepared by taking into consideration of teachers' background knowledge upon the field and lacking points.

As Barkhuizen (2011) mentioned novice teachers need not only experienced teachers' narratives but also each other's case studies. Because they can experience similar challenges. So, they can be proactive for the challenges in class. In other words, experiences of colleagues can be used as training resources in order to encourage reflective thinking. When novice teachers analyse a case, they have the chance to get benefit from the experienced teachers' practices (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Everyone in educational environment should pay attention to the problems of novice teachers. During the first years of their profession teachers mostly face the challenge of such feelings like belonging, being appreciated by administrators and students. After a while they try to find a balance between what they have

brought in their minds to the institution and what they have just learnt there. This equilibrium leads to a decision whether to stay at this profession or not. It can be better if heads, managers, experienced teacher work together collaboratively with the new comers, try to accept them into the system and foster their belonging.

It is obvious that variety of perspectives are needed for improvement. Organizations, inspectors, school or unit heads, researchers, publishers, specialists all are to be included in the team for the benefit of prosperous school year with well-equipped novice teachers. Some share their precious knowledge acquired in a long time, others like parents and students can give feedback and say their needs and expectations.

An effective teacher induction program is supposed guide new teachers. It would be better if the idea behind the induction is to be proactive rather to be reactive. In this way the possible problems of the novice teachers can be foreseen by the experienced teachers and help them to face the least unexpected occasions. So as to reach this objective, a qualified evaluation of the induction program should be done by comparing it to the resent challenges. First of all, supportive communication and responding novices' questions can be the starting point. A fostering program is expected to help anxious teachers by emotional supports and guiding activities.

School administrators have a crucial role because they organize gatherings to get to know each other and form a healthy social relationship among colleagues. Teacher training units have an important part in these events. They organize some training activities like peer observation, team teaching, video teaching.

Resnick (1991) mentioned that novice teachers' interactions with colleagues is a key deterrent to develop teaching and learning activities. Professional talks among colleagues is also argued by Feiman-Nemser (2001)) said that this interaction between experienced and novice teachers help them share feedback and guide novice teachers to learn getting feedback improving their practices.

As a result, many things can be done to help novice teachers. It is never easy to cope with challenges alone. Induction programs, even the curriculum at the bachelor level can address the future need of novice teacher. It is not enough of course. Observation of the teachers, reflective learning and teaching, self-evaluation are never ending stages of professional development. All the knowledge gained should be re-examined through the channels of educators.

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