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**Becoming a Teacher:
An investigation of the transition from
student teacher to teacher**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

of
Doctor of Philosophy

at
The University of Waikato

by
ALEXANDRA BARBARA GRUDNOFF

The University of Waikato
2007

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to gain greater knowledge of the process of transition and development that beginning primary teachers undergo over their first year of teaching. The research focus is on investigating and understanding this process from the standpoint of the beginning teacher. Of particular interest is an examination of how the teacher preparation programme, contextual features of the school, and participants' own beliefs and biographies influence and impact on their transition to teaching and their professional and identity development as first year teachers.

This longitudinal study takes an interpretive approach to investigate the first year teaching experiences of 12 beginning teachers in 11 primary schools. The qualitative methodology used in this thesis shares characteristics with a case study approach and utilizes procedures associated with grounded theory. Data were gathered systematically over a year by way of 48 semi-structured, individual interviews, two focus group interviews, and 48 questionnaires, supplemented by field notes. The collected data were analyzed, coded, and categorized, and explanations and theory that emerged from this process were grounded in the data.

The findings of this study have three broad sets of implications for the education and induction of beginning teachers.

Firstly, they question the role that practicum plays in the transition from student to teacher. The findings suggest that the practicum component of teacher preparation programmes should be re-conceptualized and re-designed to provide authentic opportunities for student teachers to be exposed to the full range of work demands and complexity that they will encounter as beginning teachers.

Secondly, becoming a successful teacher appears to depend on the quality of the school's professional and social relationships, particularly in terms of the frequency and type of formal and informal interactions that

beginning teachers have with colleagues. While the major source of satisfaction and self-esteem came from seeing the children whom they taught achieving socially and academically, the beginning teachers also had a strong need for affiliation, which was enabled through positive, structured interactions and relationships with colleagues. The study also indicates that employment status influences the way that the beginning teachers view their work and themselves as teachers, with those in relieving positions displaying greater variability in terms of emotional reactions and a sense of professional confidence than those employed in permanent positions.

The third set of implications relate to beginning teacher induction. The study points to variability in the quality of induction experiences and challenges policy makers and principals to ensure that all beginning teachers are provided with sound and systematic advice and guidance programmes which are necessary for their learning and development. While the study confirms the critical role played by tutor teachers in beginning teacher induction, it suggests that the focus is on emotional and practical support rather than on educative mentoring to enhance new teachers' thinking and practice.

This thesis provides a comprehensive and nuanced view of how beginning to teach is experienced and interpreted. It paints a complex picture of the relationship between biography, beliefs, preparation, and context in the process of learning to teach. The study contributes to the literature on the education of beginning teachers. It highlights the need for developing a shared understanding amongst policy makers, teacher educators, and schools regarding the multiplicity and complexity of factors that influence the transition and development of beginning teachers.

Acknowledgements

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Glossary of Terms

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Beginning teacher (BT)	A graduate from an approved initial teacher education institution employed as a provisionally registered teacher. He/she will typically be in their first or second year of teaching. Sometimes referred to as a novice teacher, newly qualified teacher (NQT), or provisionally registered teacher (PRT).
Decile	All New Zealand schools are assigned a decile rating depending on the socio-economic status of the community in which they are located. Schools in the lower deciles (1-3) draw their students from communities with the highest degree of socio economic disadvantage, while those in the higher deciles (8-10) are in the most advantaged areas.
Education Review Office (ERO)	New Zealand government department whose purpose is to evaluate and report publicly on the education and care of students in schools and early childhood centres.
Fully registered teacher	A teacher who has typically completed two years of teaching and has been attested to meeting the New Zealand Teachers Council Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions by the principal. The New Zealand Teachers Council approves full registration.
Induction	Refers to a national or regional system and process to support beginning teacher professional development.
Intermediate school	In New Zealand, Intermediate includes levels 7 and 8 (children 11-12yrs), and can be a separate school or part of a primary or secondary school.
Ministry of Education (MoE)	New Zealand government department responsible for leading curriculum, policy, and resourcing for state education in early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.
Induction/Advice and Guidance programmes	New Zealand's centrally-resourced advice and guidance (induction) programmes to support beginning teacher professional development. Resourcing includes the provision of the following time allowances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.2 Full-time equivalent (FTE) - 5 hours per week for a first year beginning teacher employed full-time in an entitlement teaching position. • 0.1 FTE (2.5 hours per week) for a second year beginning teacher employed full-time in an entitlement position or for a first year teacher in a part-time teaching position that is 0.5 FTE or more. • An annual allowance is provided to the tutor teacher.

New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC)	The New Zealand Teachers Council is the professional and regulatory body for teachers in English and Māori medium settings for early childhood centres, schools, and other related educational institutions.
Practicum	School-based teaching experience undertaken by pre-service teachers. Also known as placement, field experience, or section. The term ‘practicum’ is used throughout this thesis.
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Principal	A head teacher of a school. Appointed by a community-elected Board of Trustees.
Provider	An institution providing pre-service teacher education, such as a university or a college of education.
Provisionally registered teacher	A graduate from a New Zealand Teachers Council approved pre-service teacher education programme, who has New Zealand Teachers Council provisional registration.
Syndicate	A team of teachers (mainly in primary schools) with responsibility for the oversight of planning, teaching, and evaluation of a particular level of a school. Usually led by a senior teacher.
Teacher educators	In this thesis, I have used the phrase ‘teacher educator’ to refer to university-based personnel involved in pre-service teacher education to distinguish them from school-based personnel.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Internationally, the preparation and induction of beginning teachers is a topic of political and policy debate. New Zealand is no exception. One area of concern relates to ‘teacher quality’ and ‘quality teaching.’ While there appears to be no consensus in the public and policy discourse about the meaning of these terms (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), research identifying the critical role teachers play in children’s learning (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003) has sharpened the policy focus of many countries in the western world on improving the quality of teaching. Given the high level of agreement regarding the importance of teacher quality, it is not surprising that there is widespread debate over the quality of teacher preparation programmes and the quality of beginning teachers. In New Zealand, government scrutiny of teacher education has resulted in approximately twelve reviews and policy reports being published in the last 10 years, with the latest major review of initial teacher education launched by the Ministry of Education in late 2007. After on-going discussion over the last decade about the need for, and nature of, national standards for teacher education graduates, the New Zealand Teachers Council finally introduced Graduating Teaching Standards in May 2007 with the purpose of “ensuring a consistent quality of graduating teachers” (NZTC, 2007).

Concerns around teacher shortages and supply have also focused attention on new teacher retention. Research from the United States indicates that large numbers of teachers leave the profession within the first three to five years (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), while a British study (Hayes, 2004) found that 30% of those graduating from teacher preparation programmes did not start teaching and, of those remaining, 18% left after three years. New Zealand research suggests an attrition rate similar to that of other countries with Elvidge (2002) finding that 37% of all new teachers leave the teaching profession after three years. In an American study of first and second year teachers, Johnson, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu and Donaldson (2004) found those who left teaching either saw it as a short

term job or had been frustrated by their workplace conditions. While the reasons for new teachers exiting the profession are varied, the “high attrition rates suggest that large private and social costs have been incurred in preparing people for a profession which they found did not meet their expectations, or was insufficiently rewarding, or which they found difficult” (OECD, 2005, p. 175).

The intensification of national and international concern around teacher quality and retention has resulted in greater scrutiny of the preparation and development of new teachers. While there is a substantial body of literature on beginning teachers, much of it is located in a discussion of the pre-service preparation of teachers (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Cameron & Baker, 2004; Kane 2005) and the induction of new teachers (Britton, Paine, Pimm & Raizen, 2003; Johnson et al., 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). Such literature documents the challenges new teachers face as they move from preparation to practice, although there appear to be fewer studies which take a fine-grained approach to investigating what helps or hinders new teacher transition and development. While Cameron and Baker (2004) have criticized New Zealand teacher education research for being overly reliant on surveys, this situation is perhaps not unique, as internationally there seems to be a greater number of cross-sectional than longitudinal studies in this area. Given the public and political debate over the quality of beginning teachers, it is critical that such discussions are informed by empirically-based understandings of what influences new teachers’ transition to teaching and their development as teachers.

The Focus of this Research

This longitudinal study takes an interpretive approach in investigating the process of transition and development that beginning teachers undergo over their first year of teaching. The qualitative methodology employed in this thesis is aligned with the case study method and utilizes procedures associated with grounded theory. The research is framed around three key questions:

- What are the patterns of transition from student teacher to first year teacher?

- What are the key factors that affect the transition and development of first year teachers?
- How do these factors influence first year teachers' construction of themselves as teachers?

In asking these questions I sought to gain a greater understanding of the process involved in becoming a teacher, from the vantage point of the beginning teacher. I was interested in exploring the perspectives of new teachers as they develop and change over their first year of teaching. The study aimed to identify factors that enable or limit beginning teachers' professional development and learning. I was particularly interested in examining the influence of the teacher preparation programme, the contextual features of the school, and participants' own beliefs and biographies on their transition to teaching and their development as first year teachers.

As a former primary teacher and now teacher educator, I have had a long-term interest in teacher preparation and beginning teachers. Over my 25 year career in education I have worked with beginning teachers in schools, taught teachers in postgraduate courses, taught pre-service students and supervised them on practicum, and led the design, development, and implementation of teacher preparation programmes. My work has led me to wonder why learning to teach is sometimes presented as being unproblematic, whereas my professional experience suggests that it is a far more complex and lengthy exercise than is sometimes portrayed in the media, policy reports, and the literature. There seemed to be little recognition that beginning to teach, unlike many transitions to full-time work, requires new teachers to take immediate responsibility for the range of tasks and roles undertaken by experienced teachers. I became increasingly interested in the relationship between initial teacher preparation and the induction phases of teacher education. This professional interest as a teacher educator became my research focus.

Initially my research interest was in programme evaluation. In 1998 a colleague and I embarked on a systematic evaluation of the performance of graduates from our institution's primary, pre-service degree programmes in their first years of

teaching, believing that the quality of graduates' classroom practice is a critical element in the evaluation of pre-service teacher education programmes. We followed up over 400 of our graduates from 1999 through to 2002, surveying their perceptions of the quality of their teacher preparation programme and their tutor (supervising) teachers' perceptions of the quality of the graduates' teaching. In addition to the postal surveys we also interviewed two cohorts of 20 graduates and their tutor teachers at the end of their first and second years of teaching (Grudnoff & Tuck, 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003). The findings from these studies indicated that the adjustment of beginning teachers to the demands and realities of teaching was associated with a range of school-related factors (such as professional culture and the quality of the personal and professional relationships between the tutor and the beginning teacher). Other findings indicated that, although the beginning teachers experienced a relatively traumatic initial period of teaching, by the end of their second year of teaching their supervising teachers regarded them as competent and, in most cases, excellent colleagues. The start of the shift was identified in the interviews at the end of the first year and completed during the second year of teaching. This led to a new research focus on investigating the patterns of beginning teacher stress and satisfaction.

Much of the research on the relationship between stress and satisfaction have typically involved cross-sectional surveys of large numbers of teachers at different stages in their careers and the information has been gathered at one point in time which means that it does not tell us about variations in stress and satisfaction over time. This shortcoming, combined with evidence that the high levels of stress experienced by beginning teachers when starting to teach reduces quite quickly (Grudnoff & Tuck, 2003), led us to undertake a study which tracked a cohort of 18 New Zealand primary teachers over their first two years of teaching to investigate patterns of stress and satisfaction in beginning teachers (Grudnoff & Tuck, 2005). The findings indicated that the levels of stress fluctuated around a moderate level over time and nearly all experienced high to very low levels of stress during the teaching year. The initial period of stress when starting to teach was relatively short-lived. The study also identified two groups of teachers: six of the 18 participants showed a link between the levels of stress experienced during the year and satisfaction with teaching. That is, when stress was high, satisfaction

was relatively low and vice versa. The larger group reported that they were very satisfied with and enjoyed teaching, irrespective of their levels of stress.

Through this research engagement, I became progressively more intrigued with the whole ‘beginning to teach’ experience. I not only wanted to find out more about what happened in the transition from student to teacher, but also what aspects of the ‘beginning to teach’ experience enable or limit new teacher development and learning. I became increasingly interested in investigating the factors that impact on the professional and identity development of new teachers, and how these factors influence teacher change over time. Hence the focus in this thesis on how the first year of teaching is experienced and interpreted by beginning teachers.

My study deliberately focuses on beginning teachers. I was initially tempted to include tutor teachers but decided against this because my objective was to understand and interpret new teachers’ experiences from the standpoint of the beginning teachers themselves. I wanted to find out how beliefs, biography, teacher preparation, and school factors impacted on New Zealand primary teachers’ transition, development, and professional identity construction over their first year of teaching. My intention in restricting the focus in this way was to add to understandings gained from other research regarding the factors that influence and shape beginning teacher learning and development (Cameron, Baker, & Lovett, 2006; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Flores & Day, 2006; Loughran, Brown, & Doecke, 2001; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998).

In seeking to understand the process of transition, development, and learning that beginning teachers undergo, I interviewed and surveyed participants at the end of their final year of pre-service teacher education and four times during their first year of teaching. The data I have drawn on for this study come from interviews, field notes, and surveys with 12 beginning primary teachers.

At a time when the quality of beginning teachers is the subject of public and political scrutiny and debate in New Zealand, it is critical to gain empirically-based understandings of what influences new teachers’ transition to teaching and

their development as teachers. This study will add to the body of available research knowledge about beginning teaching, particularly in terms of New Zealand, where it will make an original and thus unique contribution to what is known about beginning to teach and its in-school, contextual complexities. The findings are therefore of interest to all those involved in the education of beginning teachers. They have relevance to those who work in pre-service teacher education, to school principals who employ beginning teachers, to policy makers, and also to pre-service students and beginning teachers.

The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is made up of six chapters. A glossary of terms used in the thesis is included after the Table of Contents (p. viii). This chapter, Chapter One, presents the context within which this study is located and outlines my interest and approach to the research project.

Chapter Two: The Literature Review examines the research and other literature that is directly relevant to this study. I reviewed and critiqued literature related to: teacher preparation, transition, and development; the influence of school culture and induction and mentoring on beginning teachers; and the role played by beliefs, biography, and identity in learning to teach.

Chapter Three: The Research Process. This chapter outlines the methodology and methods used in this thesis. It presents and justifies the use of a qualitative, interpretive research design that aligns with a case study approach and draws on principles associated with grounded theory. The participants, data collection methods and data analysis strategies are described and the ethical considerations that guided this research are discussed. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the approaches used to enhance the trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter Four: Findings. This chapter presents a discussion of the findings emerging from the data. The chapter consists of three sections. The first section presents an analysis of the data in terms of the influence of the teacher preparation programme on participants' transition and development as first year teachers. The

second section reports on factors that affected their development and learning over their first year of teaching. The third section examines how these factors, as well as participants' biographies and beliefs, shaped how they constructed themselves as teachers.

Chapter Five: Discussion. In this chapter, I examine the findings in relation to the key questions that shaped this study. The factors found to have influenced the transition, learning, and development of this group of 12 beginning teachers are critiqued in relation to relevant literature.

Chapter Six: Conclusion. *It's a great job once you get used to it.* This final chapter of the thesis provides a summary of the study's key findings and discusses implications for policy and practice. Limitations of the study and matters arising from the research that could be developed through further investigation are also identified.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The early years of teaching are a special time in a teacher's career, different from what has gone on before and what comes after. No longer teachers in someone else's classroom, beginning teachers are on their own, faced with the same responsibilities as their experienced colleagues. (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

The above quotation draws attention to the critical role 'beginning to teach' plays in the professional life span of teachers. The first year of employment has been identified as having a significant impact on a person's motivation, identity, and sense of competence (Arnold, 1986). In terms of beginning teachers, the importance of the first year of teaching highlighted by a number of studies led Gold (1996, p. 553) to conclude that the first year of teaching is "the most heavily weighted factor influencing teacher retention." Beginning teachers are unique in that they face an abrupt rather than a gradual transition to full-time work and are given responsibility for the same range of professional tasks and roles as their more experienced colleagues. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that research has confirmed that moving from preparation to full-time teaching is found to be personally and professionally challenging (Grudnoff & Tuck 2003; Lang, 2002; Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Kay, & Ederfelt, 1989).

The focus of this study is on beginning teachers in their first year of teaching. Of particular interest is gaining a greater understanding of the process of transition and development that new teachers undergo as they move from being pre-service students to becoming teachers. To inform this study, a critical review of the literature was undertaken. The review was not intended to be a comprehensive study of all the literature on beginning teachers. Its purpose is to contextualize this study in relation to previous international and New Zealand research which has highlighted the factors that play a significant role in beginning teacher transition and development.

Overview of the Literature Review

The focus of this literature review is on the learning and development of beginning teachers. For the purposes of this dissertation the term ‘initial teacher education’ applies to the education of beginning teachers and therefore includes both the teacher preparation and induction phases of learning to teach. This is congruent with the definition used by Cameron and Baker (2004) in the NZCER Report, ‘Research on Initial Teacher Education in New Zealand: 1993-2004’.¹

The following sections present a discussion and critique of literature relevant to this study, while the final section sets out the research question.

Approach to the Literature Review

Given the extensive literature on beginning teachers, I placed two broad restrictions on accessing research information. Firstly, I concentrated on research published in the last thirty years. The mid 1970s was selected as a starting point because the publication of Lortie’s (1975) seminal work on the sociology of teaching heralded a burgeoning research interest in the ‘beginning to teach’ phase of teacher development, such as Veenman’s (1984) influential review on the problems that teachers face when they have left pre-service teacher education. Secondly, I searched a variety of library databases for New Zealand and international studies using the following search terms: *teacher education, teacher preparation, beginning teachers, new teachers, novice teachers, transition shock, beginning teacher induction, beginning teacher professional development, beginning teacher learning, mentoring, teacher change, and teacher development*. In addition to databases such as The University of Auckland’s library catalogue, Te Puna (the New Zealand bibliography), Index New Zealand, Proquest and the EBSCO suite of databases and ERIC, I also searched Google and conference websites of the annual meetings of the American, Australian, British, and New

¹ *Becoming a Teacher in the 21st Century: A Review of Initial Teacher Education Policy* (Ministry of Education, September 2007, p. 3) also uses the term *initial teacher education* to “include tertiary programmes leading to graduation as well as induction and support leading to full registration.”

Zealand Educational Research Associations. I am also grateful to colleagues who alerted me to publications and conference presentations in my area of study.

While there is an extensive body of literature on initial teacher education, there are a far greater number of small-scale studies than larger or longer ones. It has been suggested that the preponderance of small-scale research is because teacher education has not been a priority area for attracting research funding (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Furthermore, a close examination of the literature reveals a disparity in terms of the methodology, methods, and conceptual definitions used by different researchers. For example, the teacher preparation studies do not always provide information about programme or student characteristics which makes it difficult to compare the impact of different kinds of programmes on beginning teacher transition and development. Similarly, it is hard to compare the outcomes of ‘induction programmes,’ because the term encompasses a range of approaches from short courses to systematic programmes involving trained mentors. The different approaches taken in the literature meant that I had to apply criteria with regard to what would be included in this Literature Review. The decisive factor for inclusion was the match between the published study and my research questions. I included relevant conceptual work, official papers, and guidelines and excluded work that was not empirically based, or research reports that provided weak descriptions of methodology, methods, or conceptual definitions.

Organisation of the literature review

The focus of the literature review is on the learning and development of beginning teachers. As noted above the term ‘teacher education’ applies to the education of beginning teachers and therefore includes both the teacher preparation and induction phases of learning to teach. This chapter is divided into eight broad sections. The first seven sections present and critique the international and then the New Zealand literature relevant to this study, while the final section identifies the research question. The literature is discussed in the following sections:

- The relationship between teacher preparation and beginning teacher transition and adjustment

- Teachers' stages of development
- School-related factors that influence new teacher development
- Induction and mentoring of beginning teachers
- Beliefs, biography and identity, and learning to teach
- Beginning teacher learning and development
- A discussion of the New Zealand context, including research on beginning teacher learning and development

The chapter concludes with a section that outlines the focus of this thesis.

What International Literature Says about the Relationship between Teacher Preparation and the Transition to Teaching

The first year of teaching has frequently been found to be challenging and very difficult. A number of studies and reviews draw attention to the 'transition shock' (Corcoran, 1981) that novices experience in the shift from being a pre-service student to being a teacher. In his classic study, Veenman (1984) used the concept of 'reality shock' to "indicate the collapse of missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude realities of everyday classroom life" (p. 143). From the 91 studies reviewed, Veenman identified twenty-four problems that are most frequently perceived by beginning teachers, with the top three being classroom discipline, motivating students, and dealing with individual differences. Gold (1996), in his review on teacher induction, concluded that feelings of disillusionment and lack of ability to cope with every day pressures were the greatest problems faced by new teachers, while Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1998), in their analysis of seven longitudinal studies of first year teachers, also identified the first year of teaching as a culture shock for beginning teachers.

Some researchers argue that that this shock is due to the lack of transfer from pre-service teacher education to practice. One line of thought views teacher education as a weak intervention compared with the teachers' own life experiences and the socialization process of the school (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Flores & Day, 2006; Lortie, 1975; Richardson, 1996). Bullough, Knowles, and Crow (1989), for example, identified the key influences on the teaching of three first year teachers

as being their own images of themselves and the children they were teaching, rather than their preparation programme, while Hargreaves and Jacka (1995) described how one teacher who graduated from their teacher education programme enthusiastic about teaching became despondent and disappointed as a result of her experiences as a first year teacher. Rust (1994), in his study of two beginning teachers, identified a change in their beliefs from helping children to managing them and from idealism to control and argued that this was because the teachers reverted back to their prior beliefs about teaching when confronted by the realities of teaching. There is also a suggestion in these studies that the idealism developed during their teacher preparation may have caused problems for them as beginning teachers. The findings from a Portuguese study of 14 new teachers (Flores, 2001) corroborates previous research on the relatively weak impact of their teacher preparation programme on the way beginning teachers approach teaching and view themselves as teachers, compared to the influence of their prior beliefs and experience. Richardson and Placier (2001) in their major review of literature on teacher change, have documented the beliefs about teaching that pre-service students bring to their classrooms and note that many beliefs consist of unexamined assumptions that need to be made explicit and explored. They suggest that if student teachers' entering beliefs are not addressed, problematic pre-conceptions may be retained throughout the teacher preparation phase, with negative impacts on their practice and experiences as first year teachers.

A number of studies focus on programme interventions designed to address student teachers' pre-conceptions. Weinstein (1990) examined the effects of a fourteen-hour course and a twenty-one hour field experience that took place over seven weeks. Using questionnaire data and interviews, Weinstein tested her expectation that pre-service teachers' beliefs would change during the intervention period and found no change in either their beliefs about teaching or what she termed their 'unrealistic optimism'. They continued to emphasize the personal dimension of teaching and downplay the academic side of teaching. Gore and Zeichner (1991), as part of a larger research project investigating the role of action research in promoting reflective practice, examined the action research projects of eighteen pre-service students and found little evidence that that the participants did develop understanding of reflective practice. Wideen et

al. (1998) suggest that the results of such studies demonstrate the limited effect of short-term programme interventions. However, they also point out that many of the studies investigate innovative components of traditional teacher education programmes that assume a transmission model of learning and criticize the researchers for not providing more comprehensive descriptions of the total programme in which specific interventions occur. This view is supported by Zeichner and Gore (1990) who postulate that the effects of innovative courses are nullified by the structural fragmentation and competing agendas that typify traditional programmes of teacher education.

In contrast, research evidence indicates that long-term, programme interventions that explicitly seek to change student teacher preconceptions have more impact than short-term, course-based interventions. For example, Australian researchers Gunstone, Slattery, Baird, and Northfield (1993), in a three-year longitudinal, qualitative study of thirteen pre-service science teachers (whom they also taught), found that participants' beliefs and understandings about the teaching and learning of science changed significantly as they completed a one-year constructivist, pre-service programme. The authors asserted that drawing on and explicitly addressing students' evolving needs and concerns had been an effective feature of the programme intervention. Similar findings are reported in another Australian study by Loughran, Brown, and Doecke (2001), who investigated novices' perceptions of the influence of their teacher preparation programme on their first year of teaching. The authors interviewed twenty-two graduates of a one-year secondary, postgraduate programme that was based on, and organized around, a philosophy of learning and teaching for understanding, rather than knowledge transmission. The results showed that participants generally viewed their teacher preparation as being helpful, while at the same time recognizing that their understanding of teaching and learning had increased as a result of their experience as first year teachers.

A Dutch study by Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) corroborates research that suggests that programme interventions that are designed to integrate theory with practice can mitigate beginning teachers' 'transition shock'. This longitudinal, mixed-method study used data collected from new teachers, their university

supervisors, and co-operating teachers to investigate whether teacher education can make a difference in the development of teaching competence. The beginning teachers had completed a master's degree in an academic subject prior to entering four-month teacher preparation programmes located in one university. The programmes were deliberately designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice by developing student teachers' teaching competence that would equip them for entry into teaching. While Brouwer et al. found that the integrative model of pre-service teacher education did influence the development of new teacher competence, they also identified differences between the first and second years of teaching in terms of alignment between the participants' beliefs and practices and their perceptions of the practical relevance of their pre-service programmes. The authors postulate the existence of a 'latency period', when novices first start teaching - a time when workload and school-related practices over-ride practices and ideals developed during teacher preparation. They propose that programme effects may take time to manifest, observing that it was not until the participants' second year of teaching that these behaviours and ideals resurfaced.

The programme intervention studies suggest that pre-service teacher preparation can influence beginning teacher development, a view which contradicts other researchers (e.g. Lortie, 1975; Veenman, 1984; Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1981) who argue that educational notions developed during teacher education are "washed out" during teaching. One explanation for the more positive view of the impact of pre-service teacher education may be due to the longitudinal research design employed in the studies cited above. Compared to cross-sectional studies, a longitudinal approach enables in-depth study of participants so that changes over time can be identified and analyzed in relation to the two contexts that have a major impact on beginning teacher development: the teacher preparation programme and the school. Another explanation may relate to the nature of the programmes studied. The studies reported on innovative secondary preparation programmes that were structured and organized to enable the integration of theory and practice and to address students' beliefs and pre-conceptions. They also had small numbers of participants who tended to work in small groups with their teacher educators, which may have provided an environment that facilitated the

safe exploration of beliefs. The study by Flores (2001) appears to be one of the few that investigates the impact of undergraduate primary teacher education programmes on beginning teacher development. While her findings run contrary to the studies cited above in that they suggest that teacher preparation had a weak impact on the beginning teachers she studied, Flores provides little detail of the philosophic base or approach taken in the 'Integrated Model of Teacher Training,' which makes it difficult to tease out reasons for the differences in findings between, for example, the Loughran et al. and the Flores studies. Zeichner and Conklin (2005, p. 702) argue that research investigating the impact of teacher education programmes needs to make explicit the vision of teaching that the preparation aims for. Investigations into the level of transfer from teacher education to practice should take cognizance of context, because the characteristics (and outcomes) of programmes that seek to develop teachers who are able to teach all students in a way that promotes student understanding will be different from those that focus on the transmission and regurgitation of learning.

The difference in research findings from long-term programme studies compared to short-term course interventions in terms of impact on new teacher beliefs and practice has also been noted by Wideen et al. (1998). They suggest that one reason for this difference may be because programme interventions enable teacher educators to maintain a consistent focus and message, whereas in course-based interventions other elements of the programme interfere with or nullify the effects of the short-term intervention. Graber (1996, p. 450) reinforces the importance of having a consistent focus and message, commenting, "faculty must recognize that if students are to acquire a non-traditional orientation, curriculum messages must be reinforced and supported in all facets of the programme." This suggests that traditional models of teacher training in which the university provides the theory, the school provides the context, and the student provides the effort to bring them together (Britzman, 1986) do not provide optimal conditions to assist student teachers to bridge the theory-practice gap and so mitigate the effects of beginning teacher transition shock. While coursework and practicum components of pre-service teacher education programmes provide different and distinct opportunities for learning to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Grossman & Richert, 1988), many teachers have claimed that the most important part of their teacher preparation

programme was their student teaching experiences in schools (Guyton and McIntyre, 1990). However, research on the practicum indicates that seeing the coursework (theory) and practicum (context) components as being separate and disconnected from each other makes the transfer of learning problematic and complex for student teachers (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981).

The way the practicum is conceptualized, designed, and organized influences teacher learning. There is evidence to suggest that programmes which include practicum experiences integrated with coursework make a difference in teachers' practices, confidence, and long-term commitment to teaching. Some studies indicate that more supervised practicum placements with progressive levels of responsibility can have positive effects on student teachers' practice and confidence (LaBoskey & Richert, 2002), while Baumgartner, Koerner, and Rust (2002) suggest that opportunities to teach in a variety of classrooms, as opposed to one limited practicum experience, assist beginning teachers to develop a stronger 'frame' within which to interpret learning and teaching concepts - a position supported by Feiman-Nemser (2001a) in her analysis of promising teacher education programmes and practices. Other research suggests that having longer practicum experiences, especially those undertaken alongside theoretical coursework, leads to stronger teacher outcomes in terms of applying learning to practice (Chin & Russell, 1995; Sumara & Luce-Kaplar, 1996), while Brouwer et al. (2005) reported that their participants believed that alternating the student teaching and university-based periods enhanced students' teaching competence.

Korthagen and Kessels (1999) have a different view of the relationship between theory and practice and coursework and practicum. They argue that there should be no division between theory and practice and that the question of whether teacher education should start with theory or practice is misguided. To them, the more important question is how to integrate the two in such a way that it leads to integration within the teacher. In their view, teaching should be viewed from the perspective of the student teacher and they describe their 'Realistic Teacher Education Programme' as starting with "real problems encountered by student teachers during field experiences. The student teacher would then develop his or her own knowledge in a process of reflection on the practical situations in which a

personal need for learning was created” (p. 7). This is the antithesis to the approach that Barone, Berliner, Blanchard, Casanova and McGowan, (1996) contend is taken by many teacher education programmes: that is, a collection of separated courses in which theory is presented without much connection to practice. Tom (1997) describes such an approach as an “assembly-line model” to teacher education.

The nature of practicum support is also an important factor in new teacher development. There is evidence that a “sink or swim” approach does not provide optimal learning conditions for student teachers (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1989; Britzman, 1991) but that the guidance, mentoring, and feedback that student teachers receive from their school and university programme supervisors play a critical role in their learning and development. Studies investigating the role of the university supervisor suggest that they play an important role as the translators of the values and beliefs of the teacher education programme (Richert, LaBoskey, & Kroll, 2000; Rust & Bullmaster, 2000) although LaBoskey, Kroll, and Galguera (2001) found in their study that there was little explicit mention of programme principles by either student teachers or co-operating teachers, even though university supervisors commented on these when providing assessment feedback to the student. This reinforces the importance of taking an integrative approach to theory and practice in teacher preparation programmes. In terms of providing powerful learning sites for student teachers, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) have highlighted the importance of there being an alignment between the practicum and the programme’s vision of teaching, as well as the student teachers, university supervisors, and co-operating teachers having a shared understanding about the purposes and activities of practicum placements. The study by LaBoskey and Richert (2002) suggests that even student teachers who have already had practicum experiences, have strong content knowledge, and felt strongly about the teaching vision in the programme have difficulties applying what they are learning in placements that are not consistent with the aims of the programme.

Programme coherence and consistency and shared understandings among communities of practice are important considerations in terms of strengthening

the transfer from teacher preparation to practice. Feiman-Nemser (2001a) criticizes traditional pre-service programmes for assuming that learning is largely an additive process that mostly bypasses person and setting. In terms of making a difference, she argues that pre-service programmes need to be “organized around an explicit and thoughtful mission and conceptual framework, integrate courses and fieldwork, use student and/or faculty cohorts to intensify the experience, and attend to students’ entering beliefs and their evolving professional identity and practice” (p. 1022). Feiman-Nemser’s description of the essential elements of promising programmes and practices shares similarities with Darling-Hammond’s (2006) analysis of powerful teacher education programmes, although in Feiman-Nemser’s model there is greater emphasis on the role that beliefs and dispositions play in learning to teach. Through case studies of seven different American pre-service programmes, Darling-Hammond (2006, pp. 276-7) identifies six common programme elements that she contends result in the preparation of teachers that are ready to enter teaching with the knowledge and skills that enable them to teach diverse learners and learn continuously from their practice. These elements include: programme coherence based on a common, clear vision of good teaching which is grounded in an understanding of learning that permeates all coursework and practicum experiences; extensive, connected practicum experiences; an inquiry approach that connects theory and practice; school-university partnerships that develop common knowledge and shared beliefs among school and university-based faculty; and assessment based on professional standards that evaluates teaching through the demonstration of critical skills and abilities. Both authors criticize the “lack of connective tissue” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a, p. 1049) between the pre-service and full-time teaching phases of learning to teach. Feiman-Nemser advocates conceptualizing teacher development as a professional learning continuum that extends from initial preparation into the early years of teaching. She argues, “Learning to teach...is a complex, lengthy undertaking... (that) requires coherent and connected learning opportunities that link initial preparation to new teacher induction and new teacher induction to continuing professional development” (p. 1048).

There is support for the idea of conceptualising ‘learning to teach’ as a professional development continuum. Some researchers argue that pre-service

programmes can never fully bridge the preparation to practice divide. Northfield and Gunstone (1997) for example, contend that while pre-service teacher education endeavors to prepare students for full-time teaching, this preparation will inevitably be inadequate as the programme cannot fully create or sustain an environment that mirrors the reality of being a teacher. Loughran et al. (2001) suggest that pre-service teacher education should not aim to equate teacher preparation with full-time teaching because learning to teach in pre-service teacher education is more than just socializing beginning teachers into the profession. They also argue that learning about teaching in teacher preparation and learning about teaching through experience as a beginning teacher are not independent of one another but should be explicitly linked. This view of becoming a teacher through a continuum of development is contested by other theories of 'learning to teach' as discussed in the following section.

Stage Theories of Teacher Development

A key strand in the 'learning to teach' literature considers teacher professional development in terms of developmental stages. The classic stage theories conceptualized teacher growth as a progression through a series of phases in a relatively deterministic manner, the assumption being that the stages are sequential and hierarchical and that each subsequent stage is more complex and more desirable than the preceding stages (Richardson & Placier, 2001).

A number of studies conceptualized stages of development in relation to teacher concerns. Van den Berg (2002, p. 592), in a review of literature on influences on teacher development, notes that 'concerns' theory, as a classic stage theory of professional development, has greatly influenced research on the professional development of teachers. Van den Berg describes 'concerns' as questions that have emotional undertones that signal uncertainty and possible resistance to new situations. 'Concerns' theory distinguishes three types of concerns: self-concern; task concern; and impact concern, and Van den Berg argues that the work of Frances Fuller (1969; Fuller & Brown, 1975) is significant in this area. From survey data, as well as information from the literature, Fuller inferred a three-stage 'concerns' model of teacher development: in the first stage, pre-service

students are concerned with survival issues (self concerns); later in teacher preparation, the focus shifts to concerns about their performance as teachers (task concerns); and finally, with successful teaching experiences, novices' concerns relate to their impact on students (impact concerns). This developmental progression, from early concerns with the 'self' to an eventual focus on students and students' learning, has also been identified in other studies. Nias (1989), from data obtained from interviews with newly-qualified beginning teachers, found that they progressed through stages related to survival, task, and impact concerns in accordance with Fuller's model. Nias concluded that participants did not initially think of themselves as teachers and those who did not come to view themselves as teachers eventually left teaching.

Kagan (1992) constructed a model of new teacher professional growth based on Fuller (1969) and a review of 40 qualitative learning-to-teach studies. Kagan conceptualized the teacher preparation and first year of teaching as a single developmental stage during which novices acquire knowledge of students, use that knowledge to modify and reconstruct their images of self as teacher, and develop routines in classroom management and instruction. Kagan applied this stage model to teacher preparation and learning. She argued that novices should first learn only basic skills and that the focus for reflection should be on their own biographies, because they need experience in order to reflect on their teaching performance. Kagan asserts that novice teachers need to have an inward focus in order to develop a clear image of themselves as teachers before they can grow, commenting that "without a strong image of self as teacher, a novice may be doomed to flounder" (op cit p. 147). Kagan's view differs from Fuller and Brown (1975) who argue that "the novice's initial focus on self is a weakness or inadequacy that is best shortened or aborted" (Kagan, 1992, p. 161). Kagan contends that it is only after beginning teachers resolve their self image as a teacher that they can move on to the next stages of development.

Pigge and Marso (1997) based their study on Fuller's model to investigate the 'concerns' development of a longitudinal sample of 60 American elementary and secondary, predominately female, teachers over a seven-year period from the start of teacher preparation through their first five years of teaching. Using a

quantitative approach, the authors were interested in determining what, if any, personal and academic attributes of teachers might be associated with teachers' changes in concerns about teaching. A finding consistent with Fuller's hypothesis was that participants' task, self, and impact concerns changed as they progressed through teacher preparation and the first five years of teaching. However, Pigge and Marso also identified an interaction between career stages and teacher characteristics that they suggest cannot be adequately explained by Fuller's stage model. They found changes in impact concerns to be related to participants' grade point averages and suggest that, while teachers experience changes in impact concerns as they develop, the pattern of change varies considerably relative to the capabilities of the teachers. "In other words, the development of teaching concerns may not follow a lock-step pattern, but rather may vary for individuals" (ibid, p. 234). While the Pigge and Marso research is one of the few longitudinal studies that have investigated teacher development over such a long time frame, it should be noted that the long periods between their data collection points may have masked changes in teacher concerns both within and across the years. Wideen et al. (1998), while commenting on the clean design of the study and the limited number of variables being studied, draw attention to the lack of information about the context in which the concerns were being examined and suggest that not addressing contextual matters may result in some significant factors being overlooked.

The stage theory concerns approach to teacher development has been contested by a number of researchers. Zeichner and Teitelbaum (1982), in their critique of Fuller's model, argue for a political rather than concerns based approach to teacher education, claiming that a focus on concerns promotes a personalized rather than critical inquiry approach in teacher learning. They see a danger in addressing student teachers' immediate concerns in that complex problems of practice would get put off in preference to resolving technical and survival concerns. They see the consequence of such models as promoting an individualistic and conservative approach to teacher education. Grossman (1992) has criticized Kagan, arguing against the idea that teachers should attend first to teaching procedures and routines, because she believes that this works against reflection and reinforces a focus on classroom activities as opposed to attention to

students' learning. Grossman asserts that teachers, from the outset, should cover all aspects of teaching, including student learning, curriculum, classroom management, and their own identity, and asserts that even novices can exhibit growth if they have the right kinds of support. Other researchers have argued that the emergence of prospective teacher concerns is complex and cannot be reduced to a single, universal, linear progression (Bullough, 1997), a position which disputes Kagan's contention that students must resolve early concerns before later ones can emerge. Some studies have reported the simultaneous (as opposed to sequential) emergence of survival, teaching, and pupil concerns among pre-service and experienced teachers (e.g. Calderhead, 1989; Pigge & Marso, 1997), while others have identified pre-service concerns focused on the teaching of subject matter before student classroom management routines were developed (Grossman & Richert, 1988).

A stage theory approach to examining teacher development is, however, broader than a focus on teacher concerns. Van Manen (1977), for example, looked at reflectivity in teaching and identified three sequential and invariant levels of reflection in terms of the deliberateness of the decision related to an action: technical or instrumental; practical or awareness of alternative principles; and critical or consideration of moral principles related to social conditions. Zeichner and Liston (1987) argue against Van Manen's hierarchical approach to reflection and assert that all levels are important and should be used by teachers at different times. Black and Ammon (1992) developed a five-stage theory of pedagogical thinking based on interviews of a cross-section of pre-service, novice and experienced teachers. They suggest that teachers start out with behaviourist conceptions and then move to constructivist conceptions that are initially global (level 3) and then become more differentiated and integrated (levels 4 and 5). Berliner (1994) developed a theory based on empirical research that explained teachers' cognitive processes as they moved from novice to expert teacher. He described five levels: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. Characteristics of this progression include an increased sense of responsibility and a deepening emotional involvement. However, unlike the theories proposed by Fuller (1969, 1975) and Kagan (1992), Berliner suggests that

teachers do not necessarily move through these stages on the basis of experience alone and that some teachers remain fixed on a particular level.

The majority of studies using a developmental stages approach to teacher learning imply smooth transitions from one stage to the next. However, as Bullough (1989, p. 17) points out: “Human development defies easy categorization. It is seldom smooth, never conflict free, and frequently characterized by backsliding,” and argues (1997) that beginning teachers do not go through clear transition stages and that teachers vary considerably. Richardson et al. (2001) note that rarely do stage theorists look at what prompts this movement from stage to stage and comment that, because much of the research on stages of development is cross-sectional, to determine factors other than years of experience that assist with movement through the stages is difficult. There are also issues related to the assumption that the stages identified by the various authors are meant to be generalized across all teachers and yet little account is taken of the contexts that the novice and experienced teachers are working in. Feiman-Nemser (2001a, p. 1048) has conceptualized ‘learning to teach’ not in terms of stages but rather as a continuum that requires coherent and connected learning opportunities that link initial teacher preparation to new teacher induction and new teacher induction to continuing professional development. She argues that ‘learning to teach’ is a complex and lengthy process that needs to be oriented around the intellectual and practical tasks of teaching and the contexts of teachers’ work. The influence of school contextual factors on beginning teacher transition and learning is the focus of the next two sections.

The Impact of School-Related Factors on Beginning Teacher Retention and Development

The early years of teaching have been identified as a being a critical period in determining whether, and for how long, a teacher remains in the profession. Findings from empirical studies suggest that beginning teachers’ experience of ‘easy’ or ‘painful beginnings’ (Huberman, 1989) is influenced by workplace conditions and school culture (Cole, 1991; Williams, Prestage, & Bedward, 2001),

and that these factors impact on teacher morale, commitment, and retention (Weiss, 1999).

There has been increasing concern around the retention of new teachers in the profession. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) point to a strong link between high rates of beginning teacher attrition and teacher shortages. The argument that retaining new teachers in the profession is a far larger problem than training new ones is supported by data from American studies showing that more than 30% of new teachers leave within five years (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). The reasons that beginning teachers give for leaving include job dissatisfaction, lack of professionalism in their colleagues, lack of collegiality and administrative support, challenges with teaching itself, burn-out, uninvolved parents, and disruptive students (Berry, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Inman and Marlow, 2004).

Working conditions play a large role in teacher decisions to change schools or leave the profession. According to Ingersoll (2001), poor working conditions and lack of significant on-the-job training and support were the main reasons that many new teachers leave the profession within five years. There also appear to be differences in the support that teachers receive in affluent and poor schools, with teachers in more advantaged communities experiencing easier working conditions (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). An American study (Harris, 2002) found that teachers in high-minority, low-income schools reported significantly worse working conditions, including poorer facilities, fewer textbooks and supplies, less administrative support, and larger class sizes. The teachers were more likely to say that they planned to leave a school soon if working conditions were poor, a finding that is reinforced by survey evidence showing that low-income schools experience up to 50% higher turnover than affluent schools (Ingersoll, 2001).

The working environment or school culture also has a key influence on beginning teachers' learning and development. Indeed, according to some researchers, school culture has a stronger influence on beginning teachers' actions and development than pre-service teacher preparation (e.g. Flores, 2001; Stanulis, Campbell, & Hicks, 2002). According to Deal and Peterson (1999, p. 3), school

culture is the “unwritten rules and traditions, norms, and expectations that seem to permeate everything: the way people act; how they dress; what they talk about or avoid talking about; whether they seek out colleagues for help or don’t; and how teachers feel about their work and their students.” Sergiovanni (1987, p. 59) believes that school cultures “serve as a compass setting, steering people in a common direction; it provides a set of norms, defining what people should accomplish and how, and it is a source of meaning and significance for teachers, students, administrators, and others as they work.” Sergiovanni’s definition implies an unproblematic notion of school culture in that it views culture to be a unitary and unifying phenomenon and assumes that everyone, unquestioningly, wants to travel in the same direction. In contrast, Hargreaves (1994) views school culture as being made up of subcultures that exist within the various social groups that make up the school as an organisation. He discusses subcultures, what he terms ‘balkanized cultures,’ which can result in negative working environments. The major characteristics of such subcultures are: staff working in close-knit groups that are difficult or impossible to enter; groups that have a recognized identity and provide their members with an identity; and groups that serve to promote the self-interest of their member but do not act on behalf of the whole staff. Hargreaves (1994, p. 165) asserts that the culture or subcultures of a school impact on beginning teachers’ learning and development because “what they do in terms of classroom styles and strategies is powerfully affected by the outlooks and orientations of the colleagues with whom they work.”

Sabar (2004) uses the metaphor of novice teachers as migrants to highlight the challenges that new teachers face in adjusting to the culture of their school. He describes the beginning teacher as a being a stranger, unfamiliar with the accepted norms in the school or the hidden codes which exist among teachers and students and says that they resemble migrants who leave a familiar culture (the teacher education institution) and move into a strange one (their school) that is both repellent and attractive (p. 147). He argues that beginning teachers, as strangers, occupy a marginal space in their schools since they lack the confidence in their behaviour and in their social status and are thus dependent on the good will of the members of the group to which they want to belong. Other researchers have taken a more positive view, with Williams (2002) for example, arguing that new

teachers bring with them new ideas, enthusiasm, and a potential to positively impact on their school environment. He does, however, also recognize the powerful role that school culture plays in determining whether or not this potential will be realized. Although Stanulis et al. (2002) argue that beginning teachers can either conform to or resist the prevailing culture, the reality is that new teachers often experience what Khamis (2000) refers to as ‘the anguish of compromise,’ when they compromise their strongly held notions and conform to the dominant culture in order to ‘fit in’ and to be accepted like most migrants.

Some authors have argued that not enough attention is given to how schools as organizations impact on beginning teacher transition and development. Zeichner (1983) believes that a useful way to conceptualize the act of becoming a teacher is to view this as a process of socialization, a term that “readily communicates an interest in understanding the continual interplay between individual choice and situational constraint” (p. 2). Zeichner also notes that there is no clear consensus “with regard to the potency and influence of the various socializing agents and mechanisms” (ibid, p. 8). Studies have highlighted the powerful effect of workplace culture on teacher professional socialization (Kuzmic, 1994; Rust, 1994). In his ethnographic case study of one beginning teacher’s experiences over a semester in her first year of teaching, Kuzmic (1994) argues for an interactive view of becoming a teacher that recognizes the role ‘context’ plays in this process. From data collected from field observations and interviews, Kuzmic identified in his participant a lack of understanding of how schools function as bureaucratic organizations. He suggests that this lack of understanding limited the new teacher’s effectiveness in seeking to understand and find solutions to the problems she experienced. Kuzmic asserts that ‘organizational literacy’ should be part of the teacher preparation programme because, if there is not an understanding of the organizational life of schools:

beginning teachers may be ill-equipped to deal with the problems and difficulties that they encounter or to develop the political tactics and teacher strategies needed to resist and challenge the pressures to conform, many of which stem from the institutional characteristics of schools as bureaucratic organizations (p. 24).

Similarly, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002, p. 106) contend that much of the research on beginning teachers concentrates on problems associated with classroom management and teaching and that little attention is given to the fact that beginning teachers also become members of an organization. They hold that understanding how the school as an organization operates often provides the beginning teacher with one of their most difficult tasks as a novice and is a source of the shock that beginning teachers experience. That is, transition shock is not only related to classroom issues but also to do with socialization into the school as an organization. Kelchtermans et al. (2002), like Kuzmic (1994), view teacher socialization as not passively sliding into an existing context, but rather as an interpretive and interactive process between the new teacher and the context. They concur with Blasé (1997, pp. 962-963), that micro-politics is pervasive in the classroom, the school, and the community, and argue for explicit attention being given to the micro-political reality of schools in the teacher preparation and induction phases of teacher learning. While there does not appear to be much research on the development of micro-political or organizational literacy, there are a number of studies on the impact of school culture on beginning teachers.

A number of researchers have provided insight into the relationship between school culture and teacher learning and development (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Flores, 2001, 2005; Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Hauffman, & Liu, 2001; Nias 1989). An important study in this area is one by Kardos et al. (2001) who sought to identify the type of school culture that best supported beginning teacher development. They interviewed 50 first and second year elementary, middle, and high school teachers in the state of Massachusetts to investigate the professional cultures that new teachers encounter in their schools. From their analysis of the new teachers' accounts of their experiences, the authors conceptualised three types of professional cultures or subcultures. Firstly, veteran-oriented cultures where the concerns and habits of veteran teachers determined professional interactions. In these cultures, new teachers were mostly left alone to discover how to do things, as there was a lack of meaningful, structural mechanisms in place to orient, induct, and provide ongoing support for new teachers. The second type, novice-oriented cultures, were characterized by inexperience, youth, and idealism. Beginning teachers in these cultures reported

that they seldom felt alone because of the connection they felt with their young and inexperienced colleagues, but that they often felt lost as they had little access to professional guidance from veterans on how to teach. The third category was the integrated-professional culture. In these cultures, new teachers experienced sustained support from colleagues and frequent interactions across experience levels; i.e. there were no separate camps of veteran and novice teachers. In integrated-professional cultures, all teachers regularly engaged in professional conversations and shared responsibility for students:

These professional cultures were attentive to what novice teachers knew and what they needed to know, and there was open and reciprocal exchange between the fresh perspectives of the novice teachers and the wisdom of their experienced colleagues. In addition, in integrated cultures, teachers could influence the practice in their schools, and they were dedicated to their own professional growth and renewal, so that their practices were flexible and adaptable to the changing needs of their students (p. 274).

The teachers in the study by Kardos et al. (2001) were best served by integrated-professional cultures. It was in these cultures that organized structures for support, the norms of how work gets done, and the prevailing beliefs about collegiality and professional growth were embedded in the school's professional culture. The authors also found that principals played different roles in the three cultures. In the veteran-oriented and novice-oriented cultures, the principals did not try to establish a place for new teachers within the professional culture of the school and were frequently seen to be absent from the daily life of their schools. In contrast, principals in integrated-professional cultures were seen to be present, responsive, and actively involved in building and developing those cultures. They were also aware of and attended to the needs of new teachers.

A longitudinal study by Flores (2001) provides a further example of the impact that school cultures have on new teachers. Flores interviewed fourteen Portuguese beginning teachers and also surveyed all teachers in the six schools in which the new teachers worked. In relation to school culture, her respondents reported a work environment characterized by lack of teamwork and lack of a supportive atmosphere within the school. They also reported a gap between newcomers and those with a permanent post at the school, an environment that

seems to fit Kardos et al.'s definition of veteran-oriented cultures. Flores suggests that the workplace culture has a powerful effect on the understanding and practice of the profession, arguing that beginning teachers in supportive and informative settings are more likely to seek advice and to overcome their doubts and difficulties more effectively. This view matches the assertion by Kardos et al. (2001, p. 252) that "professional cultures into which new teachers are inducted are critically important because these early years not only confirm new teachers' choice of occupation in life but also lay the basis for future professional development."

The literature contrasts isolationist cultures with collaborative school cultures in terms of types of environment that best support and nurture beginning teachers. Nias (1989), in her study of five British primary schools, identified three schools that had truly collaborative environments. She argued that it was the emotional support provided by the school culture that engendered trust, help, support, and openness rather than any formal structures or meetings. The characteristics of such collaborative cultures included: the valuing of people as individuals; welcoming and inclusion of new staff; open discussion of disagreements and mistakes; valuing hard work; and a staff's commitment and responsibility for each other and for the students they taught. Nias (1989) describes collaborative staff as being both happy and resilient. This description of collaborative cultures is similar to Bryk, Camburn, and Louis's (1999) concept of professional communities which are characterized by co-operative relationships, frequent interactions between staff, the sharing of resources and expertise, and a focus on the practice and improvement of teaching and learning. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) conceptualize work environments on a continuum from expansive to restrictive, which are similar to the characteristics of collaborative versus isolationist cultures. They identify restrictive work environments as being ones where teachers work alone alongside colleagues who do not support each other's learning, compared to expansive work environments that enable collaborative and mutually supportive working relationships with colleagues. Ramsey (2000) describes a restrictive work environment when he portrays the type of school culture that dampens the enthusiasm of the beginning teachers and isolates them from their colleagues as being 'closed and cynical' and 'toxic,' with

such cultures often shaped by entrenched and unresponsive teachers at middle management level. This description also appears to share similarities with Kardos et al.'s concept of veteran-oriented, professional cultures.

According to Hargreaves (1993, p. 53) collaboration and collegiality have become powerful images of professional aspiration, while isolation and individualism have become equally powerful images of professional aversion. While it is true that collaborative and collegial cultures have been identified as providing the most conducive conditions for starting to teach (e.g. Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a), other researchers have challenged these notions. Little (1990) argues that real collegiality, calls for more than teachers exchanging social pleasantries, offering aid or assistance or even sharing ideas and materials. She holds that true collegial work is 'joint work' in which teachers share responsibility for instruction and outcomes. Hargreaves (1994) also criticizes a culture of contrived collegiality which he views as a form of leadership-mandated collaboration in order to ensure that administration and other mandated requirements can be met, but which does little to empower the individual teacher or encourage ongoing, genuine collaboration among staff. Day (1999) is less critical of this process, suggesting, "Despite their limitations, cultures of contrived collegiality may act as a "bridging" process towards more collaborative cultures in providing added opportunities for development" (p. 81). This position is supported by Kardos et al. (2001) who argue that structures need to be put in place that nurture an environment and culture of collegiality and collaboration. They found that when:

New teachers were inducted into and socialized by integrated-professional cultures, there were organizational structures such as mentoring arrangements and curriculum planning sessions that supported their induction. These new teachers spoke of being united with their colleagues in the pursuit of a common mission. Such shared purpose had not emerged accidentally nor spontaneously but had been deliberately built. (Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu, p. 17).

This quotation not only highlights the importance of organizational contexts and working conditions in new teacher development, but also indicates the key roles that induction and mentoring play in becoming a teacher.

The Influence of Induction and Mentoring on Beginning Teachers

Over the last two decades there has been increased policy and research interest in the role that induction plays in new teachers' transition to teaching and development as teachers. Much of this interest is linked to three inter-related factors: the recognition that teacher quality is critical to enabling student achievement; concerns over the high attrition rates of beginning teachers; and the growing understanding that the "quality of the professional experience in the early years of teaching is now seen as a crucial influence on the likelihood of leaving the profession" (OECD, 2005 p. 135). Research suggests that induction is not only important for teacher retention, but also for beginning teacher learning and development (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004).

Induction is viewed as being both a period in time and a process. As Schon (1987) observed, new teachers, like all beginning professionals, must demonstrate skills and competencies that they do not yet have and can only gain by beginning to do what they do not yet understand. Induction therefore is conceptualized as providing a bridge or "critical link" between preparation and practice as a professional (Ramsey, 2000). The induction phase is what Feiman-Nemser (2001a) calls the 'second stage of learning to be a teacher,' one that requires special attention in terms of providing professional support and guidance to novices to enable them to become confident and competent teachers. Wong, Britton, and Ganser (2005) define induction as a highly organized and comprehensive form of staff development involving many people and components that typically continue as a sustained process for the first two to five years of a teacher's career. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) however define induction more loosely as comprising a range of activities including classes, workshops, orientations, seminars, and mentoring.

Not all beginning teachers experience an induction phase that is characterized by sustained professional development and support. Although Darling-Hammond (1999) noted that almost 50% of new teachers in the United States had some kind of induction experience, it seems that many induction programmes offered

superficial and/or periodic assistance like workshops (Gold, 1996). Data from American studies suggest that:

As many as 50 percent of beginning teachers do not participate in induction programmes beyond a one-time orientation only, and that one percent of the teacher workforce participates in the kind of comprehensive programme recommended by researchers (Whisnant, Elliot, & Pynchon, 2005, p. 12).

It appears then that the experience of many new teachers is one where they struggle to cope alone, with little organized help from their colleagues (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Lortie, 1975). In a recent study, Kardos (2005) surveyed a randomly selected sample of 484 first and second year K12 teachers from four American states. She notes that, in spite of the attention given to the induction of new teachers, many of her participants reported that their work was solitary, that they did not receive special assistance to help them learn on the job, nor were they encouraged to seek help. Research also indicates that some groups of new teachers are more likely to experience less support than others. Johnson et al. (2004) focused on ten teachers from their longitudinal study of 50 new teachers in the state of Massachusetts and found that those in low-income schools (i.e. those with more than 50% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch) were less likely to receive structured advice and curriculum assistance from experienced colleagues than did new teachers in high-income schools. The authors suggest that this “support gap” is of major concern because of the impact it has on schools that have the most need for skilled teachers. They argue that because low income schools offer significantly less support to new teachers they are likely to have the most difficulty attracting and retaining teachers, with consequential negative effects for the children in those schools. This contention is supported by data from other studies by Johnson and her colleagues that indicate that new teachers’ decisions to move from low income to wealthier schools were based primarily on the extent of the support that they received from their original schools (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Johnson, 2004).

The increased focus on beginning teacher induction aimed at improving teacher professional practice and retention has been an international trend over the last decade or so. A recent OECD Report on “Attracting, Developing, and Retaining

Effective Teachers” (2005) highlighted the importance of policy level decisions to ensure that new teachers were provided with appropriate assistance and professional development opportunities. The report reinforces the role that work environments play in supporting and enabling teachers to perform to their potential and to increase retention rates of newly qualified teachers. The report also identifies national differences in induction and policy and approach. For example: only ten of the 25 countries involved in the project had mandatory induction programmes and seven of those ten linked induction to teacher certification; in another six countries, whether induction is offered or not is at the discretion of the school; and almost two-thirds of the participating countries did not offer formal induction programmes. Other differences include: the duration of induction programmes (which range from seven months to two years); and workloads (five countries had requirements for a reduced workload for beginning teachers). Further reviews of international approaches to induction (Britton et al., 2003; Wong et al., 2005) looked in detail at how five countries (Switzerland, Japan, France, New Zealand, and China - Shanghai) supported new teacher entry into the profession and found that there were both similarities and differences in their approaches to induction.

Britton and his colleagues (2003) identified three major similarities to induction across the five countries: it is highly structured and comprehensive; there is a focus on professional learning and development; and there is an emphasis on collaboration and the treatment of novices as colleagues. Although Britton et al. recognize the importance of educational and cultural contexts in induction approaches and caution against cross-country generalization, they do draw on the international examples to make a less than positive comparison with induction approaches in the United States. They argue that induction there is often sporadic, poorly aligned, and lacks adequate follow up, and is viewed very narrowly with a focus on one-to-one mentoring. They also suggest that isolation is the common experience of many new teachers in America rather than the collaborative approach identified in their international comparison.

England provides an example of a mandated approach to induction, with a statutory induction period for new teachers in state schools introduced in 1999.

The aim was to ensure that all newly qualified teachers had onsite, structured support and guidance to consolidate and extend their teacher preparation learning. Kyriacou and O'Connor (2003) surveyed 43 novices at two points in their first year of teaching about their experiences of their induction year. Their participants had all completed the same one year primary graduate teacher education programme and were part of the first cohort of beginning teachers to participate in the newly mandated induction process. The authors found that there was a marked variation in the quality of the induction provision and argue that induction programmes need to be quality assured through a transparent monitoring and evaluation process, so that equality of access to high quality induction is available to all beginning teachers. Another British investigation by Williams, Prestage, and Bedward (2001) used a case study approach to investigate the induction practices in eleven rural and urban, primary and secondary schools. Through interview data with new teachers, their induction tutors, and head teachers, they found that the mandatory induction arrangements that required regular interviews with an induction tutor as well as observations and feedback, generated a 'framework of collaboration' which significantly improved support for beginning teachers. They also found that not all their participants received their entitlements and warn that "while centralized and statutory demands seem to have been successful in raising the standards of induction practice, the characteristics that take induction practice beyond the satisfactory and into the realms of excellence are, by their very nature, not amenable to statute or external mandate" (Williams et al., 2001, p. 265).

The findings in the two English studies cited above are consistent with research from other countries that have found that there are often disparities between induction policy and how it is implemented. For example, a longitudinal Australian study by Ewing and Smith (2002) investigated some of the factors that have been identified as contributing to the retention or loss of beginning teachers. Their 196 participants were all graduates from the University of Sydney and were involved in New South Wales state-mandated induction programmes. The authors sought information on participants' induction experience, including the quality and nature of the support that they had received as beginning teachers. The survey data indicated that less than half of the sample was assigned an

experienced teacher with responsibility for assisting the beginning teacher and less than a quarter of the respondents reported regular and ongoing induction meetings. This suggests that, despite the fact that induction was mandatory, the experience of many of the new teachers can be characterized as being one of ‘inadequate and unmanaged induction.’ Despite the respondents’ less than satisfactory views of their induction experiences, the authors found that the teachers were strongly committed to teaching and were generally satisfied with their teaching positions - a finding that they suggest may mean that there may be reasons other than poor induction practices that account for low beginning teacher retention rates. They also note, however, that around 40% of the 196 participants did not see themselves teaching in ten years. The authors identify the need for a more intensive and in-depth methodological approach to investigate beginning teachers’ lived experience. They indicate that the next phase of their project will be case studies of two groups of beginning teachers: those who are still teaching, as well as those who decided to leave the profession in their first few years of teaching. The aim is to identify the kinds of professional development necessary to optimize beginning teachers’ longer-term career choices.

Many of the studies on beginning teacher induction focus on mentoring. Indeed, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) argue that mentoring programmes have become the dominant form of teacher induction to the extent that the terms are often used interchangeably. According to Achinstein and Villar (2004, p. 311), mentoring is a process in which an experienced teacher “attends to the professional development of beginning teachers through ongoing observation, conversations and assessment of practice, goal setting aligned with standards of quality teaching, and technical and emotional support.” Formal mentoring has been a common strategy employed by countries and schools to try to address the isolation and the attendant difficulties and failures that are often the lot of beginning teachers. The literature does suggest that mentor teachers can influence novice teachers’ perceptions of their ability to manage the challenges associated with the first year of teaching (Martinez, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Gold, 1996). In their review of induction literature, Wang and Odell (2002) suggest that mentors can influence novices’ beliefs about students and teaching practices, which indicates that mentoring, therefore, is a way to shape new teachers’ perspectives of and

interactions with students. Ingersoll and Kralik's (2004) review of empirical research on the impact of mentoring on teacher retention also supports the claims that assistance for new teachers, and in particular teacher mentoring programmes, have a positive effect on teachers and their retention.

There is evidence to show that effective mentors assist new teachers to meet the challenges of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b; Gold, 1996; Veenman, 1984) through helping them decide what and how to teach, assisting them with classroom management, and helping them develop strategies to enable student achievement. Successful mentoring strategies include observing novices teaching and providing feedback (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Odell, 2006), modelling good teaching, and sharing resources and ideas (Kardos et al., 2001). Mentors also play an important role in helping novices adjust to school norms and expectations by helping them interpret the professional culture of the workplace (Kardos et al., 2001; Lortie, 1975; Villani, 2002). Research indicates that beginning teachers who are mentored are more likely to remain in their schools and in teaching (Johnson, 2004; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004) and become more effective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Kardos et al., 2001) because they receive advice and guidance, as opposed to relying on trial and error, to develop their teaching knowledge and expertise (Odell & Huling, 2000). In contrast, novices that experience an unsupported, 'sink or swim' start to teaching are more likely to suffer premature burnout through disillusionment and an inability to cope with the daily pressures of teaching (Gold, 1996) and as a consequence either leave teaching or lose their ideals and lower their expectations for student learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a).

A number of researchers assert that the presence of a mentoring programme does not in itself impact on beginning teacher retention and learning. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) analyzed school mentoring programmes and the extent of effective assistance provided to new teachers and measured the effects of both variables on job satisfaction and teacher turnover. They found that both veteran and new teachers in schools with mentoring programmes reported slightly less satisfaction overall, while effective assistance had a strong positive effect on job satisfaction. They suggest that one interpretation of these results is that having a mentoring

programme per se is less important than the provisions of effective assistance to newcomers, regardless of whether this is through informal or formal mechanisms. Their analyses also yielded results that showed that beginning teachers who were provided with mentors from the same subject field and who participated in collective induction activities such as planning and collaboration with other teachers were less likely to move to other schools and less likely to leave teaching after their first year in the field. Although mentor support is viewed as being important to beginning teachers (Gold, 1996; Huling-Austin, 1990), Feiman-Nemser (2001a, p. 1031) comments that:

Support is the omnibus term used to describe the materials, advice, and hand-holding that mentors offer new teachers. While supporting new teachers is a humane response to the very real challenges of beginning teaching, it does not provide an adequate rationale. Unless we take new teachers seriously as learners and frame induction around a vision of good teaching and compelling standards for student learning, we will end up with induction programs that reduce stress and address immediate problems without promoting teacher development and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The view that effective mentoring goes beyond the provision of emotional support and practical information is supported by Achinstein and Barrett (2004) in their study of 15 new teacher-mentor pairs over two years. They collected data via mentoring conversations, classroom observations, and interviews with mentors and novices working in culturally and linguistically diverse Californian elementary schools. The authors observed that novice teachers require mentoring that challenges their views of students, learning, and teaching, and conceptualized mentors as being both friend and critic, whose role was to support beginning teachers to view challenges and problems from multiple viewpoints. This position is similar to that of Feiman-Nemser's (2001b) advocacy of educative mentoring or growth-producing experiences. Her case study was of a master mentor who identified his role as "helping novices develop a practice that is responsive to the community and reflects what we know about children and learning" and focused on finding openings for productive lines of thinking by pinpointing problems that helped move the novices thinking and practice forward (p. 20). This is the opposite of what Little (1990a) argues is the norm of mentoring practice: situational adjustment, technical advice, and emotional support.

The literature identifies a number of issues related to mentors and mentoring. Due to increased expectations and the demands of mentoring, a number of studies have pointed to the need for mentor training and development. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) and Feiman-Nemser (2001a) suggest that some veteran teachers' practice is so poor or outdated that it is likely to impede new teacher growth by reinforcing traditional norms and practices. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2005) questions the assumption that experienced teachers will automatically possess the knowledge and communication skills to work effectively with novices. Worthy (2005) argues that assigning regular classroom teachers as mentors, without providing support, training, or compensation, rarely works. However, while the need for mentor training is recognized, it appears that it is less likely to be put into practice. According to the OECD Report (2005), only a handful of the twenty-five countries required formal training for mentors.

Mentor characteristics are important. Although mentors are usually formally allocated, the role of mentor is often interpreted personally (Little, 1990; Williams & Prestage, 2002), with evidence indicating that mentor personal characteristics are important even in structured mentoring programmes: mentors must want to be a mentor; make time available; have good interpersonal skills; provide specific and constructive feedback; reflect and encourage reflection; and build confidence in their mentees (Gold, 1996; Stanulis & Russell, 2000). Trustworthiness also appears to be important as there is evidence to suggest that beginning teachers must be able to regard their mentor with trust and as one who cares (Odell & Huling, 2000). Villani (2002) appears to prioritize affective characteristics in her list of the qualities of good mentors: "approachability; integrity; ability to listen; sincerity; willingness to spend time; enthusiasm; teaching competence; trustworthiness; receptivity; willingness to work hard; positive outlook; confidence; commitment to the profession; openness; experience in teaching; tactfulness; co-operativeness; and flexibility" (p. 13). This list suggests that the main role of the mentor is to emotionally support and socialize the beginning teacher into the school - a position that is at odds with the call for educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b) in order to develop new teachers' professional knowledge and practice.

Studies also indicate that school contexts can potentially constrain or enable effective mentoring. Williams et al. (2001) found that mentors in individualistic schools were less effective than those in collaborative schools, while Johnson, Harrison Berg and Donaldson (2005, p. 159) identified an integrated professional culture as providing the most powerful conditions for effective mentoring, because it is organized to benefit the mentor and the novice, with formal structures in place to facilitate interaction and reinforce interdependence. In another study, Kardos et al. (2001) reported that new teachers in schools with integrated-professional cultures experienced mentoring relationships that were meaningful and supportive, where classroom observations and feedback were frequent and helpful, and mentoring meetings focused on matters to do with learning and teaching. This is consistent with Darling-Hammond (1999) who found that novices who had access to intensive mentoring by expert colleagues became more confident more quickly and were also more likely to stay in teaching longer. Johnson (2004) also found that structural factors could impact negatively on the mentoring process - for example, if the timetabling does not give the mentor and novice common planning or meeting times, or if mentors are not allocated any time to work with their beginning teachers. In this study, mentoring appeared to be most useful to new teachers when mentors taught the same subject as they did, had common planning times, and had a classroom close to the beginning teacher.

Although there has been increased policy interest in induction and mentoring in relation to the retention and development of beginning teachers, the research evidence in terms of actual impact is far more equivocal. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) carried out a comprehensive and critical review of empirical studies on induction programmes. Although they located 150 empirical studies, they only found 10 that met their criteria with regard to: having quantitative data; providing information about the outcomes for new teachers; and comparing individuals who were in induction programmes with those who were not. They argue that while collectively the 10 studies do provide some empirical support for the claim that the assistance for new teachers and, in particular, mentoring programmes have a positive impact on the retention of new teachers, the studies also had serious

limitations that affect the extent to which general conclusions about mentoring and induction can be drawn.

A review of the literature supports many of these concerns about generalizability. There is a prevalence of small-scale, qualitative studies that, while providing insights into factors that contribute to successful induction programmes, are so context-specific that it is difficult to compare and generalize the findings. Several researchers argue that the lack of empirical, quantitative data means that it is not possible to undertake conclusive, data-rich analysis of the impact of induction programmes on beginning teachers. While the qualitative studies highlight the wide variability of factors in beginning teacher induction programmes, this variability not only makes it difficult to generalize results, but also makes it difficult to control for other factors that could impact on the outcomes of the investigation (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). The content, duration, and delivery of programmes vary from school to school and from country to country, while participation can be compulsory or voluntary. For example, those who do or do not participate in induction programmes could influence the outcomes, regardless of the effect of the programme itself; new teachers who choose to take part in voluntary induction programmes, for example, may also be more committed to teaching. However, despite these cautions, the concept of beginning teacher induction and mentoring continues to be viewed positively by policy makers and practitioners - a view that is in part supported by research that provides useful insights into promising strategies as well as potential problems.

The preceding sections of this review have analyzed the international literature on beginning teacher transition and development in relation to stage theories, pre-service interventions, and school context factors. There is, however, another strand in the 'learning to teach' literature that looks at how beliefs, experience, and context, shape teachers' professional identities. The next section examines the role that identity development plays in becoming a teacher.

Beliefs, Biography and Identity, and Learning to Teach

The late 1980s saw a growing research interest in the area of teachers' professional identity. A number of studies (e.g. Bullough, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Knowles, 1992; Nias, 1989) identified the development of a professional identity as being a key factor in becoming and being an effective teacher. Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004, p. 108) in their review of research commented that the term is used in different ways in the literature and, as such, is an unclear concept in the sense of what is integrated in such an identity and to what extent. What does appear to be common in the literature is the notion of 'self' in relation to the development of teachers' professional identity. For example, Britzman (1993) sees teacher identity as being a dialogue between individual identity and social experience and asserts that it is in this dialogue that the meanings of lived experience are named and negotiated. The idea of the 'self' intersecting with context is also recognized by Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002), who conceptualize professional identity as the result of an interaction between the personal experiences of teachers and the social, cultural and institutional environment in which they work on a daily basis. These descriptions indicate that for beginning teachers, developing a professional identity is a complex and ongoing process and one in which they are "combining parts of their past, including their own experiences in school and in teacher preparation, with pieces of the present in their current school context" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a, p. 1029).

A major theme in this literature is that teacher life histories or biography are fundamental to the development of teacher identity (Richardson, 1996). According to Hargreaves, (p. vii in Acker, 1999) the "ways teachers teach are rooted in their backgrounds, their biographies," a position that can be traced back to Lortie's (1975) influential study of teachers in two American urban schools, where he identified the socializing effects of teachers' long "apprenticeship of observation." He argued that teachers' images of, and beliefs about, teaching are formed over years of prior educational experiences in family, classroom, and school settings and that these images, along with the influence of significant others including former teachers, exert a powerful influence on teachers' practice. Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991, p. 88) assert that it is this "apprenticeship of

observation” that makes the preparation of teachers so different from the preparation of other professionals because by comparison, entrants into areas like law or medicine have not been immersed in their future occupations before they enter professional study. While Lortie has been criticized for his emphasis on a deficit model of teachers (Casey & Apple, 1989), his 1975 sociological work, *Schoolteacher*, was seminal in that it underscored the complexity of teaching and provided a catalyst for research on teacher beliefs and identity and their relationship to teacher learning and development.

A number of studies have investigated prior experience and beliefs in relation to pre-service teacher education. Some researchers have suggested that a key factor in student teachers’ decisions to go teaching is the positive educational experiences they had as pupils (e.g. Thornton, Bricheno, & Reid, 2002; Younger, Brindley, Pedder, & Hagger, 2004) and because of the influence of previous teachers (both good and bad), their families, and their own children (O’Brien & Shillaci, 2002). Other research, mainly small scale studies using a variety of methods, has focused on the influence of prior experience as pupils on what student teachers learn in pre-service programmes, arguing that prior beliefs act as filters through which teacher preparation programmes are viewed (Weinstein, 1990). For example, a British study by Calderhead and Robson (1991) followed 12 students through their first year of primary teacher education with the aim of examining (via interviews and experimental tasks) the ways in which personal beliefs affected what they learned in their course work. The authors found that the student teachers on entry to their programme had clear images of good teaching related to their own classroom experiences as pupils, which appeared to be derived from teacher role models, and that these images remained stable over time. Research by Pigge and Marso (1989), using a different methodology to the above studies, came to similar conclusions. Using questionnaires to examine changes in the concerns of 75 elementary and 58 secondary pre-service students as they progressed through their course and the practicum components of their teacher education programme, Pigge and Marso found that while concerns about themselves changed over time in the programme, their attitudes to teaching and pupils and their perceptions of themselves as teachers remained optimistic and unchanged. Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991, p. 103) assert that what pre-

service teachers know and believe about teaching is constructed out of personal experience and not out of formal study, and that their pre-service experiences are informed and sometimes distorted by their experiences and beliefs that have developed from their own personal histories as school students. Although this is a much-cited article, their methodology seems unclear in that they state that the themes “have appeared universally across the pre-service teachers with whom we have worked” (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991, p. 90).

Studies have found that a student teacher’s biography plays an important role in the process of identity formation. According to Knowles (1992), relevant biographical categories include early childhood experiences, early teacher role models, previous teaching experiences, and significant or important people. Knowles’s (1992) case studies of pre-service students investigated the relationship between success and failure in students and beginning teachers and role identities and images of teaching, which were formed from prior educational experiences. Knowles found that participants with strong role identities, which he linked to positive, formative life and school experiences, had less difficulty coping with challenging situations and contexts and experienced more success than did those with weak role identities, which Knowles linked to negative, formative life and school experiences. He concluded that prior beliefs play a major role in the way that student teachers approach teaching and thinking about themselves as teachers. Knowles (1992) and Cole & Knowles (1993) argue that teacher preparation programmes should explicitly address and examine student prior experiences and pre-conceptions of teaching. They believe that if pre-conceptions are unexamined, they are likely to remain unchallenged, so that when students’ images do not match with the realities of classroom teaching when on practicum, they are more likely to run into problems and become disillusioned with teaching. Stofflett and Stoddart (1992), however, downplay the influence of programme interventions, arguing that, from the review of literature that they undertook, pre-service students do not usually develop new perspectives, but simply become better at defending the perspectives they already possess. Widdeen et al. (1998, p. 144) suggest a paradox in the literature on pre-service teacher beliefs. They suggest that prior beliefs held by student teachers are often seen to be problematic by researchers, most of whom are teacher educators. Many studies focus on

changing the beliefs of teachers, but the authors point out that most of the studies in their review of literature point to the enduring nature of beliefs. Widdeen et al. (1998) challenge the view that beliefs of pre-service students are not amenable to change in any way and suggest that the focus should be on building on beliefs that already exist, a view that is in accord with Knowles (1992).

While much of the earlier research focused on pre-service students, a number of studies have investigated the relationship between life history and beginning teacher professional identity development (Bullough, 1997; Knowles, Cole, & Presswood, 1994) and argued that beginning teacher identity is closely linked to and determined by life history (Stanulis, Campbell, & Hicks, 2002). Kuzmic (1994), in his ethnographic case study (which grew out of a larger study on the socialization of pre-service and beginning teachers), used field observations, formal and informal interviews, and journals to investigate the experiences of one beginning kindergarten teacher in her first semester of teaching. Kuzmic found that 'Kara' carried into her first year of teaching well-developed and strong images and views of teaching and herself as a teacher and that these images were resistant to change and impacted upon her ability to examine critically her teaching and her situation. In explaining how Kara's images of teaching and herself as teacher influenced the way she perceived her school teaching experiences, Kuzmic cites Bullough (1989, pp. 131-144):

The beginning teacher's identity as a teacher and the common sense that flows from it form a fine interpretative lens or filter through which the teacher views his or her preparation. Ideas, concepts, and even skills that do not fit the beginning teacher's self-image, which is accepted as right and proper, and are not backed up with sufficient power to prompt internalization through practice or through experiences that demonstrate conclusively their value, are screened out. On the other hand, ideas that confirm a vision of self as teacher are highlighted and seen as credible. In part this process is possible because virtually everyone takes teaching and what teachers do for granted, having spent innumerable hours in classrooms. Beginning teachers are often seduced into a false security by the familiarity of teaching, only later to discover that not all is as it seems.

More recently Flores (2001), as part of a broader longitudinal study of 14 first year teachers in six elementary and secondary Portuguese schools, investigated the influence of biography and context in new teachers' learning and

development. Data collection occurred at the beginning and end of the year through semi-structured interviews, and a questionnaire designed to capture school culture and its influence on new teacher learning and professional development was administered at the end of the year. Flores (2001) found that ‘significant others,’ relatives, or former teachers played a key role in her participants’ decision to go teaching and that they attributed a great deal of importance to their own experiences as students - their ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie, 1975) - and that this influenced both their practice and how they viewed themselves as teachers. While workplace conditions were found to have a powerful effect on new teacher learning and development, Flores (2001, p. 144) suggests, “the way in which new teachers interpret their own experiences of teaching is influenced by their personal biography, their beliefs, and expectations.”

As indicated above, many of the studies point to the powerful effect of context, as well as biography, on new teacher professional identity development. Reynolds (1996) emphasized that what surrounds a person, what others expect from the person, and what the person allows to impact on him or her greatly affects his or her identity as a teacher. She noted that the teachers’ workplace is a ‘landscape’ that can be very persuasive as well as very demanding and often quite restrictive. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) use the term ‘landscape’ to discuss and describe the various cultures and subcultures within a school and argue that beginning teachers’ identity will be molded to a large degree by the school landscape, or landscapes, by which they are surrounded. They also contend that new teachers internalize and construct their own positions within these landscapes. In their 1995 study, Clandinin and Connelly cite the example of two beginning teachers, one a substitute teacher and the other with a permanent teaching position. They suggest that how these two teachers position themselves in their different contexts had dramatic consequences for their sense of identity as teachers. Clandinin and Connelly (p. 107) argue that, in contrast to the substitute teacher, the teacher that had the permanent position made the school story his own and therefore became confirmed in his identity as a teacher. While Clandinin and Connelly highlight the relationship of school context to the formation of teacher identity, they also

acknowledge that the individual is constantly constructing their identity from past experiences and present interactions within the professional landscape.

A recent study by Flores and Day (2006) reports on a longitudinal investigation of the way 14 Portuguese elementary and secondary teachers' professional identities were shaped and reshaped over the first two years of teaching in different school settings through the interaction between personal, professional, and contextual factors. It explores how their (taken-for-granted) assumptions and values about teaching and being a teacher were challenged in two school settings and the ways in which professional and cultural environments affected them. Data were collected by way of semi-structured interviews with the new teachers at the beginning and end of the school year, a questionnaire administered to all staff in the new teachers' schools, and analysis of the new teachers' annual report, which is a formal requirement on all teachers. In addition, pupils were asked to write a short essay in which they described the ways in which their teacher changed (or did not change) over time. Flores and Day found that while teaching was not the first choice of career for most of the participants, prior experiences as pupils seemed to play a strong mediating role in the identities that new teachers brought into their first school teaching experience. They also found that pre-service teacher education appeared to have had a relatively weak impact in relation to the way the new teachers approached teaching and viewed themselves as teachers and that time and experience, in terms of becoming more aware of their job and their new role at school, influenced participants' professional identity development. In terms of the impact of school culture, the authors (p. 229) comment that "conservatism and compliance emerged in their accounts as characteristics of their identities, replacing their initial enthusiasm" as the participants got to know the way in which their school (and their colleagues) operated. The Flores and Day (2006) empirical study is important in the literature, not only because of the quality of the reporting and research but also because of its multi-faceted approach to beginning teacher identity development.

A major contribution to the literature on teacher identity is that of Nias (1989, 1996), whose seminal book, *Primary teachers talking: A study of teaching as work* (1989) drew attention to the personal, professional, emotional, and

organizational elements that contribute to the construction of teacher identity. In her work, Nias made a clear distinction between the personal and professional elements of teachers' lives and identities and argued that recognition of the personal was critical to an understanding of the teachers' working lives. She argued that the incorporation of the identity 'teacher' into a person's self-image was accomplished over time and that participants were into their second decade of teaching before they were likely to have incorporated their professional role into their self image and thus identify themselves as teachers. Many of her teachers had invested their personal sense of identity into their work, sometimes to the extent of blurring the boundaries between their personal and professional lives. Nias (1989; 1996) posits three main answers to her question about why teachers have such a deep emotional attachment to their work: first, teaching is a job that involves interactions between people and therefore has an inevitable emotional component; second, teachers invest their 'selves' into their work, which means that the school and/or classroom become the main sites for the development of self-esteem and self-efficacy, along with a certain degree of vulnerability; and third, teachers have profound feelings about their work because they invest so heavily into it and into the values that they believe their work represents.

After the publication of Nias' book there was increased research attention given to the emotional aspect of teachers' lives, although it has been noted in two recent reviews of literature on emotions and teaching (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; van den Berg, 2002) that the research base is still limited. Nias (1996) views teaching as an occupation highly charged with feeling and holds that the emotional reactions of individual teacher's work are intimately connected to the view that they have of themselves and others. Similarly, Zemblyas (2001, 2003), from his longitudinal ethnographic study of one experienced science teacher, argues that teaching is inextricably linked to teachers' personal lives and therefore emotions play a strong role in the construction of professional identity. In a review of empirical research on teacher identity, Sutton (2000) found that love (as a social relationship) and care, job satisfaction and joy, pride and excitement and pleasure in students' progress and achievement are among the most commonly-cited positive emotions. Other writers (Scott and Dinham, 1999; Hargreaves, 1998; 2000) have argued that teachers' most important rewards are gained from the

students in their classroom - what Lortie (1975) called the “psychic rewards” of teaching. As Kelchtermans (1996, p. 2) has commented, “Teachers’ talk about their work immediately reveals that emotions are at the heart of teaching.”

Some studies suggest that teachers experience negative as well as positive emotions in relation to their work. Jeffrey and Woods (1996) investigated English primary teachers’ responses to an external inspection (Office for Standards in Education) and found that teachers’ reactions included feelings of professional uncertainty, confusion, inadequacy, anxiety, and doubt. Kelchtermans (1993, 1996) has also reported on teachers’ feelings of vulnerability. He used career stories of Flemish teachers to understand his participants’ ways of thinking about teaching and about themselves as teachers, and identified vulnerability as a recurring theme in his teachers’ retrospective, narrative accounts. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) extended this research focus to beginning teachers. Their participants comprised 14 teachers who had been teaching three to five years and who were selected because they had career experiences that they could reflect back on. The authors found that an important factor in their identity development as beginning teachers was their experience of professional success that was also recognized by ‘significant others.’ The desire for recognition by others links with feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability as beginning teachers.

Kelchtermans and Ballet suggest that new teachers want to do a good job and invest time and energy into their work, while at the same time they feel vulnerable in terms of their own limits of competence. This vulnerability is heightened by the degree of visibility of their teaching practices in that they are subject to ongoing observation and evaluation by colleagues, the principal, and parents, both in their classroom and in the school - a situation that the authors suggest helps to explain new teachers’ concerns with behaviour management and control. Another source of vulnerability for beginning teachers related to lack of tenure and the authors suggest that the longer the time of uncertainty about a job, the more beginning teachers’ self-esteem becomes threatened and the more they start doubting their professional competencies (p. 113). Kelchtermans (1996, p. 11) argues that, because of the link between the personal and professional selves of individual teachers, vulnerability is inherent in the teaching job and therefore

never completely avoidable, although he believes that it is necessary to acknowledge this and to try to reduce its effects. While these studies have provided further fine-grained insights into the connection between primary school teachers' personal and professional identities and how these contribute to teacher motivation and self-efficacy, a possible limitation relates to the methodology. That is, asking people to retrieve and reflect on information from their long-term memory may lead to selective information that could be coloured by other experiences.

Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons (2006) propose that a significant and ongoing part of being a teacher is the experiencing of strong emotions and suggest that there has been insufficient consideration of the strengths of their influence in previous studies on teacher identity. This contention is especially pertinent to studies of new teachers, given the intensity of emotions experienced when starting to teach and the effect that emotions can have on the retention of new teachers (Nieto, 2003; Johnson, 2004). Erb (2002) studied six Canadian second year teachers on the emotional aspects of teaching and used the metaphor of a whirlpool to illustrate the gamut of emotions that beginning teachers experience:

From one experience to another, the world of the beginning teacher is never still. Although the direction of a whirlpool may be predictable, the degree of activity is less predictable. Opposing currents may create small or large whirlpools. Objects may stay afloat in gentle currents, or get sucked underneath the water's surface by the overwhelming intensity of the force (Erb, 2002, p. 1).

Summary

The international literature reviewed supports the contention that learning to be a teacher is a multi-faceted and lengthy undertaking. Widdeen et al. (1998), in recognition of the complexity and interconnectedness of factors in learning to teach, call for an ecological approach to seeking to understand how individuals, institutions, programmes, and ideas are inter-related, observing that "We can no longer regard courses, programmes, and the other participants and structures of teacher education as unchallengeable and operating in isolation" (p. 169). Their suggestion that more attention needs to be given to how other players affect the

landscape and process of learning to teach is supported by Feiman-Nemser (2001a) who argues for a coordinated approach in building a professional learning continuum that links initial preparation to new teacher induction and new teacher induction to continuing professional development.

Some studies suggest that teachers' professional learning and development is influenced by factors that involve an interaction between the personal and professional elements of teachers' lives. This complex interplay between biography, experience, and context contributes to the construction of teachers' identities. Flores and Day (2006) for example, argue that teachers' individual and professional histories, their pre-service programme, and school-related factors are strong mediating influences in determining the kinds and stability of professional identities that teachers develop in the early years of teaching and thus the kind of teachers they become. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) suggest that professional identity formation is an interpretative and interactive process between the new teacher and their context, while Beijaard et al. (2004) conceive of professional identity development as being an ongoing process that involves the interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences. These views imply that teacher identity formation is a dynamic and active process, a construction that contradicts Nias's idea of teachers having little agency in the shaping of their professional identities. Day (2002, p. 689) also argues that teacher identity is not fixed or static but rather is an amalgam of personal biography, culture, social influence, and institutional values that may change according to role or circumstance. He also suggests that there is an interrelationship between teachers' professional and personal, cognitive, and emotional identities and that maintaining a positive sense of professional identity is important to maintaining motivation, self esteem, efficacy, job satisfaction, and commitment to teaching.

The New Zealand Context: Initial Teacher Education Policy, Practice, and Research

This section of the Literature Review presents an overview of key issues related to New Zealand policy and practices that have impacted on the preparation and induction of beginning teachers since 1989. Literature that addresses factors that influence the learning and development of New Zealand beginning teachers is also reviewed and critiqued. The definition of initial teacher education used in this discussion encompasses pre-service (initial) teacher education and the two years of provisional registration that follows graduation.

Overview of Initial Teacher Education Policy and Practice Since 1990

Impact of educational reforms on initial teacher education

The New Zealand education reforms of the 1990s produced major changes in the tertiary and compulsory education sectors that impacted on initial teacher education. The reforms saw the compulsory education sector restructured from a centralized, bureaucratic system to one that focused on “parental choice, decentralization, management, governance, and accountability” (Codd, 2005, p. 35). Schools became self-governing institutions with responsibility for curriculum, administrative, and employment decisions made at the school level through their governing bodies - parent-elected Boards of Trustees. For beginning teachers, the changes meant that they were no longer guaranteed an initial teaching position but had to apply directly to schools and so compete for jobs on the open market.

The tertiary reforms had particular consequences for teacher education in two main areas. Firstly, colleges of education, the only providers of teacher education prior to 1990, became autonomous institutions responsible for their own student recruitment and selection and for offering their own qualifications, including the right to offer degrees. Secondly, teacher education became deregulated. The resulting competitive environment saw the number of institutions offering teacher

education expanding from the six colleges of education in 1990 to 27 in 2005 (Kane, 2005). New Zealand's provision of initial teacher education has been described as atypical (Kane, 2005) in that, unlike most OECD countries, teachers are prepared in a range of institutions (colleges of education, polytechnics, private training establishments, and wānanga) as well as in universities. In 2007, with the amalgamation of all colleges of education with their local universities, the number of providers offering primary and secondary teacher education will have been further reduced. Although a significant number of institutions still offer pre-service teacher education, most of the diversity is now in the early childhood sector, with very little in the secondary sector, mainly because it is difficult and expensive to deliver.

The 1990s also saw changes in the way teachers were prepared for teaching in New Zealand. Prior to 1989 the six colleges of education offered a three-year Diploma of Teaching for early childhood and primary teachers, a shortened two-year primary Diploma of Teaching for those with degrees, and a one-year post-degree secondary Diploma of Teaching. Early childhood and primary students also had the opportunity to gain a Bachelor of Education through a fourth year of university study at an associated university. In 1996 the teacher education landscape underwent further changes. The colleges of education began to offer three-year teaching degrees for early childhood and primary teachers and this qualification remains the most common route into primary teaching in New Zealand. Also in 1996, because of primary teacher shortages, the Ministry of Education provided incentives and "persuasion" for potential new providers to offer teaching qualifications (Jesson, 1997) and extra funding was made available for compressed (one-year) primary pre-service programmes for university graduates. The proliferation of providers put the Teacher Registration Board under pressure to approve a lot of new programmes in a very short timeframe (Cameron & Baker, 2004). It was also asserted that the rush to meet approval deadlines resulted in some institutions' quality assurance processes being dispensed with or subverted (Jesson, 1997). By 1999 the number of institutions offering teacher education had increased from the original six colleges of education to include seven polytechnics, four universities, four private providers, and two wānanga (Cameron & Baker, 2004).

Quality assurance related to teacher preparation programmes and teacher registration

Public concerns about educational standards and teacher quality were major factors in the government's decision in 1990 to establish a Teacher Registration Board (TRB) with responsibility for the registration of teachers in schools and kindergartens and the accreditation of teacher education pre-service programmes. However, the TRB "was emasculated almost immediately when a new government elected at the end of that year made registration optional for teachers" (Alcorn, 2000). The 1991 decision to abolish compulsory teacher registration effectively meant that boards were free to appoint anyone they deemed suitable to a teaching position in their school (Codd & Scrivens, 2005). Although compulsory teacher registration was reintroduced in 1996, schools continued to be responsible for all staff appointments, including first year teachers, and were also responsible for recommending the registration of beginning teachers.

The New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) replaced the Teacher Registration Board in 2002. The Council, a crown entity, was given the broader mandate of maintaining ethical and professional standards, as well as responsibility for teacher registration (and deregistration), renewal of practicing certificates, and the approval of teacher education programmes that lead to registration. The Council is also responsible for the registration of new or provisionally registered teachers, following the successful completion of at least two years of teaching. The awarding of full registration is based on the attestation of the principal that their provisionally-registered teacher has participated in an advice and guidance programme and has met the requirements of the NZTC's Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions, currently under review, including the "fit to be a teacher" criteria (Appendix One). As part of the beginning teacher's application for full registration, the beginning teacher and their supervising or tutor teacher are required to keep copies of records that provide evidence that the NZTC requirements for full registration have been met. The Ministry of Education also requires beginning teachers to be appraised annually against the Professional Standards for Beginning Teachers. The Teachers Council audits a random 10% sample of registration applications as a check that the process has occurred, but, as Cameron, Baker, and Lovett (2006) point out, this does not currently include

independent verification that the documentation provides valid evidence that the criteria have been met.

Induction of beginning teachers in New Zealand

Since 1985, schools have been required to provide an “advice and guidance programme” for beginning teachers, making New Zealand one of the first countries to establish a formal, national approach to induction. Schools must only appoint newly-qualified teachers, who have been awarded provisional registration status by the NZTC on graduation from an accredited provider of initial teacher education. The minimum period of provisional registration is two years. The Ministry of Education provides a 0.2 time allowance (equivalent to one day a week) to state schools employing a beginning or provisionally registered teacher for the first year, and a 0.1 time allowance (equivalent to half a day a week) for the second year. The additional allowance is intended to support schools to provide beginning teachers with an advice and guidance programme to enable them to become fully registered teachers. During this two-year period of ‘provisional registration,’ a beginning teacher is entitled to a structured programme of induction that includes mentoring, professional development, observation, feedback on their teaching, and regular assessments based on the standards for full registration. The guidelines in the NZTC support kit *Towards Full Registration* (NZTC, 2006, p. 2) clearly describe the responsibility of the school:

...the employer accepts the obligations and challenges to assist and guide the teacher to develop professionally and achieve and maintain full registration through an approved advice and guidance programme.

Schools are required to appoint a supervising teacher (tutor teacher) with responsibility for working with the beginning teacher to tailor an advice and guidance programme appropriate to the needs of the new teacher. In primary schools, the time allowance can be shared between the beginning teacher and a supervising (tutor) teacher. While the tutor teacher is paid a small amount for taking on this role (\$2000), there is currently no requirement that tutor teachers be trained for their roles, though professional development courses are available if they wish to take them. The primary teachers union, the New Zealand

Educational Institute (NZEI), has currently proposed a careers pathway with required training or qualifications for the tutor teacher role.

Issues to do with teacher preparation and teacher quality

In New Zealand, as in other countries, concern about teacher quality has become a common theme in the public, political, and policy discourse on educational achievement.

The perception is one of falling educational standards, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy, which have affected New Zealand's performance in international comparisons of student achievement. Politicians, policy makers, researchers, and educators increasingly use 'teacher quality' to signify that teachers are a critical influence on how, what, and how much children learn (Hattie, 2003). While there is no single, agreed definition of 'teacher quality,' it is currently most commonly defined in terms of pupil performance. For example in the Ministry of Education's publication *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis*, Alton-Lee (2003, p. 2) argues that quality teaching is the most important point of leverage on student outcomes, with 59% or more of variance in student performance attributable to differences between teachers and classes within schools, rather than between schools.

Given the high level of agreement nationally and internationally regarding the importance of teacher quality, it is not surprising that there is also congruence in terms of conceptualizing the problem as being related to the quality of teacher preparation programmes and concerns about the quality of graduates. Evidence that such matters are not new in New Zealand is illustrated by the seventeen reviews and inquiries into areas related to initial teacher education carried out by government, government agencies, and pressure groups or commissioned by the Ministry of Education between the period 1988 and 2006. Ramsey (2000), reporting on a similar situation in Australia has commented that teacher education has been reported on and examined "almost beyond belief or reason." What is new in New Zealand, as in other countries, is how the debate about initial teacher education and teacher quality is being conceived of as a policy problem (Darling-

Hammond, 2000; Youngs, 2002), which assumes that teacher quality can be improved by locating it within an accountability context (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

Discussions about teacher quality and quality of teacher education programmes are invariably linked with discussions about standards in the context of control and accountability (Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 2000). In New Zealand this was first identified in the Scott Report (Ministry of Education, 1986) on the quality of teaching. The report called for “greater accountability” to “protect the rights of pupils” through the assessment of teaching skills and results, and recommended “the commissioning of New Zealand research to develop a model for evaluating the quality of teaching” (Alcorn, 1999, p. 111). The connection between quality and accountability was also highlighted in the Ministry of Education document *Quality Teachers for Quality Learning: A review of teacher education* (called the *Green Paper*) that was published for consultation in 1997. The document states that “A good education system depends on the ready availability of well-trained, high quality teachers” (p. 19), and endorses the international trend towards ‘standards’ as a means of improving the quality of teaching (Alcorn, 1999). The *Green Paper* proposed that standards should be developed for both pre-service and qualified teachers to address the problem of quality teaching. In terms of pre-service teacher education, the lack of accountability was linked to the absence of standards in that “there is no uniform basis for assuring the quality of pre-service provision” (Ministry of Education, 1997, p. 25). To address this problem the *Green Paper* proposed that a professional body be established to “promulgate and monitor the professional standards to be met at completion of pre-service teacher education” (op cit, p. 30).

There have been various attempts by a number of New Zealand agencies to define sets of standards for satisfactory teaching. For example, in the early 1990’s the New Zealand Qualifications Authority established a Teacher Education Advisory Group charged with developing teacher education standards. According to McGrath (1996) the QUALSET project was a key initiative in trying to establish teacher education diploma qualifications based on the National Qualifications Framework. The project entailed the development of unit standards that specified learning outcomes and performance criteria that student teachers would have to

demonstrate to be credited with that standard. While the standards were completed amid some controversy related to the notion of specifying standards, they were not used by institutions mainly because of the development of teacher education degrees that were outside the framework.

In 1997, the Teacher Registration Board developed a set of guidelines for the competencies of provisionally registered teachers. In 1998, the Educational Review Office (ERO) published a list of standards for “the capable teacher” and the Ministry of Education introduced professional standards for teachers that are part of New Zealand schools’ mandated performance management system. More recently, the tightening of central control over teacher education promoted in the 1997 *Green Paper* is evident in the role accorded to the NZTC under the Education Standards Act (2001) which specifies two of its three functions as being “to establish and maintain standards for qualifications that lead to teacher registration” and “to conduct, in conjunction with other quality assurance agencies, approvals of teacher education programmes on the basis of standards.” In 2005, the NZTC began the work of developing a set of standards for graduating teachers. The *Graduating Teacher Standards: Aotearoa New Zealand* were approved in April 2007 and from 2008 all teacher education providers will be required to “provide evidence to the Council...that will give confidence and assurance that the Graduating Teacher Standards will be met by all graduates” (NZTC, 2007). It will be interesting to see how the tighter bureaucratic oversight and statutory control accorded to NZTC will be played out in practice and how it will impact on initial teacher education in New Zealand.

New Zealand Research Related to Initial Teacher Education

This section reviews and critiques empirical research related to New Zealand initial teacher education. As stated above, for the purposes of this review, initial teacher education includes pre-service teacher education and the two years of provisional registration that follows graduation.

Recruitment, employment, and retention of New Zealand beginning teachers

New Zealand beginning teachers share similar characteristics with those in other Western countries. In terms of recruitment into teaching, New Zealand teacher education students are primarily motivated by intrinsic factors related to a love of children and altruistic reasons connected with making a contribution to society (Kane & Mallon, 2006). They desire to “make a difference to the learning and life chances of the next generation” (Cameron et al., 2006, p. 15). The key influences in terms of deciding to go teaching are encouragement from family, friends, and previous teachers, with status-related decisions not seen as key factors (Kane & Mallon, 2006). Similar findings were identified by Cameron et al. (2006) in their study of 57 “promising” New Zealand primary and secondary teachers who were in their third to seventh year of teaching. The authors found that, while teaching was sometimes viewed as lacking the status and financial rewards of other professions, this was outweighed by a belief in the importance of teaching. The factors that were most influential in the teachers’ decisions to go teaching were encouragement by family and friends and “inspirational models from their own schooling” (p. 16).

Beginning teachers are a predominately homogenous, female group, as indicated by the Renwick and Vize (1993) study of student teachers in three colleges of education, where 74% were white European and 81% were women. These demographics have remained constant over time. New Zealand beginning teachers are mainly Pakeha/European, with the majority being between 20 and 29 years of age, and make up approximately 5% of the teaching workforce (Elvidge, 2002). Seventy percent of teachers are female, with males making up only 20% of all primary teachers and 45% of all secondary teachers. Fourteen percent of the entire teaching workforce is under 30 (Murray, 2006). In 2002, Māori comprised 11% of all beginning teachers, which is 2% greater than the proportion of the total teaching force that is Māori (Elvidge, 2002).

According to Elvidge (2002), new teachers are likely to gain employment in low decile schools and in regions that have the greatest difficulty attracting experienced teachers. Many beginning teachers are also unlikely to be appointed to permanent positions. Elvidge (2002) found that 53% of primary beginning

teachers gained their first employment on a limited term basis of less than one year, compared to 42% of new secondary teachers. Cameron et al. (2006) reported that one-third of the primary teachers in their sample had been employed in short-term positions in their first year of teaching, before being appointed to a permanent position, although most secondary teachers in their sample had been appointed to permanent positions. The tendency to appoint first year teachers to contract positions has been a recurring theme in New Zealand studies (Battersby, 1989; Mansell, 1996). ERO (2004, p. 37) for example, noted the number of beginning teachers who started teaching in a “temporary capacity” and were made permanent in their second year of teaching, commenting that it “appears that the first year of teaching is, in effect, a probation year for many beginning teachers.” The report also noted such employment patterns can have a negative effect on beginning teachers’ ability to access advice and guidance programmes, a situation that was also identified by Renwick (2001).

The likelihood of New Zealand first-year teachers changing schools appears to be low, at around 4% according to Elvidge (2002). His report indicates that changes are more likely to occur after two years of teaching, with teachers moving from low to high decile schools. A different pattern is reported by Cameron et al. (2006) in their study of promising teachers. About one-fifth of their teachers voluntarily moved schools in their first year of teaching, sometimes more than once, with half of them changing schools because the first school had not lived up to expectations. The authors comment that, “Beginning teachers were looking for environments that were lively and positive, and were prepared to try again when faced with a lacklustre culture” (Cameron et al., 2006, p. 21). They also note that despite their initial struggles, these teachers were still determined to stay in teaching and “were prepared to look for contexts where their desire to make a difference to the quality of students’ lives was more likely to be realized in practice” (p. 22). The move to schools in more economically-advantaged areas was also a pattern identified by Cameron et al. (2006), although they also note that 50% of their teachers of promise have stayed in the same school to which they were appointed four years ago.

It appears that the majority of beginning teachers intend to remain in teaching. According to Fursman and Visser (2001), only 13% of new primary and secondary teachers signalled that they were likely to leave teaching. However, a different picture emerges from data on fully-registered teachers. Mansell (1996) identified a high proportion of teachers who leave teaching within the first five years. Similarly, Elvidge (2002) found that 37% of teachers had left the profession by the end of their third year of teaching, although it should also be noted that of those leaving, 31% of primary and 21% of secondary returned to teaching after a year away. In their study of promising teachers, Cameron et al. (2006) found that 70% of their teachers, after three years of teaching, indicated that they were highly likely to remain in teaching over the next five years.

The drivers for teachers wishing to remain in teaching appear to be similar to those that attracted them to teaching in the first place. Kane and Mallon (2006), in their study on *Perceptions of Teachers and Teaching*, observed that teachers remained in the profession because they were intrinsically motivated to work with and help young people. They gained much of their satisfaction from their ability to influence students' achievement. Beginning teachers also achieve much of their satisfaction from seeing children's progress as a result of their teaching (Grudnoff & Tuck, 2003). The teachers in the Cameron et al. (2006) study also reported that the most satisfying aspect of their work was their core work with children, their relationships with children, and the outcomes of their teaching. Negative factors such as high levels of workload and paperwork, particularly in relation to accountability demands, contributed to beginning teacher stress (Grudnoff & Tuck, 2005), while feelings of overload, lack of acknowledgement, and negative school politics led teachers of promise to leave their schools or the profession (Cameron et al., 2006). Kane and Mallon (2006, p. 44) also comment that paperwork and other workload issues (especially for secondary) impact negatively on teachers' sense of satisfaction with teaching, and directly influence current teachers' willingness to recommend teaching as a career to others. Kane and Mallon (2006) also noted that teachers in medium and high decile schools were less satisfied than those in low decile ones and that, while many teachers in their study talked of leaving, most did not really intend to do so. These trends differ from those in the United States where the attrition rate is estimated to be 40%-

50% in the first five years, with attrition being most severe in low-income schools (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2004).

Teacher preparation

The focus of a number of New Zealand studies has been on investigating the extent to which pre-service programmes have prepared beginning teachers for teaching. This section relies on a few major studies that have mainly been undertaken by teacher educators evaluating the effectiveness of their programmes from different stakeholder perspectives. Lang (2002), for example, surveyed 71 student teachers prior to graduating to find out about the areas that they thought their programme had prepared them well for, and those aspects that they felt could have prepared them better. A sample of 20 of those surveyed were interviewed after 5 to 11 months into their first year of teaching to find out whether they felt well or ill-prepared in terms of those aspects that they had identified on their survey forms. The findings revealed that the participants still felt ill-prepared for long-term planning and integrating planning across the curriculum, and assessment and evaluation of children's learning. However, although the student teachers predicted that they would have difficulties with levels of curriculum knowledge and managing children's behaviour, these areas were not identified as causing difficulties in the interviews with the first-year teachers. The time commitment involved in being a teacher was a problem area identified by almost all of the twenty beginning teachers, but had not been identified by many of those surveyed prior to starting teaching.

Cameron and Grudnoff (1993) surveyed 228 primary school principals who had employed 255 graduates with a three-year Diploma of Teaching from their institution to ascertain how satisfied the principals were with the first-year teachers that they had employed, and to ascertain areas of strength and weaknesses in beginning teachers' practice. Data from 78% of the principals who responded indicated that 77% of beginning teachers were rated very satisfactorily or higher in terms of their personal qualities and 66% satisfactory or higher for their professional skills. The ability to create a positive learning environment and the willingness to seek help were the most highly-rated professional attributes and principals valued teachers who fitted into the school culture. The importance of

beginning teacher personal characteristics were also identified by McGee and Penlington (2000) who investigated the quality of preparation of graduates from a 13 month compressed pre-service teacher education programme from the perspectives of five principals, two tutor teachers, and six beginning teachers. The interview data from the tutor teachers and principals revealed that the beginning teachers had been employed mainly on the basis of personal characteristics such as social skills, dedication, commitment to children, and the ability to “fit in” with the culture of the school. All six beginning teachers commented on the extraordinary workload they experienced in their first year of teaching and how difficult it was to find a work-life balance. Kane and Mallon (2006, p. 27) also noted, “For many principals there is a real pragmatism related to appointing new staff that will “fit in” to the current staffing profile and school culture.”

New Zealand studies have identified the initial period of teaching as being a particularly difficult time for beginning teachers. Lang (2001) examined the process that beginning teachers undergo as they move through the survival to the consolidation phase of teacher development as described by Katz (1977). Survey data were gained from seven primary beginning teachers, mostly at the end of their first year of teaching. The participants had graduated from a mix of programmes, with four having completed an intensive programme for graduates, while another three had completed a four-year concurrent programme. Lang reported that in most cases it took six months for the beginning teachers to move beyond the ‘survival stage’ and to feel as though they were succeeding as teachers. The most commonly mentioned factors that helped them survive their first year were: planning their teaching as part of a group of teachers; support from their tutor teacher; keeping up-to-date with planning, marking, and administration tasks; and getting lots of sleep. There were no commonly identified responses to a question asking them to identify areas that they would have liked to have had included in their pre-service programme. Lang also noted that poor access to support structures and resources within their school had placed stresses on the teachers and exacerbated their struggles to survive as teachers.

Grudnoff and Tuck (2005) also identified beginning teaching as being a particularly challenging phase in a teacher's career. They investigated 18 beginning teachers who were asked to plot their levels of stress and satisfaction over their first and second year of teaching, giving reasons for peaks in stress and high points of satisfaction. The results showed that 12 of the 18 teachers reported "high" to "very high" levels of stress during the first four weeks of the teaching year, with the most common explanation being 'practice shock' arising from differences between their expectations about teaching and the everyday reality and the resulting task overload. This contrasted with the beginning of the second year where 16 of the 18 teachers indicated 'very low' to 'moderate' levels of stress in the first month of teaching. Another study by Grudnoff and Tuck (2002) also showed the differences between the first and second year of teaching. Sixteen primary beginning teachers, along with their tutor teachers, were interviewed as they were completing their second year of teaching. The study was a follow-up on previous research that surveyed the cohort in their first year of teaching. The data showed that all the beginning teachers had been recommended for full registration by their principals and were regarded, in most cases, as excellent colleagues by the tutor teachers. The authors commented that the second year teachers had got on top of the 'steep learning curve' identified in their first year and were now operating as confident, autonomous professionals who were able to make their own professional decisions, while contributing effectively to their team and the school.

New Zealand research has also identified differences between the culture and the expectations of the teacher preparation institution and the schools that employ their graduates as beginning teachers. For example, Grudnoff and Tuck (2003) identified a tension between the pre-service providers and the supervisors' construction of teacher education, with the teachers prioritizing craft knowledge and believing that teacher education should be less theoretical and more focused on the everyday realities of the classroom. Like other New Zealand and international researchers (e.g. Battersby, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Loughran et al., 2001; Renwick, 2001), Grudnoff and Tuck (2003, p. 40) argue for a closer relationship between the endeavours of the pre-service educator and the school, because both are partners in the common

enterprise of preparing and developing new teachers. A similar call for a closer collaboration between schools and teacher education providers is also made by Langdon (2000) in her investigation of primary school principals' perceptions of how initial teacher education programmes can contribute to the dispositional, personal, and professional qualities that they identified as important attributes for beginning teachers. The principals in her study emphasized the importance of all those involved in initial teacher education subscribing to a coherent model and practices that provided student teachers with consistent role models and shared theoretical understandings.

A lack of alignment between pre-service teacher education and schools has also been identified in relation to practicum. Ovens (1996) investigated the problems experienced during practicum placements by secondary student teachers who were enrolled in a physical education degree. Data were collected via surveys that were administered prior to and following their final practicum placement and from paired interviews conducted in schools during their placement, as well as from informal observations of the students' teaching. Problems identified included poor supervision and feedback and little autonomy in making decisions. Student comments indicated that their relative lack of power in their relationship with their associate is problematic in learning to teach. The author noted that, in such a relationship, the associate's views take precedence and alternate views are often repressed. A study by McGee, Oliver, and Carstenson (1994) of 43 final-year primary teacher education students who were surveyed on their final practicum also noted that half their students, in the interests of maintaining a positive relationship with their associate, made compromises about their teaching approaches and management techniques.

A similar point is made by Haigh and Ward (2004) who report on a series of studies that explored the nature of practicum relationships in secondary schools and the degree of shared, professional understandings within these relationships. The authors argue that student teachers were not given the freedom to develop professional agency to any great extent, which limited their opportunities for creative approaches, innovation, or risk taking. The authors conclude that shared understandings of the roles of the participants in the practicum need to be

developed, so that practicum can provide opportunities for rich, educative experiences for student teachers, rather than just being a site for practicing teaching. Hoben (2006), in her mixed-method study of secondary student teachers' practicum experiences, offers further evidence that practicum provides pre-service teachers with very variable opportunities to learn to teach. She postulates that this may, in part, be due to the lack of explicit statements made by the university regarding the purposes and expectations of the practicum, and the fact that associate teachers hold highly variable beliefs and understandings about teaching and learning.

A lack of shared understandings between the teacher preparation programme and the school around practicum is corroborated by Lind (2004). He used a case study approach to examine the perceptions of six triads comprising student teacher, associate teacher, and visiting lecturer, regarding the adequacy of the practicum for the preparation of first-year primary teachers. Lind found that while all the participants viewed the practicum as critical in preparing beginning teachers, all had different views of the practicum: the associate teacher saw it primarily as an apprenticeship in which the practical knowledge and 'know-how' of the student teacher was demonstrated; the visiting lecturer saw the practicum as an opportunity for the student teachers to develop practitioner-knowledge and engage in collegial decision-making. The data showed that student teachers emphasized the importance of developing positive, working relationships with the associate teacher and that they often relied on their associates to provide solutions to challenging classroom problems. While this study highlights the importance and complementary nature of the roles that the members of the triad play, it also draws attention to the need for university and school personnel to collaborate effectively to promote student teacher professional development to meaningfully bridge the gap between classroom context and the pre-service programme.

Research on teacher education in New Zealand has been characterized as "a lot of small-scale 'one shot' studies by individuals, some team research, and development-type work through contracts" (McGee, 1999). According to Cameron and Baker (2004) this judgment still holds, as there is still a shortage of longitudinal studies that evaluate the nature and effectiveness of initial teacher

education. One exception is *Windows on Teacher Education* (Renwick & Vize, 1993) which reports on the final phase of a longitudinal study on teacher education. This qualitative, descriptive study, commissioned by the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, examined student teacher progress through their teacher education programme and their first year of teaching. The findings were drawn from interview data of 100 primary teachers who were in their first year of teaching in 1992 and were working full-time and information from surveys sent to 89 graduates who were not teaching full-time. The participants had graduated from three colleges of education. The research questions were designed to determine the beginning teachers' views of their pre-service training and how prepared they felt to teach and assess in all the curriculum areas. The authors found that most of their sample thought that they were well-prepared to teach most of the curriculum areas and for classroom planning and management and that they felt more confident about assessment by the end of their first year of teaching. They also noted the enthusiasm and confidence of their participants. The findings also showed that most participants were finding teaching a more complex and time-consuming job than they had expected. With regard to professional support from their school, the teachers particularly valued support from their tutor teacher and their 0.2 release time, although not all regularly received the full-time allowance. While a possible limitation of this study is that its findings are based only on beginning teacher perceptions, Renwick and Vize (1993, p. 17) argue that where participant opinions were widely shared, they deserve to be taken seriously.

Cameron and Baker (2004) comment that the findings of New Zealand studies on beginning teachers' views of their teacher preparation programmes contrasts with many overseas, and particularly United States, studies. They note that, despite teacher preparation programmes being shorter than the OECD average, most of the studies they reviewed (2004, p. 57) "generally found moderate to high levels of satisfaction with programmes of teacher education." Two recent reports have contrasting findings on perceptions of the quality of teacher preparation programmes in New Zealand. Kane and Mallon (2006) were commissioned by the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Teachers Council to investigate the relationship between perceptions of teachers and teachers' work, and the

recruitment, retention, performance and capability, and professional status of teachers. This cross-sectional, mixed-method study obtained data via questionnaires and interviews from staff in early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools, and Boards of Trustee/management committee members in three regional clusters in New Zealand. Overall, 38 schools and 36 early childhood centres agreed to participate in the survey: 8 schools and 7 centers in South Auckland; 16 schools and 20 centres in Christchurch; and 14 schools and 9 centres in Taranaki. In addition, senior high school students and early childhood, primary, and secondary student teachers from two education providers completed questionnaires (598 senior students and 410 student teachers) and participated in focus group interviews.

In terms of teacher preparation, the authors report dissatisfaction with the current provision of teacher education and the quality of student teachers and graduates, whilst also acknowledging the high quality of some graduates. Their respondents believed that the increased number of teacher education providers and the resultant competitive environment has led to a lowering of entry and exit standards and reluctance to fail non-performing or unsuitable students. It is difficult to generalize conclusions regarding this aspect of the study, not only because of the nature of the sample, but also because the responses to the question about pre-service teacher education were only reported as combined teacher/principal responses. Identifying results according to sector, region, and type of participant (i.e. principal and teacher) may have provided interesting comparative information.

The findings of the study by Cameron, Baker, and Lovett (2006), commissioned by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER), differ from those of Kane and Mallon (2006) in terms of participants' views on teacher preparation. Cameron et al. report the first phase of a longitudinal study of 57 'promising' male and female primary and secondary teachers from their third to seventh year of teaching who will be tracked over a four-year period. The purpose of the study was to understand more about teachers' experiences in the early years of teaching. Individual interviews were undertaken with each teacher in the middle of the year and again at the end of the 2005 school year. In terms of

views on initial teacher education, the majority of teachers considered that they had been prepared or well-prepared for teaching. One-third indicated that they felt less prepared in terms of handling classroom management or discipline problems and working constructively with parents/caregivers. The data also indicated that teachers who felt well-prepared to teach tended to report greater satisfaction in their third year of teaching, compared with those who felt less-prepared to teach. The authors comment, “This suggests that effective initial teacher education may assist beginning teachers to manage the vicissitudes inherent in classroom practice more successfully, thus contributing to their confidence, success, and feelings of satisfaction” (p. ix). Although the authors state that they focused on ‘promising’ teachers because international studies indicate that such teachers are more likely to leave teaching than others, there are issues to do with generalizability across other populations of beginning teachers. Another possible limitation is that participants’ perceptions of their teacher preparation programmes were based on memories of events that occurred from three to seven years previously.

The findings of commissioned research and independent studies on teacher preparation and beginning teachers discussed above also identify the importance of school support and induction in facilitating the transition and development of new teachers. As in overseas research, New Zealand studies recognize that pre-service teacher education programmes provide graduates with a beginning repertoire of knowledge, skills, and understandings. New Zealand’s mandated two-year advice and guidance system is an acknowledgement that this repertoire needs to be expanded and enhanced through support and professional development during the provisional registration period.

Research on New Zealand beginning teacher induction, support, and guidance

The New Zealand induction system, and how it is resourced, has received positive comment from international authors (e.g. Britton et al., 2003; Clement, 2000). However, in common with overseas studies (Darling-Hammond, 1999) New Zealand evidence indicates that there is often a mismatch between policy and practice. This section examines New Zealand literature related to the induction and professional support of beginning teachers.

Cameron (2007, p. 55) has commented that New Zealand does not have an extensive literature on teacher induction. There has, however, been a long-term research focus on assessing stakeholder views of the support provided to new teachers, as illustrated by the following five national investigations commissioned by government agencies. The first study is an evaluation, commissioned by the Department of Education and the New Zealand Educational Institute, undertaken not long after the introduction of the national induction system. Battersby (1989) followed 69 primary teachers over their first two years of teaching. Data were collected through interviews (two in the first year and one in the second) with beginning teachers, principals and senior teachers, and by questionnaires which were completed at the end of each term. Beginning teachers kept diaries for the first year. Relevant documentation, including inspectors' and principals' reports were also collected. In his report, Battersby (1989) noted inconsistencies and difficulties with aspects of the implementation of the induction programme and recommended that clear guidelines be published to ensure greater accountability of both principals and inspectors (who were abolished in 1989 as a consequence of the education reforms). Despite the publication of guidelines called for by Battersby, and even though from 1990 all beginning teachers were required to have a specially tailored advice and guidance programme, subsequent reports have identified similar concerns regarding the variability of induction processes.

In a second study, the Teacher Registration Board (TRB) surveyed first- and second-year primary and secondary teachers about their induction programmes and their use of the 0.2 release time. The TRB was interested in investigating how widespread were informal reports regarding the inadequacy of advice and guidance practices and in gaining information to improve these practices, as well as signal that the TRB was interested and concerned about beginning teachers. Mansell (1996) reported on the survey sent to year one and two teachers in all New Zealand primary and secondary schools, noting that obtaining statistical information on beginning teacher appointments made the response rate problematic (first year returns were estimated to be 41%). The data indicated that participants were positive about their advice and guidance programmes, although more primary beginning teachers thought that they were working 'very well' than those in secondary schools. Most teachers had a supervisor with whom they met

regularly, and support from other teachers. Mansell (1996) noted that different uses were made of the 0.2 time, with primary teachers being more likely to attend professional meetings or courses and observe other teachers' classes. This situation led Mansell to suggest (1996, p. 22) "...it may well be necessary to build more co-ordination and cohesion into the school system, with stronger provision of support services and consistency of professional development."

The findings by Battersby (1989) and Mansell (1996) regarding unevenness in the implementation of induction programmes was backed up by those of the third national study commissioned by the Ministry of Education. Renwick (2001) investigated the perceptions of a random sample of primary (n=291) and secondary (n=265) new teachers regarding their advice and guidance programmes. The response rate was 86%. The findings, once again, highlighted differences between primary and secondary teachers in their perceptions of the amount and effectiveness of the support they received. Overall, primary teachers were more likely to have a designated tutor teacher who provided regular support and to consider that their advice and guidance programme was effective.

The fourth project was commissioned by the Ministry of Education to investigate issues to do with the recruitment and retention of beginning teachers and returning teachers and heads of departments in New Zealand secondary schools. Whereas Mansell (1996) and Renwick (2001) captured the perceptions of beginning teachers via surveys in schools which claimed the 0.2 time allowance, Dewar, Kennedy, Staig, and Cox (2003) interviewed a total of 158 staff in 20 secondary schools in hard-to-staff areas which had two or more beginning teachers. The sample comprised 20 principals, 19 co-ordinators of beginning teacher programmes, 56 heads of department, 63 beginning teachers, and 20 returning teachers. In relation to beginning teachers, Dewar et al. reported that, apart from initial orientation, advice and guidance programmes appeared to be ad hoc rather than implemented on a formally scheduled basis and that many did not get systematic mentoring and had insufficient opportunities to observe other teachers. The authors noted that, while school staff felt that beginning teachers, while progressing well, often required extra assistance in the early stages, many of the beginning teachers felt that it was sometimes difficult to access support because

of the busyness of teachers. Almost all of the new beginning teachers said that they felt overwhelmed by, and unprepared for, the amount of paperwork and administrative tasks that were part of teaching. It should be noted that decile 9 and 10 schools were not included because of a comparative lack of recruitment problems.

The fifth and final national study to be discussed was undertaken by ERO (2004) to determine the quality of the support and guidance provided by schools to beginning teachers in their second year of teaching. ERO was interested in evaluating the beginning teachers' skills and knowledge and engagement of students in learning and the school's effectiveness in facilitating further beginning teacher professional development. ERO used its own indicators to design the questions and make judgments of effective practice. The sample comprised 119 second-year primary teachers in 79 schools and 78 secondary year two teachers in 32 schools. The teachers had been in their schools for their first year of teaching and the evaluations took place when the participants had completed at least half of their induction period. Reviewers, who were also undertaking scheduled school reviews, interviewed beginning teachers, their supervising teacher, and their school principal. Data were also gathered from school and class documentation and evidence from their own reviews. The reviewers also observed the beginning teachers. ERO (2004) reported that, in relation to the office's own expectations of effectiveness, only 65% of primary and 52% of secondary second-year teachers met all expectations. The report identified a cause for concern about the quality of a sizable majority of beginning teachers and about the quality of the support they receive. In terms of influencing the quality of teaching, ERO concluded that the most significant factors were: the quality of the school's support, the relationship between the beginning teacher and their tutor teacher, and opportunities to work with and meet other beginning teachers. The report was critiqued on methodological grounds regarding the nature of the sample and the lack of information regarding inter-rater reliability measures, which raised issues regarding the validity and reliability of the observations. The use of ERO's own indicators was also challenged, as they were different from those of MoE and NZTC which were used by schools to evaluate the performance of beginning teachers.

Themes from the New Zealand literature on beginning teachers

Key themes that emerge from the findings of the commissioned reports discussed above are corroborated by other New Zealand studies. With regard to induction programmes, the reports indicate that beginning teachers, especially primary ones, are generally satisfied with their advice and guidance programmes. There was, however, evidence to show that there are inconsistencies across schools in terms of the implementation of advice and guidance programmes. Britton et al. (2003) also commented on inconsistencies of support for beginning teachers and use of resources across New Zealand schools, while at the same time endorsing New Zealand's resourcing of beginning teacher induction. Similarly, Cameron et al. (2006) reported variable provision of induction across schools. While over half of their sample described systematic and supportive induction experiences, a quarter of participants felt that they had received minimal or extremely limited guidance in their first two years. As in other studies, Cameron et al. identified sector differences, with half of the secondary teachers compared to a third of primary teachers reporting that their schools provided minimal or unsupportive induction into the teaching profession. Almost all of the teachers in low decile schools experienced supportive induction - a result which contrasts with American studies that have found that many schools serving low income students do not provide teachers with the support they need to do their jobs well (Johnson et al., 2004). Cameron et al. (2006) also note that teachers who had short-term appointments were most at risk of not receiving consistent support, a worrying result given the high proportion of New Zealand beginning teachers who are employed, at least initially, in a temporary capacity.

The role that tutor teachers play in the induction of beginning teachers is another key theme (Renwick & Vize, 1993; Renwick 2001, ERO, 2005). Cameron et al. (2006) also found that having a highly supportive and committed mentor was identified as being a key component of an effective induction programme. The teachers in their study identified both interpersonal skills and wider professional expertise as being key ingredients in successful mentoring. They noted that beginning teachers were more likely to work with their tutor teachers when good relationships had been established. Important factors in the development of such relationships included the tutor teacher committing time and energy to beginning

teacher induction and displaying sensitivity to the developmental needs of the new teacher, such as knowing when to intervene, when to offer assistance, and when to stand back. Tutor teachers also protected new teachers from overworking by doing things to make their job easier and stressing that teaching has no endpoint. Cameron et al. (2006) reported that commonly beginning teachers felt particularly uncertain and insecure in their first few months of teaching and sought emotional reassurance and encouragement from colleagues. Grudnoff and Tuck (2005) argue that tutor teacher support is likely to be especially important in the first few weeks of teaching because this is when many beginning teachers experience high levels of stress from practice shock and task overload. Renwick (2001) found that the first year teachers reported less need for formal support as the year progressed and commented that this was to be expected as they gained more confidence and experience of the school and class. Given the critical role that tutor teachers are seen to play in the induction of beginning teachers, it is interesting that there has been no requirement for tutor teachers to undertake professional development, despite ongoing recommendations that this should occur (Battersby, 1989; Mansell, 1996; Renwick, 2001).

Supportive work environments have also been identified as important for new teacher development. For example, Smales (2002) explored the images of 'self as teacher' held by 30 first-year teachers in primary schools and found that adequate and appropriate support within the school was identified as the key factor in enabling the participants to evolve their image as a teacher and develop effective and satisfying teaching practices. Supportive practices included collaborative planning and assistance from tutor teachers. Lang (2001) in her study of seven new teachers also found that the school factors that most helped her teachers to survive were collaborative planning and support from their tutor teacher. Similar results were reported by Cameron et al. (2006) who comment that:

Most teachers began teaching feeling prepared and with high ideals to make a difference to children's learning, but successful entry into teaching was strongly influenced by the organizational conditions and professional learning cultures in their schools. They expected to be able to work with and have structured opportunities to learn informally from their colleagues. They flourished when schools enabled them to learn from their more experienced colleagues, in collaborative work cultures. They

looked to their workplace to provide them with models of good practice, helpful teaching resources, and constructive feedback on their teaching (p. 53).

Mansell (1996) and Renwick and Vize (1993) found that the working environment of the school affected the confidence levels of new teachers. Kane and Mallon (2006) also identified factors such as having limited opportunities for professional development and working with others which contributed to beginning teachers' lack of confidence and feelings of isolation.

A fourth theme identified in many New Zealand studies on beginning teachers relates to workload. Dewar et al. (2003) report that almost all of the secondary beginning teachers in their study felt overwhelmed by and unprepared for the amount of paperwork and administrative tasks that were part of their job. The primary beginning teachers involved in studies by Grudnoff and Tuck (2003, 2005) also reported that they felt overwhelmed and highly stressed by task overload when they first started teaching, although these feelings had diminished by their second year. A different picture emerges in the study by Cameron, Baker, and Lovett (2006) of promising teachers in their third to seventh year of teaching. They found that half of the primary teachers reported working ten hours or more a week on top of their timetabled day and a significant minority of their participants did not think their workload was manageable. They identified the factors that contributed to overload as paperwork, meetings, assessment, and reporting. Half of the primary teachers and a quarter of the secondary teachers in their sample felt that their level of work-related stress was acceptable. Only half of the teachers thought that they could maintain a satisfactory work-life balance.

The impact of work overload on teacher motivation and retention has been identified in a number of studies. Concern over overload was commented on by Mansell (1996, p. 22) in relation to the first and second year teachers' responses to her surveys:

The 1403 responses to this survey give an unmistakable picture of teachers who are generally very appreciative of the strong support they receive from colleagues, like the children and are concerned for them, enjoy teaching, yet feel under extreme pressure of over work, excessive paper

work, and administrative demands...These are not, on the whole, restless people who are leaving the profession because they are bored, or want a change, or who expected to follow a pattern of frequent career switches. They reflect rather a great sadness that they were finding it impossible to gain satisfaction from a chosen career, either in terms of professionalism or in terms of living a balanced life.

More recently, Dewar et al. (2003) noted that workload, along with pay rates, were seen as the main disincentives to their beginning teachers remaining in teaching. Similarly, Kane and Mallon (2006) identified workload and the 'paper war' as having a detrimental effect on teachers' job satisfaction and that matters to do with overload and salary were major barriers to both recruitment and retention. Their teachers reported that they faced ever-increasing reporting and compliance requirements, resulting in an increase in paperwork and administration. To quote Kane and Mallon (2006), "There was evidence, especially from the secondary sector, that increases in paperwork and other workload issues...have a detrimental effect on people's sense of satisfaction with teaching and directly influence current teachers' willingness to recommend teaching as a career to others" (p 44). The authors report that the teachers and principals commented that the best advice that they could give to beginning teachers is "not to take on too much and establish a work-life balance from the start" (p. 74), but some also observed that they did not heed their own advice.

Summary

The New Zealand literature suggests that starting to teach is a particularly stressful time for a lot of new teachers. While many appear to get on top of the 'steep learning curve' by the end of their first year of teaching, some continue to feel overburdened by the amount of paperwork and administration, particularly related to reporting and compliance requirements. The studies also indicate that an increasing number of new teachers are, at least initially, being appointed to short-term teaching positions.

The beginning teacher advice and guidance provided through induction programmes is identified as being a key factor in supporting new teacher development. The studies, however, show that provision of induction across

schools is variable in terms of quality. Supportive and committed tutor teachers are identified as being a key component of an effective induction programme, with beginning teachers regarding their tutor teachers as being their main sources of professional and emotional support, particularly when first starting to teach.

The Focus of this Research

The international and New Zealand literature reviewed in this chapter identifies 'beginning to teach' as being a particularly challenging stage in a teacher's professional career. The evidence indicates that the first few years are critical, not only in terms of impact on new teacher learning and growth, but also on decisions to stay or leave teaching. Factors that have been identified as influencing the transition and development of beginning teachers include teacher preparation programmes, student and teacher biography and beliefs, beginning teacher induction and support, and the work environment or culture of the school. Much of the research focuses on one or the other of these aspects, although Flores and Day (2006), in a recent study, have taken an approach that recognizes the complexity and interconnectedness of the multiplicity of factors involved in learning to teach.

There is not a large amount of New Zealand research on beginning teacher transition and development. Much of the research focus has been on investigating stakeholder perceptions regarding the effectiveness or otherwise of pre-service teacher education or school induction programmes on new teacher development. Relatively little attention has been given to how factors such as beliefs and biography or the professional culture of the school influence new teacher learning and development. There also appears to be no New Zealand research (and comparatively little international research) that has looked at the interplay between biography, experience, context, and identity in terms of new teacher development and learning.

Many of the studies on beginning teachers have tended to gather data using a cross-sectional research design, while New Zealand research has also been accused of being overly reliant on surveys and questionnaires (Cameron & Baker,

2004). While cross-sectional, quantitative studies provide useful insights into the beginning teacher experience, they do not provide a deep and nuanced understanding of the complexity of the process of becoming a teacher.

This thesis aims to address this gap by undertaking a longitudinal, qualitative approach to probe more deeply into how primary beginning teachers experience and interpret beginning to teach. Of particular interest is understanding how beliefs, biography, teacher preparation, and school factors impact on the transition, development, and professional identity construction of new primary teachers over their first year of teaching. This research deliberately focuses on beginning teachers. The decision not to include tutor teachers was taken because my aim was to understand and interpret new teachers' experiences from the standpoint of beginning teachers. I was cognizant of the importance of hearing the 'voices' of teachers among educational research (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Giving voice to this group of New Zealand primary beginning teachers regarding their first-year teaching experiences adds to the literature in this area.

CHAPTER THREE

The Research Process

The intention of this research is to gain a greater understanding of the process of transition, learning, and development that beginning teachers undergo over their first year of teaching.

The study is framed around three key questions:

- What are the patterns of transition from student teacher to first year teacher?
- What are the key factors that affect the transition and development of first year teachers?
- How do these factors influence first year teachers' construction of themselves as teachers?

In asking these questions I sought to understand the process of becoming a teacher from the vantage point of the lived reality of the beginning teacher. I was interested in exploring the perspectives of beginning teachers as they developed and changed over their first year of teaching so as to gain greater understanding of what aspects of their prior and current experiences enabled or limited their growth as teachers.

This study aims to expand our knowledge and understanding of factors that influence and shape beginning teacher transition, learning, and development. At a time when the quality of beginning teachers is the subject of public and political scrutiny and debate in New Zealand, it is critical to gain a clear understanding of what factors enable or limit new teachers' transition to teaching and their development as teachers. This study is therefore of interest to all those involved in the education of beginning teachers. It has relevance to those who work in pre-service teacher education, to school leaders who employ beginning teachers, to policy makers, as well as to beginning teachers themselves.

According to Neuman (2003), research is a way of going about finding answers to questions and social research is undertaken to find answers about the social world. Reichardt and Rallis (1994, p. 242) assert that in the social sciences, including education, researchers must have a commitment to “understanding and improving the human condition ... (by providing) usable knowledge about social problems and about strategies to address them.” The selection of an appropriate research framework for this study was therefore critical to enable understanding of the process of transition and development that new teachers undergo and to inform those involved in teacher preparation and development.

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework and design of the research project and examines the questions of trustworthiness and authenticity as criteria for evaluating the research. Also discussed are the maintenance of ethical standards, including the selection of participants, and the strategies used for collecting, recording, and analyzing data. The relationship of the researcher to the researched is also explored.

The Research Framework

The framework for any research includes beliefs about the nature of reality and humanity (ontology), the theory of knowledge that informs the research (epistemology), and how that knowledge may be gained (methodology). A consideration of these three generic elements must be a central feature of any discussion about the nature of social science research as these elements give shape and definition to the conduct of an inquiry (Popkewitz, Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1979).

Epistemological Considerations

The critical epistemological debate in terms of conducting social science research is whether or not the social world can be studied according to the same principles as the natural sciences (Bryman, 2001). There are two broad epistemological positions: positivism and interpretivism.

For positivists the purpose of research is scientific explanation. According to Neuman (2003, p. 71) “positivism sees social science as an organized method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity.” The nature of social reality for positivists is that: empirical facts exist apart from personal ideas or thoughts; they are governed by laws of cause and effect; patterns of social reality are stable and knowledge of them is additive (Crotty, 1998; Neuman, 2003). In the positivist paradigm an objective stance is demanded and rigorous and exact measures are sought preferably through the use of precise quantitative data gained from experiments, surveys, and statistics (Lincoln & Guba 2000, 2005; Neuman, 2003). Explanations must be consistent with observed facts and have no logical contradictions and, in terms of reliability, results must be able to be replicated by other researchers (Neuman, 2003).

In contrast, interpretive researchers hold that there is no objective ‘reality’. In this paradigm the goal of social research is to develop an understanding of social life and to discover how people construct meaning in natural settings (Neuman, 2003). The interpretivist approach holds that reality is subjective and that the role of the researcher is to understand how people experience the world; how they make meaning of their experiences. This approach “sees social reality consisting of people who construct meaning and create interpretations through their daily social interaction” (Neuman, 2003, p. 77). The view that social situations contain ambiguity means that interpretivists do not see facts or behaviours as being objective and observable but rather they are viewed as being context-specific actions that depend on the interpretation of the participants in their social setting.

Both positivist and interpretive researchers hold that human behaviour may be patterned and regular. However, while positivists see this in terms of the laws of cause and effect, interpretivists view such patterns as being created out of evolving meaning systems that people generate as they socially interact (Neuman, 2003). Because interpretive researchers are more concerned with achieving an empathetic understanding of how others see the world than testing the laws of

human behaviour (Bryman, 2001), they employ data gathering methods that are sensitive to context (Neuman, 2003, p. 80), and which enable rich and detailed, or “thick” description of social phenomena. This contrasts with the positivist emphasis on explaining behaviour through measurable data. Issues of trustworthiness and credibility, as opposed to the positivist criteria of validity, reliability and objectivity, are key considerations in the interpretivist paradigm. It is important, however, to note that researchers using this approach engage in multiple levels of interpretation. Interpretive researchers are:

...not simply laying bare how members of a social group interpret the world around them. (They) will...be aiming to place the interpretations ...into a social, scientific frame. There is a double interpretation going on: the researcher is providing an interpretation of others’ interpretations. Indeed, there is a third level of interpretation in terms of the concepts, theories, and literature of a discipline. (Bryman, 2001, p. 15)

Ontological Considerations

Ontological questions in social science research are related to the nature of reality. There are two broad and contrasting positions: objectivism that holds that there is an independent “reality” and constructionism that assumes that reality is the product of social processes (Neuman, 2003, p. 63).

An objectivist position holds that there is an external reality that both exists and is discoverable; that is, “social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors” (Bryman, 2001, p. 17). Neuman (2003) refers to this as a ‘what you see is what you get’ type of a stance. In contrast is the constructionist position that holds that people’s interactions and beliefs create reality, a view that allows for multiple realities. Crotty describes the constructionist position as:

The view that all knowledge and therefore meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (Crotty, 1998, p. 42).

Within constructionism, social constructionism emphasizes the importance culture has on the way people view the world (Crotty, 1998). This stance allows for a relativist view as social constructionism holds that reality is influenced by an individual's history and culture (Crotty, 1998). According to Crotty, constructionism is different from constructivism in that the latter focuses on the unique experience of the individual or as he put it, "the meaning-making activity of the individual mind" (p. 58). While constructivism implies that each person's way of making sense of the world is valid and therefore meaning is relative, constructionism focuses more on the collective generation and transmission of meaning. Crotty argues that:

It would appear useful, then, to reserve the term constructivism for epistemological considerations focusing exclusively on 'the meaning-making activity of the individual mind' and to use constructionism where the focus includes 'the collective generation (and transmission) of meaning' (Crotty, 1998, p. 58).

The aim of this study is to gain a greater understanding of factors that limit or enable the transition and development of beginning teachers from the perspective of first year teachers. My philosophic viewpoint is in tune with the interpretive approach which encompasses a subjectivist epistemology (interaction between the researcher and participants co-create understandings), a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities) and a naturalistic methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The next section discusses the selection of a research paradigm that supports my research aims and philosophic perspective.

Selecting a Research Paradigm

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 22) the "net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm, or an interpretative framework." Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 105) defined a paradigm as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways." The authors also acknowledged that although the basic beliefs inherent in specific research paradigms represented

worldviews they “must be accepted simply on faith (however well argued)” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). The above discussion of epistemological and ontological considerations also overviewed two major research paradigms – positivist and interpretivist-constructivist. Other major paradigms include postpositivism and critical theory. Postpositivists, like positivists, hold to the notions of objectivity and scientific inquiry but differ in that they believe that research outcomes are neither totally objective nor unquestionably certain (Crotty, 1998). The focus of critical social research is on emancipatory action (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 2000) and the role of the researcher is to question commonly held assumptions and values, challenge conventional social structures, and engage in social action (Crotty, 1998).

Description of the different paradigms demonstrates that there are competing approaches to social research based on different philosophical assumptions about the purpose of science and the nature of social reality (Neuman, 2003). The different paradigms are often discussed in oppositional terms. Over the last two or three decades, different research paradigms have contended “for legitimacy and intellectual pragmatic hegemony” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 163), and while “the border lines between these paradigms and perspectives have begun to blur (at the same time) perceptions of these differences have hardened” (Lincoln & Guba, 2005, p. 184).

The ontological and epistemological positions of these...Research traditions provide the foundation of one of the most bitter quarrels in contemporary sociology... Each side claims that the frame of thought they promote provides a means for acquiring knowledge about social phenomena, and each regards the efforts of the other as at best misguided.They differ on what phenomena should be attended to, how one is to approach phenomena, and how the phenomena is to be analyzed. (Couch, 1987, p. 106 cited in Neuman, 2003, p. 69).

While it can be argued that one paradigm is not intrinsically better than another, what is critical is the selection of the appropriate paradigm for an inquiry. Neuman (2003, p. 90) argues that there is “no single, absolutely correct approach to social science research” but rather the approaches represent “different ways of looking at the world – ways to observe, measure and understand social reality” (op cit, p. 70). Merriman (1998, p. 5) argues that “getting started on a research

project begins with examining your own orientation to basic tenets about the nature of reality, the purpose of doing research, and the type of knowledge that can be produced.”

The focus of the current investigation is on understanding how beginning teachers experienced their first year of teaching, how these experiences were interpreted, and the nature of novices’ understandings of becoming a teacher. The interpretative notions of understanding, meaning, and action are central to this study. An interpretive research paradigm requires the researcher to engage in:

... systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds. (Neuman, 2003, p. 76.)

The next section compares research methodologies and presents an argument for the use of a qualitative approach in this study of beginning teacher transition and development.

Methodological Considerations

Methodology is a way of thinking about and studying social reality (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Sarantakos (2005, p. 30) defines methodology as a “research strategy that translates ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines that show how research is to be conducted.” Following is an overview of the two major social science methodologies that relate to the positivist and interpretive paradigms: quantitative and qualitative.

The positivist research paradigm underpins quantitative methodology. The realist/objectivist ontology and empiricist epistemology contained in the positivist paradigm requires a research approach that is objective or detached, where the emphasis is on measuring variables and testing hypotheses that are linked to general causal explanations. Positivist research uses experimental designs to measure effects, especially through group changes. The data collection techniques focus on gathering hard data in the form of numbers to enable

evidence to be presented in quantitative form (Candy, 1989; Neuman, 2003; Sarantakos, 2005).

In contrast, qualitative methodology is underpinned by interpretivist epistemology and constructionist ontology. This assumes that meaning is embedded in the participants' experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the researcher's own perceptions (Merriman, 1998). Delamont (2002, p. 7) describes this as finding out "how the people you are researching understand *their* world." According to Holliday (2002) researchers can only explore, illuminate, and interpret these pieces of reality: "Interpretation is as far as we can go" (p. 5), which implies a commitment to the idea of multiple realities. Thus the interpretivist paradigm is closely associated with the view of qualitative research.

There does not appear to be one definition of qualitative methodology. Indeed, it has been described as an "umbrella term" (Merriam, 1998, p. 10) comprising "diverse methods employed in the social sciences" (Sarantakos, 1993, p. 44). Although there are many different research strategies available to the researcher, Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggest that the strategies used in qualitative research share common characteristics. These characteristics include investigating questions without hypothesis testing, understanding and interpreting actions, objects, and social processes from the participants' point of view, and where data were collected through sustained contact with participants. Merriam (1998, p. 11) also identified common characteristics of the qualitative approach which included "the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an inductive orientation to analysis, and findings that are richly descriptive." Such rich descriptions are called "thick" (Geertz, 1973), a term that has been defined as "description that goes beyond the mere or bare reporting of an act (thin description) but describes and probes the intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations, and circumstances of action" (Denzin, 1988, p. 39).

There are different advantages and disadvantages for both methodological approaches. In comparing the two methodologies, Punch (2005) suggests that the quantitative approach provides data that allow for descriptions of phenomena to

be made in a systematic and comparable way and that the objectivity of such research is increased because the associated data analysis methods do not rely on the researcher doing the analysis. On the other hand, Punch contends that qualitative approaches are more flexible and can therefore be used in a wider range of situations for a wider range of purposes. Qualitative approaches “are the best way of getting the insider’s perspective....the meanings people attach to things and events” (2005, p. 238). Punch argues that qualitative data provide a “holism and richness” or thick descriptions that are able to deal with the complexity of social phenomena. Merriam (1998, p. 6) views the differences between the two approaches as being quantitative research taking apart a phenomenon to study its component parts (the variables in a study) whereas qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole. A mixed method approach combines both approaches and allows for both quantitative and qualitative data collection. A mixed methods approach provides data that enable the findings to be generalized and develops a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon for individuals (Creswell, 2003, p. 23).

The argument for which is the ‘best’ methodology in the end comes down to decisions about ‘fit for purpose’. According to Creswell (2003) the selection of an appropriate research design requires several considerations - firstly, the research problem will often indicate a specific research approach, or approaches, to be used in the inquiry; secondly the researcher’s own experiences, training, and worldview, (Strauss & Corbin, 1998); and thirdly the audience to whom the research is to be reported.

This thesis investigates the experiences of beginning teachers as they move from being a teacher education student to becoming a teacher. The focus is on what the first year of teaching meant to beginning teachers. It set out to investigate how starting to teach was experienced, how these experiences were interpreted, and the nature of the participants’ understanding about becoming a teacher. The nature and purpose of the study indicates the qualitative approach as being the most appropriate methodology. Qualitative researchers study occurrences in their natural settings, “attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). A qualitative

methodology would enable me to gain a nuanced viewpoint of the participants (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990) and to present findings that were “thick” in description (Geertz, 1973).

This study employs a qualitative methodological approach situated within the interpretive framework. The next section outlines the selection of a qualitative research design that was most appropriate for the inquiry.

Identifying a Qualitative Research Design

As noted previously, qualitative research is an ‘umbrella term’ which includes various ways of conducting qualitative inquiry (Merriman, 1998). Creswell (2003) identifies four general approaches to qualitative inquiry: ethnography, grounded theory, case study, and phenomenology. Merriam (1998) adds a category of basic or generic study to this list. She also notes, however, that they all share essential characteristics of qualitative research: “the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument in data collection and analysis, and findings that are richly descriptive” (p. 11). Furthermore, the different research designs or strategies can and do work in conjunction with one another. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2) comment, “qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand.”

This study incorporates elements of many of these research designs. The phenomena of beginning teachers’ experiences of their first year teaching will be studied; the findings will be a mix of description and analysis; and concepts and explanations will be developed that are “grounded” in the data. The proposed design is, however, most closely aligned with the case study, drawing on principles associated with grounded theory.

Case study

A case study is an intensive description and analysis of a single unit (Yin, 1994) or bounded system (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994) employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved (Merriam, 1998,

p. 19). Yin (1994, p. 23) observes that a case study design is particularly suited to situations where it is impossible to separate the phenomena's variables from its context.

Merriam (1998) identifies three special characteristics of qualitative case studies. They are particularistic in that they focus on particular situations, events, or phenomenon; they are descriptive in terms of the end product being a rich, "thick" description of the phenomenon under study; and they are heuristic in that they illuminate the reader's understanding of the case, bring about the discovery of new meaning, and confirm what is already known. In addition to having these features, case studies can be used for three purposes. Firstly, they can be purely descriptive, providing a detailed account of a phenomenon but not forming any theoretical explanation. Secondly, they can be interpretive case studies that are also highly descriptive but where the researcher analyses the data for patterns to develop concepts and theory. Thirdly, they can be an evaluative case study, containing description, explanation, and a judgment or evaluation of the findings (Merriam, 1998).

Stake (2000) distinguishes three types of case studies based on the reason for undertaking the inquiry. Intrinsic studies are those undertaken because of the researcher's interest in them. They present the stories of those living the case and therefore provide detailed understanding of the case but are not used for theory building. Instrumental studies are cases where the data are closely examined for insights and explanations and where the case study facilitates the reader's understanding of the case. Stake notes that there can be overlap of these two types of case study in a "zone of combined purpose" (p. 437). The third type is collective case studies where multiple single case studies are combined to investigate phenomena and generate theory.

A major issue in case study design is the selection of participants and instances for inclusion as they must provide the researcher with the best opportunity to learn and understand (Stake, 2000). Stake argues that the case, while singular, contains subsections that are often so numerous and complex that they can only be sampled. When sampling for case studies it is important to attend to the untypical

as well as the typical, as it is often the infrequent occurrence that becomes critical to understanding the phenomena under study. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000, p. 185) argue that “significance, rather than frequency, is a hall mark of case studies, offering the researcher insight into the real dynamics of situations and people.” Sampling decisions must also be pragmatic. While they need to ensure the availability of participants who can provide insight into the subject, context, and settings of the inquiry, the time and resources available to the researcher are also matters that need to be considered.

The current study has many characteristics of case study design. This focus was on 12 beginning primary teachers who graduated from the Auckland College of Education Bachelor of Education (Teaching) programme and, as such, is a bounded phenomenon. It was particularistic in that it focused on the participants’ transition from student to teacher and their experiences as first year teachers. In terms of the descriptive criteria, the participants provided “thick” description of the phenomena under study. The heuristic criterion was fulfilled through the provision of new knowledge regarding factors that enable or limit beginning teacher transition, professional learning, and development.

Grounded theory

Grounded theory is a widely used approach in qualitative research (Neuman, 2003). Grounded theory was first developed by the sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) who believed that theories which were “grounded” in data from the field would have greater explanatory power than studies designed to verify or test theory. In this approach, the collected data are analyzed and sorted, and a theory emerges from the data. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 12), “Grounded theories, because they are drawn from the data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action.”

Over the years grounded theory has undergone a series of critiques and changes. For example, Glaser (1992) came to criticize Strauss’s view of grounded theory as being too prescribed and structured, while Charmaz (2005, p. 509) challenges the objectivist-positivist assumptions of the earlier grounded theorists such as Glaser and Strauss (1967), Corbin and Strauss (1998). Charmaz (2005) advocates for a

more interpretive constructivist approach to grounded theory that “emphasizes the studied phenomena rather than the methods of studying it” (p. 509). She argues that:

No qualitative method rests purely on induction – the questions we ask of the empirical world frame what we know of it. In short we share in constructing what we define as data. Similarly, our conceptual categories arise through our interpretations *of* data rather than emanating *from* them or from our methodological practices (cf. Glaser, 2002). Thus, our theoretical analyses are interpretative renderings of a reality, not objective reporting of it. (Charmaz, 2005, p. 510).

This study utilizes the principles of grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin (1998) characterize grounded theory as being both a methodology and a set of methods for building theory (p. 14). They identify a systematic, analytic three step approach to grounded theory. Firstly, the researcher describes a phenomenon from the participants’ perspective. In this study, the participants have told a story from their perspective, that is highlighting areas that participants perceive to be important and relevant to them. Second is the organization of data “according to their properties and dimensions and then using description to elucidate these categories” (p. 19). Strauss and Corbin see this as “conceptual ordering” which is a precursor to the third step, which is “theorizing.” They define theory as:

...a set of well-developed categories (e.g. themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, nursing, or other phenomenon. The statements of relationship explain who, what, when, why, and how and with what consequences an event occurs. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 22).

Charmaz (2005, p. 507) comments that while “grounded theory” refers to both a method of inquiry and to the product of inquiry, the most common use of the term refers to a specific mode of data analysis. She contends that:

Essentially, grounded theory methods are a set of flexible, analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle-range theories through successive data analysis and conceptual development ... A grounded theory approach encourages researchers to remain close to their studied worlds and to develop an integrated set of theoretical concepts from their empirical materials that

not only synthesize and interpret them but also show processual relationships. (Charmaz, 2005, pp. 507-508).

This study uses a process of analysis that is described as coding the data. According to Neuman (2003) coding is a way of managing, ordering, and making sense of data. The grounded theory approach has been described as a “comparative method in which the researcher compares data with data, data with categories, and category with category” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 517). Grounded theory procedures comprises three, not necessarily sequential, stages in which the data are reviewed and coded, with a different coding system used each time (Neuman, 2003; Punch, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). “Open coding” is employed for the first pass through data with the purpose of “bringing themes to the surface from deep inside the data” (Neuman, 2003, p. 443). In this stage the “data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences” (Corbin & Strauss, 1998, p. 102) and used to generate conceptual labels and categories for themes. I provide a more detailed explanation later in this chapter of how the data were coded in this study.

The second stage is called “axial coding” where the aim is “to begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding... In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations about phenomena” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 124). In this phase the researcher reviews and examines the initial coded themes in order to identify linkages between concepts or themes as well as making decisions about retaining codes and identifying new codes or themes. The third stage is called “selective coding” during which the aim is to integrate and pull together the developing analysis. The researcher compares, contrasts, reviews, reorganizes, and refines the categories, themes, or concepts that have already been identified and elaborates a major theme or themes (Neuman, 2003).

In common with other forms of qualitative inquiry, a grounded theory approach requires the researcher to be the primary instrument of data collection and analysis and to take an inductive approach when deriving meaning from the data. Merriam (1998, p. 18) argues that the constant, comparative method of data analysis employed in the grounded theory approach is widely used in all kinds of

qualitative studies, whether or not the researcher is building a grounded theory. She describes the data analysis process as:

...comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences....data are grouped together on similar dimension ...is tentatively given a name...then becomes a category. These patterns are arranged in relationship to each other in the building of grounded theory. (Merriam, 1998, p. 18).

While Charmaz (2005, p. 517) endorses grounded theory coding procedures as a way of providing “analytic scaffolding,” she is critical of grounded theory studies that have not taken account of the context in which the research question exists. She argues against decontextualized and objectified grounded theory analyses and for a focus on meaning and processes which address subjective, situational, and social levels. Charmaz believes that in order to make nuanced explanations of behaviour, researchers should focus on action and context: “what people think, feel, and do must be analysed within the relevant social contexts, which, in turn, people construct through action and interaction” (p. 524). She uses grounded theory procedures in social justice inquiry and suggests that new criteria be used to evaluate such studies. Instead of the criteria of fit, workability, relevance, and modifiability (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), Charmaz (2005) argues for credibility and originality; resonance (is it connected to the worlds of lived experience?); usefulness (can it be used by people in their everyday worlds?); and does it contribute to a better society?

In summary, the aim of this research was to gain a greater understanding of the process of transition and development that 12 beginning primary teachers experienced over their first year of teaching. In this study I was the primary instrument of data collection and my goal was to interpret the participants’ experiences in terms of the meanings they brought to them. I intended to engage in a deductive approach to data analysis and to present findings that were “thick” in description. The aim and focus of this research matches the qualitative methodology that is aligned with the interpretive paradigm. The qualitative research design selected for the study shares characteristics with a case study approach and utilizes procedures associated with grounded theory.

Research Methods

The Sample

Sampling the participants

Qualitative research requires the purposeful selection of participants that will best help the researcher understand the research question (Creswell, 2003, p. 185). In contrast to what is typically found in quantitative research, a qualitative approach does not necessarily require random sampling or selection of a large number of participants and sites. As Merriam (1998, p. 61) argues:

Probability sampling (of which random sampling is the most familiar example) allows the investigator to generalize results of the study to the population from which it was drawn. Since generalization in a statistical sense is not a goal of qualitative research, probabilistic sampling is not necessary... Thus nonprobabilistic sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research.

The sampling selection used in this study fits Merriam's (1998) description of what is usual in qualitative research, namely, that it was "nonrandom, purposeful, and small" (p. 8). Non-random sampling has the advantages of being simple, cheap, and easy to set up and is considered adequate when generalizability is not an issue (Merriam, 1998). Delamont (2002, p. 84) believes that more important than the actual method used to obtain participants is "honesty and reflexivity" in recording how the sample was obtained and the effect the sample had on the data.

There are various types of non-random sampling (see for example Neuman, 2003). The sampling strategy used in this research has features of "convenience sampling" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 149), "opportunistic sampling" (Bryman, 2001, p. 323) and "haphazard sampling" (Neuman, 2003, p. 211), in that the process for selecting the sample began with all those who responded to the invitation to supply expressions of interest and then to attend the focus group sessions as outlined later in this chapter. My choice of sampling strategy was based on factors to do with time and availability of respondents (Merriam, 1998). Although Neuman (2003) cautions against the use of haphazard or convenience sampling, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) and Punch (2005) have noted the increasing use of this approach, given the proliferation of qualitative research and

the associated difficulty of accessing potential participants. Cohen et al. (2000) assert that convenience sampling is not problematic as long as it is recognised that the sample represents no other group than itself and therefore generalisations to wider populations cannot be made.

Merriam (1998, p. 63) argues that while “some dimension of convenience always figures into sample selection, selection on this basis alone is not very credible.” In this study, the sampling was done with a specific purpose in mind, which was to select participants who had been appointed to a beginning teacher position for the start of 2004. It can therefore be viewed as a form of “purposive sampling” that Neuman (2003, p. 213) suggests is appropriate in situations where the researcher needs to “select members of a difficult-to-reach, specialized population.” In this study, the “specialized population” were those graduating students from the primary pathways of the Auckland College of Education’s Bachelor of Education (Teaching) and the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary) who had been appointed to teaching positions in primary schools in the Auckland region by December 2003. Once graduates left the College at the end of the year, the pool of potential participants would become ‘difficult to reach’ as there was no reliable mechanism which would enable me to identify or contact graduates who had been appointed to a teaching position after the end of the 2003 academic year.

The selection of the participants took place over three months. I interviewed six Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Primary) graduates and 12 graduates of the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) programme who had confirmed that they wished to be part of the study when I contacted them early February 2004. In terms of this thesis, however, I decided to use only the data obtained from the 12 beginning teachers who had graduated with the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) qualification. The decision to focus on these participants grew out of a growing realization that I would have difficulty dealing with the amount and complexity of the data that had been generated. This linked with another pragmatic reason - that of time. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003) and Neuman (2003), knowing when you have enough information relies on recognizing the point of data saturation, acknowledging when you “reach a point of diminishing returns ...

which is the period when you learn a decreasing amount for the time you spend” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 62).

About the participants

As noted above, the participants in this study comprised 12 beginning teachers who started teaching for the first time at the beginning of 2004. They had all graduated with a Bachelor of Education (Teaching) from the Auckland College of Education at the end of 2003, had been appointed to a teaching position in a primary school in the Auckland region by mid December 2003, and had started teaching at the beginning of the 2004 primary school year. Appendix Two outlines the key features of the pre-service teacher education programme that the participants graduated from in 2003.

Eleven of the 12 participants were female, which is a fairly typical ratio given that male graduates from primary initial teacher education programmes comprise around 20% of the cohort. Eleven identified as European and one as European/Maori. Eight participants were aged between 20 and 25, two were between 30 and 35, one was 38 and another was 41 years old. Six participants had family who were associated with teaching, eleven had friends who were teachers, and four had children of their own.

The 12 beginning teachers worked in 11 primary schools. Schools in New Zealand are allocated a decile ranking from one (low) to ten (high) in relation to the socio-economic status of their community. The decile ranking determines the level of government funding, with low decile schools receiving the highest MoE funding allocation per pupil. Two participants were in decile 1 to 3 schools, five worked in decile 4 to 7 schools and five were in decile 8 to 10 schools. In terms of geographical location, four taught in West Auckland schools, one of which was in a rural area, five in South Auckland, two on the North Shore, and one in South East Auckland.

Six of the 12 participants were appointed to permanent positions by the end of 2003: one to a decile 2 school; two to decile 5 schools; one to a decile 7 school; one to decile 9 and one to decile 10 schools. Two of the participants who were appointed to permanent positions (one in a decile 7 and one in a decile 10) had

been on a seven-week practicum in that school the year they were appointed. One other participant had been on practicum in their (decile 8) school and they had been appointed to a one-year fixed term position.

Appendix Three provides a summary of information about the participants to provide a context for the description and analysis of the 12 participants' experiences of transition, development, and learning over their first year of teaching.

Ethical Considerations

While all research involves ethical issues, Punch (2005, p. 276) asserts that they are likely to be more acute in social research because it requires collecting data from people, about people. He goes on to argue that ethical issues are heightened in qualitative investigations because the level of intrusion into people's lives is often greater than in quantitative research.

Consideration was given to ethical issues from the outset of this qualitative study. As a safeguard to ensure that ethical issues have been taken account of, educational researchers are required to submit their research proposals to the appropriate ethics committee for approval. The ethics proposal for this doctoral thesis was approved by Waikato University, School of Education Ethics Committee on 15 October 2003 and site access was granted by the Auckland College of Education Research Ethics Committee on 17 November 2003.

Bryman (2001) proposes that the ethical principles in social research that need to be taken account of revolve around four main overlapping areas. These are: harm to participants; informed consent; invasion of privacy; and deception. The following shows how these four aspects have been considered in this investigation.

Harm to participants

Harm to participants can entail a number of aspects including physical harm, harm to development, stress, loss of self-esteem, and coercion. In this study there was no risk of physical harm and no coercion of any of the participants to be involved

in the research or to disclose information. To address any potential harm to the development of the participants I removed myself from any influence over their work by carrying out the first phase of data gathering via focus group interviews after participants had completed all of their coursework. The timing of the focus group interviews took account of potential issues of power between me, in my role as Dean of Teacher Education at the College of Education, and the participants. Even though I had not taught or come into direct contact with any of the participants over their course of study, I was very aware that my position could impact on the participants' feelings of safety and therefore their responses.

I was also aware of the potential for loss of self-esteem and stress. I attempted to minimize disturbance by undertaking the individual interviews in participants' schools at dates, times, and venues that were suitable to them. While issues around power relationships were less acute during this phase because they were employed by their school, it was important that the beginning teachers should not feel pressured to participate. This was particularly important given that the interviews were carried out over the participants' first year of teaching, which is known to be a very stressful and challenging period in teachers' professional lives. Of critical importance, therefore, in minimizing harm to participants, were ethical considerations related to informed consent and confidentiality, which are discussed in the following sections.

Informed consent and participant selection

The principle of informed consent means that potential research participants are given as much information as necessary to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in the research. This means that the researcher has the responsibility to ensure that consent is based on the participants being truthfully informed about the risks and benefits of taking part in the research. Cohen and Manion (1994) talk about "reasonably informed consent" to acknowledge that, in reality, it is impossible for researchers to predict all eventualities at the beginning of a research project. I was not aware of any unforeseen problems occurring during the conduct of this investigation.

Gaining informed consent and participant selection occurred in five phases. *Phase One:* I addressed final year Bachelor of Education (Primary) 2003 students in a Professional Studies session in the last term of their programme of study. I informed them verbally, supported by an overhead transparency, about my research, including possible risks and benefits of participation. A possible benefit was the opportunity for participants to reflect on their experiences as developing teachers with someone who was empathetic but was not directly part of their school community. Other potential benefits included improving the support and guidance provisions for future beginning teachers through gaining greater understanding of factors that help or limit new teachers' transition to teaching and development as teachers. It was also hoped that the results of the study would both contribute to the literature on beginning teacher induction, and inform policy and practice in terms of creating more effective linkages between pre-service teacher education and schools. Possible risks related to concerns about confidentiality and anonymity, and strategies for preserving these were outlined.

I explained that, in order to gain insight into their perspectives, participants would be interviewed before they left College and early in each of the four terms of their first year of teaching. The first set of interviews would be at College after they had completed their course work and prior to graduation. These would take the form of focus group interviews and would take approximately an hour. The interviews would be audio taped to ensure that what was recorded was accurate. I provided *Expression of Interest* forms for them to complete if they wished to participate in the focus group interviews. I informed them that indicating interest did not commit anyone to being involved in the study. I also stated that once I received an expression of interest I would provide more detailed written information at which point they could decide whether they still wanted to be involved or not. I stated that, because I would be starting the individual interviews early in the first term of the following school year, participants would have to be drawn from those who had got a job in a primary school in the Auckland area by the end of the current academic year. This process allowed potential participants time to consider their decision and to ensure that their participation was truly voluntary.

Phase Two: The second phase of participant selection and informed consent related to those respondents who had expressed an interest in being part of the study. The 54 graduating primary students who had expressed interest were sent a letter of invitation to become part of a focus group, along with a schedule of time slots on which they were asked to indicate their preferred times. Enclosed was an *Information Sheet for Focus Group Interviews* that stated that, while confidentiality would be maintained, full anonymity could not be guaranteed due to the nature of focus group interviews. Respondents also received a *Consent Form* that clearly stated that they were not obliged to participate and that if they did take part they could withdraw from the study without prejudice up until October 2004 (Appendix Four).

Phase Three: This stage of participant selection and informed consent related to the 19 people who replied that they would like to participate in the focus group interviews. Fifteen people actually attended the two sets of focus group interviews in early November 2003 (with seven in the first focus group and eight in the second focus group). The other four who had expressed interest had put in apologies for not attending and were sent the questions that had been asked at the focus groups (Appendix Five). They were asked to complete and return them to me, with all four returning the completed questionnaires. All those who participated in this phase of the study (whether through focus group interviews or by questionnaire) were provided with another copy of the *Information Sheet for Focus Group Interviews* and *Consent Form* and were asked to sign and return the *Consent Form* to me. They were also asked to complete a form that included information regarding whether or not they had a job in an Auckland primary school the following year, whether or not they wished to participate in the research project in 2004, and their contact details if they did wish to participate (Appendix Six). Three of the 19 indicated that they wished to participate but had not been appointed to a job for 2004, one was going to work in an early childhood centre, and three indicated that they were intending to teach out of Auckland. The remaining 12 had indicated that they wished to participate and that they had been appointed to a teaching position in a primary school in the Auckland region.

Phase Four: As I was operating in a very tight time-frame in terms of securing participants who had teaching jobs before the end of the College's academic year, I was worried about the number of Bachelor of Education (Teaching) primary graduates with jobs that I would actually end up with for my study. Towards the middle of November 2003 I therefore decided to widen my group of potential participants to members of the one year Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary) programme, and so engaged in a fourth phase of participant selection and informed consent. I followed the same process as outlined above in terms of explaining the study to the group and seeking expressions of interest. Twelve indicated that they would be interested in participating. Because it was by now the end of the academic year, I sent the 12 respondents a questionnaire (the questions that had been used in the focus group interviews), an *Information Sheet*, and *Consent Form*. Also enclosed was the form that requested information regarding whether or not they had a job in an Auckland primary school the following year, whether or not they wished to participate in the research project in 2004, and their contact details if they did wish to participate. Nine of the 12 respondents stated that they did wish to participate and seven of these nine had teaching positions in primary schools in the Auckland region.

Phase Five: The fifth and final phase of participant selection and informed consent took place at the start of the school year in 2004. I telephoned at home each of the 19 beginning teachers who had confirmed at the end of 2003 that they wished to participate in the study during 2004. I outlined again what was entailed and reinforced that they were not obligated to participate and could withdraw without prejudice up until October 2004. The 12 graduates of the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) all confirmed their desire to participate, and six of the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary) graduates stated that they wished to continue in the project. The seventh potential participant told me that she no longer wished to participate in the research as she was thinking of leaving New Zealand.

Following the phone conversations I sent the 18 participants an *Information Sheet for Beginning Teacher Interviews* which stated that I wished to interview them approximately four weeks into the beginning of each of the four primary school

terms in 2004. They were informed that the interviews would take about an hour, and would be held at their school (unless otherwise arranged) and that I would negotiate with them suitable times. I also informed them that I would be contacting their Principal regarding the study and seeking their consent for the beginning teacher to be interviewed at their school. The participants also received an *Information Sheet for Beginning Teachers' Questionnaires* that asked them to complete a questionnaire just prior to the end of each school term in 2004. I would send them the survey that would take approximately 30 minutes with a request to return them to me in a self-addressed envelope. Both *Information Sheets* clearly indicated that they were not obliged to participate, that they could withdraw up to October 2004 without prejudice, and that data could be returned to them or destroyed at their request. Data were to be retained in a safe place and information would remain confidential to me. No names of any individuals or schools would be mentioned in any reports and publications. Participants were also sent a *Consent Form* and a copy of indicative questions (Appendix Seven). At the first interview I provided each participant with further copies of the *Information Sheets* and *Consent Forms*. They were given the opportunity to read, consider, and sign both the *Individual Interview Consent Form* and the *Questionnaire Consent Form*. I retained these consent forms in a safe place.

Prior to the first beginning teacher interviews I contacted the principal of each participant about the study and followed up by sending an *Information Sheet for the Principal of the School Employing the Beginning Teacher* and *Consent Form for Principals* with regard to interviewing the beginning teacher employed in their school. All the principals signed the consent forms which I collected when I went to the school for the first beginning teacher interview early in Term One of 2004.

In summary, the process by which participant selection and informed consent was gained took place over a period of months and involved a number of iterative steps. I was committed to follow the fundamental, ethical principle in social research regarding lack of coercion and voluntary participation (Neuman, 2003). At all points in the process, respondents were informed of what they were asked to participate in, and were made aware of their rights. They were asked to sign

statements of consent regarding participation only after they had been informed of the research aims and procedure.

Invasion of privacy

Bryman (2005) suggests that the issue of privacy is closely linked to the notion of informed consent, particularly in relation to issues of anonymity and confidentiality. Ethics requires the researcher to take care to maintain the confidentiality of all data so that the identities, information of each participant, and research locations remain confidential (Christians, 2000). In this study all records are stored in a safe place and are retained by the researcher. To assist with maintaining confidentiality I gave each participant a pseudonym and none of the schools were identified in any way.

Anonymity and confidentiality are key ethical considerations. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995) revealing sources of information or contexts would violate participants' and others' privacy and has the potential to disrupt their everyday world. Neuman (2003), however, believes that it is difficult to protect participant anonymity in social research, often because pseudonyms and disguised locations are recognized by insiders. He argues that confidentiality is easier to protect than anonymity because the researcher can hold the information in confidence. In terms of this study, I have taken due effort to protect anonymity and confidentiality by ensuring that no names of individuals or schools were used in the writing of this research. I do, however, acknowledge that I have no control over what participants may reveal to each other, their colleagues, or friends. Cohen and Manion (1994) also talk about privacy in relation to respecting the rights of participants to only divulge information they feel comfortable with. At no time during the research process was pressure put on the beginning teachers to reveal information.

Deception

Deception is linked to the ethical principle of informed consent and voluntary participation. Neuman (2003, p. 123) contends that the right of a person not to participate becomes a critical issue whenever the researcher uses deception, disguises the research, or uses covert research methods. In carrying out this study, no deception was intended or knowingly carried out. The ethical principles

of no harm to participants, informed consent, and privacy were considered from the inception of this study.

I was also aware of the suggestion by Sarantakos (2005) that a potential, ethical weakness of qualitative research relates to the requirement that researchers enter the personal world of their participants. In this study all care was taken to ensure that my behaviour as a researcher was ethical, unbiased, and sensitive to the participants and their contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Collecting the Data

As discussed previously, the focus of this research was on gaining a greater understanding of the process of transition, learning, and development that twelve primary beginning teachers experienced over their first year of teaching. The questions framing this investigation were:

- What are the patterns of transition from student teacher to first year teacher?
- What are the key factors that affect the transition and development of first year teachers?
- How do these factors influence first year teachers' construction of themselves as teachers?

My aim was to understand and interpret the new teachers' experiences in terms of the meanings that they brought to them and to present findings that were "thick" in description. In order to achieve this I utilized group interviews, semi-structured, individual interviews, and questionnaires as the principal data sources for this study. As outlined above, the group interviews were conducted with those graduating students who had expressed an interest in taking part in the research and who responded to an invitation to be part of a group interview in November 2003. Those who were not able to attend the group interviews were sent the questions and asked to provide written responses. Respondents who had indicated an interest in participating in the research in 2004 and who had been appointed to primary teaching positions in the Auckland region were interviewed

individually using a semi-structured format and sent questionnaires four times over the year in 2004.

Data collection timeline

Focus Group Interviews:

November 2004

Individual Interviews 2004:

Term One	17 February to 04 March
Term Two	12 May to 26 May
Term Three	04 August to 30 August
Term Four	20 October to 04 November

Surveys 2004:

Term One	Sent end of March
Term Two	Sent end of June
Term Three	Sent end of September
Term Four	Sent mid-December

The Interview Process

Fieldwork requires the researcher to observe and talk directly with the people being studied (Neuman, 2003). This research was designed to gain a greater understanding of how the process of transition and teacher development was experienced by 12 first year primary teachers. I elected to interview the participants as interviews provide the “greatest opportunity to find out how someone thinks or feels and how they react to various issues and situations” (Bouma, 2000, p. 180). Or as Kvale (1996, p. 1) puts it, “If you want to know how people understand their world and life, why not talk to them?”

In qualitative research, an interview is seen as a conversation with a purpose: that of obtaining specific kinds of information (Merriman, 1998, p. 71). Interviewing, therefore, utilizes skills that the researcher already possesses, such as talking, listening, and observing (Shank, 2002), while, at the same time, placing specific demands on the researcher to not introduce subtle bias through the use of language or expression (Babbie, 2002). Interviewers have to be flexible, objective, non-directive, patient, calm, reassuring, warm and, caring (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Glesne, 1999) and non-judgmental (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Being an effective interviewer is a demanding and tiring exercise (Glesne, 1999). This means the data have to be recorded carefully, as relying on one's memory can be problematic (Silverman, 2000), particularly if the interviews are long or when they are the major strategy used to collect data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This is one reason why many interviews are taped and then transcribed. However, it is also important to back up the taped interview with comprehensive field notes, as these can record other features of the interview, such as posture or facial expressions not apparent in a tape recording (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In this study, all interviews were taped on a portable recorder that captured the conversations without being overly intrusive. The recorded interviews were transcribed in full by an expert typist in order to save me time. I also took extensive notes during each interview, recording the key ideas as well as any unusual incidents or behaviours.

Two types of interview were used in this study: group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews.

Group interviews

I undertook group interviews, often referred to as focus groups (Kvale, 1996) at the beginning of the data-gathering phase. Fontana and Frey (2000, p. 651) define the group interview as a “qualitative data-gathering technique that relies upon the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting.” I conducted the group interviews in a structured manner using a set of prepared questions, copies of which had been given to the participants at the beginning of the session. Group interviews were used for three purposes: exploratory, phenomenological, and triangulation (Fontana & Frey, 2000). They were exploratory in terms of enabling me to identify key informants, namely, the graduating students who had obtained teaching positions in primary schools in the Auckland region from the beginning of 2004. With regard to the phenomenological purpose, I wanted to know how they made sense of their experiences in the process of becoming teachers before they made the transition from student to teacher. In terms of triangulation, group interviews would assist with the individual interviews by enabling me to put individual responses in

context (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 651) in the next phase of data-gathering, using semi-structured one-to-one interviews.

There are benefits and risks with regard to group interviews. Fontana and Frey (2000, p. 652) identify a difficulty as not being able to generalize from the results while also arguing that group interviews were a viable data collection option. In their view the benefits include: being relatively cheap to conduct; being stimulating for respondents; aiding recall; and having the potential to produce rich data. Punch (2005, p. 171) also argues that group interviews can make a useful contribution in research in that the group interactions can assist in bringing to the surface aspects of a situation that might not otherwise be exposed. Kvale (1996), however, points out that the group interaction reduces the interviewer's control of the interview situation that may lead to difficulties in the systematic analysis of the participants' responses. To address this potential difficulty I both tape recorded and took notes of the two focus group sessions, and I ensured that I had noted the number that identified each respondent as I wrote down their responses. Fontana and Frey (2000, p. 652) suggest that group interviews put greater demands on an interviewer's skills than individual interviewing in terms of not allowing one person to dominate and of ensuring that a group culture does not emerge that could interfere with individual expression. I drew on my teaching skills and acted as a moderator and facilitator (Punch, 2005) to ensure that each person had the opportunity to contribute an answer to each question if they wished to and that one or two people did not dominate the sessions.

Individual interviews

In this study, each of the twelve participants was interviewed four times in 2004 - early in each of the four terms of their first year of teaching. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. I used a semi-structured interview format because it permits greater flexibility than structured interviews. Both forms of interview use pre-prepared questions but the difference lies in how the interviewer responds to the interviewee's responses. In structured interviews the questions are asked in a fixed order and there is no deviation, regardless of the response to the question just asked. In semi-structured interviews, however, the interviewer uses the questions as a guide and follows up on relevant comments made by the

respondent (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Merriam, 1998). In common with unstructured formats, semi-structured interviews enable interviewers to probe responses and allow the participant's perspective on the phenomenon to unfold (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Merriam, 1998). Semi-structured interviews have been characterized as having "the 'virtues' of both structured and unstructured approaches ... Researchers can readily compare different responses to the same questions, while at the same time remaining open to important but unforeseen information or points of discussion" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 202).

In this study a similar format was followed in terms of the questions asked for the first, second, and third sets of interviews (Appendix Eight) in order to achieve consistency and coherence in the interviews and to identify any themes and patterns emerging from the responses. I followed up comments made by the participants, probed their replies, and allowed the participants free reign in terms of their comments. The final set of interviews that took place in the fourth term posed different questions as the participants were asked to reflect on their first year of teaching (Appendix Eight).

While the interview is one of the main data collection tools in qualitative research (Punch, 2005), it is important to recognize that interviewing is not necessarily a straightforward, value-free process. Fontana and Frey (2000) draw attention to the influence of class, gender, status, and age in the relationship between interviewer and interviewee and argue, "that the nature of the social dynamics of the interview can shape the nature of the knowledge generated" (p. 647). With all but one of the participants being female, the major factors that I had to be aware of related to differences in age and status. I was aware that as an older woman there was a certain imbalance between the interviewer and respondent and that in some situations the expectation that respect should be accorded to older people could create a tension for some of the younger participants. With regard to status, I have already acknowledged that my position as Dean of Teacher Education may have resulted in my being viewed as being of a 'higher status' professionally than all of the participants. Glesne (1999) and Merriam (1998) have highlighted the potential for difficulties in interviewing where the status roles in research are different from everyday interactions.

To minimize possible status differences I made it clear from the outset that my role in the project was that of a student engaged in research for my doctoral degree. I travelled to the participants' schools to interview them in a familiar environment. I took care that my verbal and nonverbal interactions conveyed my role of student researcher and that what each person had to say was important and of interest to me and my study. Another strategy I used to mitigate the effects of status differences was to use another interviewer for half of the third set of interviews. Although Bryman (2001) points out that using more than one interviewer is a very unusual situation in social research, mainly because of the cost involved, I chose to do so because of concerns regarding perceived differences between me and the participants. By using another interviewer, I was able to compare the extent and type of responses given by the two sets of participants at the same point in time. The language of teaching was not a barrier for the participants or me. My job experience provided me with an "insider's view" (Wolcott, 1999, p. 119) which enhanced my position as interviewer as I understood the language and context of primary teaching.

I realized that participants may be going through difficult times as new teachers and that my interviewing may be perceived as being intrusive. I accepted White's (2002, p. 40) suggestion that we should not disregard the value of the interview as a vehicle for people to talk through their concerns, as the research interview can be "a welcome opportunity and stimulus for those involved as participants to reflect on their own experiences." I was also aware that I was intruding on the busy lives of the participants and took care to act at all times in accord with Stake's (2000, p. 447) observation that "Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict."

Surveys

In addition to interviewing each participant individually early in each of the four terms over the 2004 school year, I also surveyed them. I used a longitudinal survey design (Creswell, 2003) whereby I mailed a questionnaire (Appendix Nine) to each participant in their school at the end of each of the four school terms

of their first year of teaching. I had initially intended to survey only at the end of Terms One and Four but, after receiving complete and full responses to the Term One survey, I decided to survey at the end of Terms Two and Three as well. Participants were requested to return the completed questionnaire in an enclosed, self-addressed envelope to me. Responses were not anonymous but confidentiality was maintained.

In terms of the questions, I was aware of the literature around teaching as an emotional practice so questions were designed to elicit participants' feelings about the term they had just completed and their thoughts regarding their next period of teaching. Research also indicates that beginning to teach can be an overwhelming and tiring process so I asked a question related to this. Given the importance of reflection in teacher learning, another question asked participants what they had learned about teaching in the surveyed period. I piloted the first questionnaire with two beginning teachers who were not part of this study to ascertain question clarity and relevance. They suggested that I add "Any other comments," which I did. I also checked response time (approximately 10 minutes) because I realized that I was sending the surveys at the end of the term and asking participants to complete them when they were likely to be tired and looking forward to holidays.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004, p. 167) suggest that surveys in education research are a useful way of finding what people feel about particular practices, but point out that they must have a significant point and a valid purpose. I used surveys because I wanted to gather information about participants' opinions, attitudes, feelings, and understandings of teaching and themselves as teachers at key transition times, that is, at the end of each school term and before they had the chance to recharge their batteries over the between-term school holidays. I also wanted the opportunity to pick up on any themes that emerged from the interview data that had been obtained earlier in the term. Thus information picked up through the questionnaires could confirm, contradict, or add new material to that gained through the semi-structured interviews.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004) also add a caution regarding surveys in terms of response rates and the generalizability of the findings. It should be noted that the surveys in this study were not designed to be a mechanism to generalize from this

particular sample of first year teachers to a larger population of beginning teachers. In qualitative studies such as the current one, the question of generalizability or transferability rests with the reader who judges whether the methodology, procedures, and reported outcomes are applicable to other individuals or groups in which the reader is interested (Bryman, 2001; Merriam, 1998).

Analyzing the Data

Data analysis is the search for patterns within the data (Neuman, 2003) that, once identified, will be interpreted by the researcher. In order to make sense of the data (Merriam, 1998), the researcher needs to spend uninterrupted periods of time reading and rereading the data in order to develop codes and categories of codes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Tentative theories will be developed from the coded data and the interpretation of the relationship between the coded categories (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative data analysis therefore involves “codification, classification, and thematisation” (Bouma, 2000, p. 186) of the data, followed by the building of theory. Delamont (2002) warns that there are no short cuts with data analysis and that it is a time consuming, iterative process that takes place throughout the research.

Managing the data was a key concern. In this study the primary sources for data analysis were the transcriptions of the forty-eight individual, taped interviews and accompanying field notes. In addition there were the two taped and transcribed focus group interviews, along with written responses from those who could not attend the group interviews, and responses to the end-of-term written surveys. In terms of managing the large data set, I decided against using a computer-assisted, qualitative data analysis software package although I was aware that such software could make the task of data analysis easier and less monotonous (Delamont, 2002). I took note of Taylor and Bogdan (1998) who cautioned that, while computer aided data analysis can be a great help in coding the data, the insight and intuition of the researcher is invaluable while interpreting the data. I chose to code and analyze the data by hand, believing that this would provide me with plenty of time to reflect on the data and so allow patterns and hunches to

emerge. I immersed myself in the data by repeatedly reading each interview transcript, field note, survey response, and summary observation - an approach that while time consuming, ensured that I maintained close proximity to the data.

I was mindful that data collection and data analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998) so I started the process of analyzing, coding, classifying, and identifying themes from the data from the outset of the interviews. I was also aware that during the data analysis process the researcher is continually making decisions about what to leave out as well as what to include. In making such decisions I was guided by Merriam (1998, p. 179) who argues that while “devising categories is largely an intuitive process...it is also systematic and informed by the study’s purpose, the investigator’s orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the participants themselves.” Keeping these factors in mind during the analysis process also helps guard against making inferences that go beyond the data when theorizing from the data (Merriam, 1998, p. 188).

According to Neuman (2003, p. 442), “coding is two simultaneous activities: mechanical data reduction and analytic organization of data into themes. The researcher imposes order on the data.” The process used to code the data in this study was based on that described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and involved the development of open, axial and selective codes. They describe the process as “mining the data” (p. 65) through careful, line-by-line examination and interpretation of the material. During the initial readings of the data, key words, terms, categories, concepts, or themes emerged that were noted and coded as ‘open codes.’ These open codes were then clustered and reorganized by theme, concept, or relationship. These clusters were then labeled to become the ‘axial codes’ (Neuman, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), a process which adds structure and depth to the developing themes. It is at this stage that tentative explanations and theory are developed for the first time. These coding processes were repeated as new data were added. Eisenhardt (2002) comments that overlapping of data collection and data analysis gives the researcher a head start in analysis, as well as providing the opportunity to probe the emerging themes and ideas in later interviews.

Developing open, axial, and selective codes

I used the following process when developing the open, axial, and selective codes. All the interview transcripts were set up as computer files, while my field notes and data from the surveys were photocopied. The coding processes were carried out on copies of the transcripts, field-notes, and surveys which meant that the raw data were retained in a form that could be used for subsequent analysis and coding. The layout of the transcripts provided plenty of space for making notes. As a 'first pass' through recently collected data, I used coloured pens to highlight emerging concepts and recorded the open codes in paper files that were then sorted, and resorted, into categories. I used the language of the participants when developing the open codes to ensure that the themes, which eventually emerged, were grounded in the data (Glaser, 1992). In the 'second pass' through the data I reviewed the initial codes and identified major patterns and themes, or axial codes. I developed schematic diagrams on large pieces of paper using different coloured pens to identify categories or concepts that clustered together. This mind-mapping process enabled me look for linkages between themes, as well as locate evidence from the different pieces of qualitative data to support the core themes (Neuman, 2003).

At the axial coding stage the researcher starts to reassemble the data that were "fractured" during open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In order to help me identify themes and linkages I wrote detailed case studies of two beginning teachers who were both in permanent positions in the same school. As I was undertaking a collective case study I did not include these in the thesis. Their purpose was to help me see the 'whole picture' through two beginning teachers in order to help me understand the issues. Following are extracts from one of the case studies, along with my annotated notes, to illustrate the process of identifying themes and linkages.

Case study extracts

<p>Sally was working overseas as a secretary and had just completed a Camp America when she decided to become a teacher, thinking it would be ‘more fun working with children than adults.’</p>	<p><i>Career decision</i></p>
<p>She loved primary school as a child and always thought that she might become a teacher but wanted a break from study after secondary school.</p>	<p><i>Primary school</i></p>
<p>Sally had a relative who was a recently retired principal and friends who were teachers.</p>	<p><i>Friends/family</i></p>
<p>Prior to graduating, Sally said that she felt well prepared for teaching and had already spent a few days at the school she had been appointed to ‘so as to feel a little more at ease and prepared’ and had been given an induction manual that had ‘everything in it from bell times, how to set out books, planning examples, lunch ordering.’</p>	<p><i>Teacher preparation</i> <i>Knowledge of school</i> <i>Induction manual</i></p>
<p>Sally looked forward to beginning her teaching career and thought that ‘like beginning anything, it will be difficult at first.’</p>	<p><i>Feelings about starting to teach</i></p>
<p>She felt that the day to day running of the class wouldn’t present problems but felt that the after hours demands, like planning and assessment, would be challenging.</p> <p>She felt that the most difficult things in her first year of teaching would be balancing a new teaching career with her family, sporting interests, and social life, because of the long hours and marking required and was concerned about not getting talked into taking on extra curricular activities.’</p> <p>She wanted to be approachable and friendly to the children and parents and an enthusiastic, motivating, and interesting teacher who was liked by the children. Sally talked a lot about her own primary teachers and remembered that they ‘stayed young and knew what the kids were into’ no matter what their age.</p>	<p><i>Expectations</i> <i>Perceptions re difficulties</i> <i>Work-life balance</i> <i>Kind of teacher aspired to be</i></p>

<p>She thought that having a supportive principal and a tutor teacher who gave her time and constructive feedback would be critical to her development as a teacher. She also thought that having the support of friends and family would be important. When interviewed a month after starting teaching</p>	<p><i>Advice and guidance</i></p> <p><i>Support from friends and family</i></p>
<p>Sally described the professional culture of the school as being very professional with high expectations of staff and students.</p>	<p><i>Professional culture</i></p>
<p>She was very positive about the amount and availability of curriculum resources in the school. Sally talked about the high workload and amount of paperwork, especially related to assessment. She thought that the in-class support system ‘kept everyone on their toes’ and that, along with the principal’s visits to check assessment and planning, was meant to ensure that ‘everyone was doing their job.’ ‘You think there is so much work but I appreciate it because I know I am going to come out a better professional at the end of the day.’</p>	<p><i>Curriculum resources</i></p> <p><i>Workload</i></p> <p><i>Professional development/ support</i></p> <p><i>School expectations for all teachers</i></p>
<p>In terms of her Beginning Teacher Support and programme, Sally got a release day once a week during which time her Tutor Teacher observed her and then gave oral and written feedback on the lesson.</p>	<p><i>0.2 time</i></p> <p><i>Tutor teacher - observations and feedback</i></p>

Once all the data had been collected and coded, and tentative explanations or theory had been developed, the final step in the coding process was to go back into the data and look for cases that illustrated the themes and concepts, so as to integrate and refine the emerging explanation or theory. This process, known as ‘selective coding’ (Neuman, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) allows for the validation of theory by comparing it back to the raw data. I was careful to take account of any ‘outliers’ to ensure that their voices would not be silent in this study. I was aware of Delamont’s (2002, p. 182) caution regarding the importance of researchers being honest and not ignoring data that do not support an argument or emerging theory. She contends that researchers must think about and interrogate ‘negative’ findings. In reporting the results of this study, the axial codes acted as a framework for the findings outlined in Chapter 4, supported by

the selected sections of transcript text identified during the selective coding process.

According to Neuman (2003) theory has a place in all research, although there are varying levels of theory building and testing. Within interpretative research an understanding of the meaning of the participants' experiences is gained through an inductive, or theory-generating, approach to inquiry (Merriam, 1998). According to Neuman (2003, p. 66), "Inductive theorizing begins with a few assumptions and broad organizing concepts. Theory develops from the ground up as the researchers gather and analyze the data." In this study, theory was developed during the coding process described above. As the theory is 'grounded' in the data, this process is often referred to as a "grounded theory approach" to data analysis (Neuman, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Grounded theories are substantive theories as opposed to formal or 'grand' theory because they are related to everyday situations and are therefore seen to be of more practical use (Merriam, 1998; Neuman, 2003). According to Merriam (1998) substantive theories consist of two elements: categories with their associated properties; and hypotheses, which are the relationship between the categories and properties. In interpretative studies, the tentative hypotheses are derived from the study. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 12) note that grounded theories are more likely to resemble reality and therefore offer "insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action."

Evaluating Qualitative Research

Neuman (2003) contends that, while reliability and validity are central issues in all research, these notions are conceptualized differently according to the methodology used in an investigation. A quantitative researcher's concern with reliability is in terms of establishing dependable or consistent results across time, across different groups, and/or different indicators, and with validity with regard to the extent to which there is a "match between a construct ... and a measure ... (or) ... how well ideas about reality 'fits' with actual reality" (Neuman, 2003, p. 179). Qualitative researchers, however, hold that the standards against which qualitative studies are judged require redefinition in order to meet the realities of

qualitative research and the complexities of social phenomena (Merriam, 1998; Sarantakos, 2005). According to Neuman (2003, p. 185) “qualitative researchers are less concerned with trying to match an abstract concept to empirical data and more concerned with giving a candid portrayal of social life that is true to the experiences of people being studied.” However, while reliability and validity are not terms often used in qualitative research because of their strong association with the positivist paradigm and quantitative methodology, Merriam (1998) argues that for qualitative research to be seen as being trustworthy, researchers must take account of notions related to validity and reliability. She also asserts that ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner (Merriam, 1998, p. 198).

Trustworthiness plays a critical part in the assessment of qualitative research (Bryman, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Merriman, 1998). One of the most widely used set of criteria are those developed by Lincoln & Guba (1985): truth-value; applicability; consistency; and neutrality. They suggest that these criteria will be met when a researcher demonstrates the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of their work. Based on the work of Guba and Lincoln, Bryman (2001, p. 272) has provided a concise overview of the elements of trustworthiness, along with the equivalent criterion in quantitative research that are discussed in the following sections. The elements are:

- credibility, which parallels internal validity;
- transferability, which parallels external validity;
- dependability, which parallels reliability;
- confirmability, which parallels objectivity.

Credibility

As qualitative research is concerned with understanding and interpreting meaning from the participants’ point of view, the researcher will be working with multiple accounts of social reality. According to Bryman (2001, p. 272) this means that it is the “feasibility or credibility of the account that a researcher arrives at that is going to determine its acceptability to others.” There are a number of potential ways of increasing the trustworthiness of qualitative research, particularly in the

interpretation of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Merriam (1998, p. 204) identifies six basic strategies that can be used to enhance credibility or internal validity: triangulation; member checks; long-term observation; peer examination; participatory or collaborative modes of research; and clarifying researcher biases. For this research project, the main strategies used to increase trustworthiness were triangulation, peer examination, long-term observation, and member checks.

Triangulation can include the use of multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, multiple informants, multiple perspectives, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings (Merriam, 1998; Sarantakos, 1993). In this study, the perceptions of 12 first year teachers provided multiple informants, and data were collected through four face-to-face interviews with each participant (early in each term) and four posted questionnaires (at the end of each term) over the participants' first year of teaching. An independent interviewer carried out half of the third term interviews.

As indicated, the data for this study were gathered over the period of a year. According to Merriam (1998) long-term observation, or gathering data over time, is a way of increasing the validity of findings.

Peer examination involves asking colleagues to comment on the findings (Merriam, 1998). Peer and supervisor comment and critique were a consistent part of the research process from the very beginning. Colleagues with whom I work provided peer examination on an ongoing basis. Regular meetings with my supervisors provided me with critical comment on my developing ideas, challenging my interpretations and thinking. Initial findings were also presented as "works in progress" at the February 2006 Practical Experiences in Professional Education (PEPE) conference and the September 2006 British Educational Research Association conference. Ongoing discussions with professional colleagues and my supervisors helped me to clarify and continually test my assumptions and theoretical orientation - key aspects related to addressing issues of researcher bias.

Member checks in this study involved asking participants for validation and verification of my interpretation of the data that was contributed by them. The

process of discussing tentative interpretations and emerging themes with the participants as a check on the plausibility of the results (Merriam, 1998) was carried out continuously during the study.

Transferability

A key question applied to the case study approach and to qualitative research as a whole relates to the issue of generalizability (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000). Merriam (1998) suggests that, in part, this is due to thinking of generalizability in the same way as it is used in experimental designs or correlational designs that use aggregated data from large, random samples to increase external validity. Instead, Merriam argues for the value of what can be learned from the study of a case. She asserts that because the purpose of qualitative research is to find out the particular in depth, what we can learn from the particular situation or case can be transferred or generalized to similar situations (Merriam, 1998, p. 210).

While qualitative researchers generally make few claims about the wide generalizability of their findings, Merriam (1998) argues that it is important to provide the information others require in order to make a judgment about the usefulness of the work in other settings. Stake (2000) notes that in case study work researchers do generalize in the sense that they expect the reader to understand the interpretations and draw their own conclusions. He asserts that the “narrative provides opportunity for vicarious experience” (Stake, 2000, p. 442) and therefore allows for a naturalistic generalization by the reader. An important way of improving transferability or external validity or generalizability is to provide sufficient thick description grounded in contextual experience so that readers can decide what is relevant to them (Geertz, 1973; Bryman, 2001). By paying attention to the particular, that is, giving sufficient contextual detail, the question of transferability would be open to individuals to determine themselves (Merriam, 1998). Or, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue, thick description provides others with a database for making judgments about the possible transferability of findings to other situations.

In this study the aim was to provide a rich, thick description of the participants' experiences as first year teachers that would assist readers to make judgments about the usefulness of the work in other situations.

Dependability

Merriam (1998) argues that the term reliability in the sense of replication of results does not fit qualitative research. This is because the focus in the qualitative approach is on understanding and interpreting social phenomena from the participants' perspective rather than testing hypotheses that are linked to general causal explanations that is the concern of quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 288) suggest that the emphasis should be the "dependability" or "consistency" of the results obtained from the data. The issue, therefore, is not whether the findings will be replicated, but whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1998, p. 206).

Qualitative researchers can use several strategies to increase the dependability criterion of trustworthiness. Merriam (1998) suggests that triangulation can strengthen reliability as well as internal validity. As noted previously, this study used more than one investigator for part of the data gathering and more than one data source was used to gain information from multiple participants. Also recommended is an "auditing" approach which entails the researcher keeping complete and accessible records of all phases of the research process (Bryman, 2001). In this study copies were kept of the question formulation, participant selection, interview transcripts, field notes, and data analysis decisions. I used the actual words of participants to inform my findings and kept checking and reflecting on participant responses for clarifications or omissions.

It could also be argued that the University of Waikato audited this study in terms of doctoral requirements. In the candidacy application, the University required a research proposal and an ethics proposal that included copies of the Participant Information Form and the Consent to Participate in Research forms. The University also appointed two supervisors to oversee this research. After candidacy approval, the supervisors gave regular feedback at all stages of the

research process and the University undertook a six-monthly review of progress throughout the study.

Bryman (2001) also refers to peer auditing. In this project, a colleague, who was engaged in doctoral studies through the same university, acted as a peer auditor throughout the course of the research. We discussed, debated, and critiqued each other's research processes, interpretations, and constructions. Bryman notes that peer auditing has not become a frequently used approach to validation, partly because of the demands made on the auditors. In this case, my colleague and I had the same supervisors and frequently had joint supervision meetings which assisted with peer auditing as we shared and discussed written drafts of our investigations from the point when we applied for candidacy through to the completion of our research projects.

Confirmability

In qualitative research it is important for the investigator to ensure that the direction of the findings is not influenced by dubious evidence or personal bias (Yin, 1988). According to Bryman (2001) confirmability is concerned with ensuring that the researcher has acted in good faith. This requires the researcher to ensure that personal values and biases are addressed and monitored. For this study, my two supervisors and my peer auditor, through questioning and challenging various aspects in my work, provided me with the opportunity to step back from my study and reflect on my personal biases and values in terms of how I was conducting the research process. The independent interviewer who undertook half of the Term Three interviews also acted as a check that I was acting in good faith.

Summary

The aim of this longitudinal study is to gain a greater understanding of the process of beginning teacher transition and development over the first year of teaching from the standpoint of the 12 participants. It investigates how starting to teach is experienced, how these experiences are interpreted, and the nature of the participants' understandings about becoming a teacher.

This chapter, Chapter Three, outlines the methodology and methods used in this study. A qualitative, interpretative strategy is employed - specifically a collective case study approach. The process of selecting the sample and the decisions by which the final participants is identified and outlined, as are the ethical considerations that guide this research. Data were gathered over a year by way of interviews and surveys, supplemented by field notes. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed to provide text for analysis through coding and categorization. Explanations and theory that emerged are grounded in the data. Issues relating to criteria for soundness of this research are addressed by using multiple sources of information gathered over time, peer debriefing, the provision of thick description and the keeping of comprehensive records. A reflexive approach has been used during the research process to assist in demonstrating the value and trustworthiness of the study. Chapter Four reports the results of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

The purpose of this investigation was to gain a better understanding of the process of transition and development that beginning teachers undergo over their first year of teaching. The study aimed to identify factors that enable or limit new teachers' professional development and learning. Of particular interest was an examination of how teacher preparation programmes, the contextual features of the school, and participants' own beliefs and biographies influence and impact on their transition to teaching and their development as first year teachers. The research focus is on how the first year of teaching is experienced, interpreted, and understood by beginning teachers.

The previous chapter outlined a data-gathering process that utilized a series of semi-structured interviews and surveys with 12 beginning teachers. The analysis required the identification of examples from the data that would illuminate the patterns of transition and development that the first-year teachers underwent during the year, the factors that did or did not support their development, and learning, and how their experiences influenced the way they constructed themselves as teachers. The following sections present the results of this analysis. The themes that are identified were chosen deliberately. They represent the factors that were important to the first year teachers in this study.

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section presents an analysis of the data in terms of the influence of the teacher preparation programme on participants' transition and development as first-year teachers. The second section reports on factors that affected the beginning teachers' development and learning over the year, while the third section examines how these factors, as well as participants' biographies and beliefs, influenced how they constructed themselves as teachers.

The data presented in Chapter Four are drawn primarily from three points in time: at the end of the final year of the participants' three-year teacher preparation

programme; approximately four weeks into their first term of teaching; and in the fourth term after about nine months of teaching. These time frames were selected because they enabled an identification of factors that influenced the beginning teachers' transition, development, and learning over time.

From Preparation to Practice: Expectations Versus Reality

This section presents an analysis of data that enables the first-year teachers' experiences to be considered in terms of the influence the pre-service programme had on their transition and development. The analysis is presented in two parts. The first part addresses the beginning teachers' perceptions of the effect college-based aspects of their teacher education programme had on their movement from student to teacher, while the second part explores the role that practicum played in this transition.

Being Prepared: The Influence of College-Based Courses

At the end of the final year of their teacher preparation programme, the majority of participants felt prepared and ready to start teaching the following year. Comments such as "I feel very well-prepared" and "I believe everything will be useful in some way" suggest that participants felt that their pre-service programme had been effective in getting them ready for teaching. There was, however, a difference of opinion regarding which particular college-based aspects of their programme would be most useful to them as teachers in the following year.

Five of the 12 thought that educational theory was going to be critical.

I didn't realize the theoretical knowledge required to become a teacher and the importance of this as the basis for my effectiveness as an effective teacher. Nina

Although none of the participants articulated what they meant by theory, they did make comments about theoretical knowledge being "the foundation to build practice on" because of the way it "influences what you do in your classroom,"

particularly in terms of “understanding and improving children’s learning.” One saw theory as being important to her as a teacher “because I will be able to go out next year and justify what I do,” while for another, theory highlighted the problematic nature of teaching, saying “it’s important to know that there isn’t a manual on how to teach.” Only one of the 12 participants put forward the view that theory “was interesting but won’t be useful practically.”

There was a range of opinion regarding the usefulness of other aspects of their college-based programme. Four identified curriculum knowledge and skills, particularly in language and mathematics, while two viewed their “knowledge and understanding of assessment” as being critical. For one person the development of a philosophy of teaching was important “because I now know and feel confident in what drives me”, while for another, the programme emphasis on reflection was key because “you need to go in there as a learner.”

Although the majority said that they felt ready and prepared, their comments revealed that they had a degree of uncertainty about what teaching would actually be like. As one stated:

I feel quite well prepared but I am not sure what to expect. Liz

The data showed that the participants had, in fact, developed expectations, particularly about what was and was not going to be difficult. Most did not expect any difficulties in terms of the “day to day running of the classroom,” “building positive relationships with the children,” or “curriculum planning and assessment.” Although three expressed concern about being able to manage children’s behaviour, the majority of participants were apprehensive about factors that did not relate directly to classroom teaching. Six felt uneasy about being alone in the classroom and not getting enough support or backup, two were anxious about meeting school expectations, while three were nervous about establishing relationships with colleagues and parents. For three of the participants it was working long hours and “not knowing when to stop” or how to “balance a new teaching career with family and social life” that caused concern,

while another three didn't know how they "would cope with all the administration and paperwork."

In summary, at the end of the final year of their pre-service programme, all of the participants felt that the programme had prepared them for teaching the following year, although some thought that their experiences as a beginning teacher would mediate the influence of their pre-service programme:

I have learned so much but I am afraid I won't be able to draw on it all because I will be in survival mode. Mary

All but one expected that their first year of teaching would not be plain sailing:

Like beginning anything, I think it will be difficult at first. Sally

The next part looks at participants' experiences and their perceptions of the effects of their college-based courses on their experiences from the vantage point of their first term of teaching.

After four weeks of teaching: Moving from one world to another

The first few weeks of teaching were a time of considerable stress for 11 of the participants. As one commented:

I expected it to be hard but didn't realize that it was going to be this hard.
Chris

The beginning teachers observed that the "stress started on day one and didn't let up." They compared it to "being on a roller-coaster" and referred to being "overwhelmed" with "so much to take on board." Some commented on how they were "so busy and so tired" and how they didn't expect that "teaching was going to dominate my whole life." Others observed that they didn't realize that there "would be so much paperwork," or "how much you have to do after school" with "all the meetings as well as your own planning and preparation." For example:

The difficulty is finding the balance. I'm taking a lot of work home at night and the weekend. So much extra to do that I have never done before.
Robin

Not only was the stress of starting teaching different to what they expected, it was also perceived to be unlike that which they experienced during their pre-service programme. Their comments revealed that their pre-service programme had not fully prepared them for the reality of their first term of teaching, particularly in terms of “how tiring it was going to be.” They observed that “the reality is different” and that “we are not mentally prepared for it.” Some referred to their experiences as “culture shock,” with others believing that this was to be expected and “part of the learning curve.” Three thought that it would have helped them if there had been more emphasis on behaviour management because “you are learning on the job” in terms of “how to deal with each child individually.” Others thought “the college had done its best to prepare me for this” but that “you really needed to go out there and experience it for yourself.” For example:

College can't prepare you for this because schools are all run so differently so finding your feet takes a lot of effort and takes a lot of time.
Nina

The participants also identified aspects of their programme that they believed had a direct application to them and their teaching. Six beginning teachers referred to the planning, teaching, and assessment knowledge and skills they had gained from the curriculum courses as being important, especially the ones that were “hands on and practical” and provided “resources and ideas that you could use in the classroom.” Eleven of the 12 named their mathematics courses as being most useful to them. They were all in schools that were part of the Numeracy Project, a major Ministry of Education initiative aimed at increasing teacher understanding and competence in teaching numeracy to primary children:

The numeracy project is really a big thing at the school this year and I feel really comfortable with it thanks to college. Mary

Six referred to reflection as being “very helpful” to them as teachers even though they “didn't like learning it at college.” They thought that it was important to “step back and think about what was happening” and to “reflect on what I need to change and do differently.” Some commented, “things went smoother” when they “acted on their reflections.” Others believed that reflection assisted their professional learning:

I think reflection is an important thing to do with learning. It makes you aware of what you are doing, of what your weaknesses and your faults are, and helps to improve things because if you carry on doing things one way then you never get anywhere. Toni

Three of the first-year teachers thought that their philosophy of teaching that they had developed during the preparation programme was most important because it “made it really clear what I want and what I believe in,” especially when faced with uncertainties or difficulties:

When I am in a dilemma about what I am going to do or what is going on, my philosophy draws me back to what I believe in. It grounds me. Kathy

For three of the beginning teachers, it was their knowledge of educational theory that was important, with one believing that it enabled “understanding of why things happen and lets you see the big picture” and two referring to how “knowing how children learned” enhanced their teaching practice. One teacher continued to view educational theory as not being relevant because “even though it is good to know in my head, it’s not much use for actual teaching.” This participant also reported prior to graduating that she had no worries about starting off teaching, and was the only one that did not feel stressed or overwhelmed during her first weeks of teaching.

In summary the data indicated that starting to teach was physically and emotionally draining. The new teachers observed that “you never stop” and that you have to “put teaching first when you start” which meant that they found it “hard to balance their personal and professional life” and that their “social life was fairly non-existent.”

Not only have I struggled to find time to socialize and play, I usually find I am too tired anyway. Sally

While there was a belief that “what we did at College does happen out here,” there was also a feeling that “the reality is just different.” For the majority of the first-year teachers, the first few weeks were the most stressful and difficult. Some felt that this was because the college-based programme did not pay sufficient attention to how to “set up your classroom at the beginning of the year.” Others,

however, believed that “you couldn’t have prepared for some of the things that happen no matter how many years you spend training.”

After nine months of teaching: Coming to the end of the first year

After nine months of teaching the participants still thought of teaching as a “hard, high stress job” but admitted to being “far less stressed,” “more flexible,” and “relaxed” than when they started teaching. Although teaching was still “hard work” they now felt that they were “coping with the workload better” as they “got used to what was expected,” and were “enjoying it more.” They had also become “much more confident” and believed that they “could now do it.” As one commented:

You have this ideal view of what it is going to be like but then you start and you know it’s not the perfect classroom. It’s so much harder than you ever thought it would be. But now I’ve become more relaxed, more flexible, and less stressed because I am more realistic in my views of what I can and can’t do. I now know a teacher can’t do everything because there are not enough hours in the day to fit everything in. Chris

From the perspective of having almost completed their first year of teaching, the beginning teachers thought that that the college-based aspects of their pre-service programme “were pretty good” or “valuable” and they got “a good broad coverage in all areas.” Despite feeling that their pre-service programme seemed “a long time ago” and that they “had been teaching for ages,” six talked about “applying what they learnt at college,” saying that they “still go back to their folders of work” and “use the things that are practical” like “resources and ideas from the curriculum areas.” One liked to “fossick through college notes because reading them reawakens my thinking.”

As in Term One, the participants identified the curriculum courses (especially mathematics), reflection, their philosophy of teaching, and educational theory as being the aspects of their college-based programme that were most helpful to them as beginning teachers. In terms of the last three aspects, participant comments revealed some differences in how they were being used to support their learning and development.

With regard to reflection, the first year teachers described how the nature of their reflections had changed from the beginning of the year. They talked about how they “had gone from survival mode” at the beginning of the year to now “reflecting more on how I can improve things rather than reflecting on how it went.” This sense of reflection being used for professional learning was also accompanied by a feeling of caution and perhaps realism:

You need to reflect on what didn't work well and what you should do tomorrow but not get down about it. Not everything is going to come off and there are going to be lessons that are complete failures and you just have to get over it. Nina

Philosophies of teaching were now being used as a way of measuring professional learning and ‘fit’ with their school’s philosophy. One said she “went back to it all the time to reflect on the kind of teacher I am trying to be or think I’m being, seeing how my thinking has changed, what shifts I have made,” while another wondered “where I would be and what would I be doing if I didn’t have my philosophy clear.” For another, getting a match between a personal and school philosophy was seen as essential:

It's not till you start teaching that you realize how important it is to know what you believe in and what your idea of a good school is. You need to know your philosophy so that you can see if the school's philosophy matches yours so you can see if you really want to teach there. Robin

Educational theory had become important to the participant who previously had seen it as “interesting but not useful in the classroom.” She now talked about it as being helpful “when working with kids” and felt positive about “being able to contribute to the staff meetings that discussed the different theorists,” commenting that it was “like an extension of teachers’ college.”

Although the beginning teachers felt that their programme had been “pretty good” in terms of preparing them for teaching, there was a feeling that there were some gaps:

I felt I was prepared in a lot of ways but in other ways I wasn't. Liz

As in Term One, many of the beginning teachers suggested that the college-based programme should have a stronger focus on “practical stuff” in two main areas they believed would have helped them as first year teachers. Firstly, more attention should be placed on the beginning of the year in terms of setting up the classroom, starting off programmes, setting routines, and putting in place behaviour management strategies. While they believed that starting off the year had been discussed in some curriculum courses, they thought “until you are out there you have no idea because you are too busy getting through your assignments to really listen to what they are talking about.” The second area related to providing realistic expectations about what the first term was going to be like:

You get out here after college and it’s so much harder than you thought it would be. College should tell you that it’s going to be really tough and give you realistic expectations about how hard you are going to have to work. If I had known it was supposed to be this hard, then I would know it was OK that I was finding it tough. Chris

Four of the first-year teachers felt that having more practicum experiences was the answer to addressing the programme-practice divide by providing more time in classrooms because “you can never get enough experience.” Others, however, thought that it was inevitable that there would be “culture shock” because “you can’t know a lot of it till you get out there.” As one first-year teacher put it:

You have your degree behind you and you have good knowledge and good strategies and you have to just figure out how you are going to put them in play. No one can really tell you how to do it - it’s just a matter of finding your feet. Sally

Three participants thought that the first two years of teaching “should be looked at as being part of training” because “that’s what these two years are all about - putting it into practice.” The value of having the first two years of teaching clearly identified as an extension of the pre-service programme is captured in the following statement:

It’s full on for three years – it’s like preparing you for the world really. You come out knowing everything OK but you don’t know anything really well. You need a lot of practical experience at the level you want to teach but the problem is that you don’t know where you are going to teach until

really late so you can't focus on the level when you are doing your degree.
Nina

In summary, by the end of their first year of teaching, all 12 of the first-year teachers had come through a demanding year and had become more confident and less stressed about teaching. They believed that overall the college-based aspects of their pre-service programme had prepared them well for their first year. Curriculum knowledge and skills, reflection, and their philosophies were identified as being the most helpful to them over the year. However, they also believed that greater attention on the practical aspects of starting the year would have helped smooth their transition from student to teacher. More practicums were seen by some as the answer to providing better links between preparation and practice that would help them as first year teachers. The next part examines the role that the practicum components of their teacher preparation programme played in their transition from student to teacher.

Practicum: Getting a Glimpse of what Teaching is Really Like

At the end of their three-year pre-service programme, the beginning teachers in this study viewed practicum as the key component in their preparation for teaching. They believed that it was critical to be “in classrooms instead of just talking about it,” with one noting that “some of my best learning has been on practicum.” Three participants felt that “you can never get enough experience” and advocated more practicums. The final seven-week practicum was commented on by seven participants as contributing to their feelings of preparedness for teaching. For example:

I taught for six weeks of the last seven week practicum and it gave me a good taste for it...I did feel pretty prepared from that and it made me more confident about starting teaching. Kathy

Over the course of their first year of teaching, participants consistently identified the practicum components of their pre-service programme as being critical to teacher development. What changed were their perceptions of how their practicum experiences compared with their reality as beginning teachers. The

next part discusses how the participants perceived the impact of practicum on their transition and development as first year teachers.

Beginning the year is something completely different

As indicated previously, all 12 participants perceived that the beginning of their first year of teaching was “completely different” to what they had experienced as student teachers. Even though three beginning teachers had done a seven-week student placement in their school the year before, all participants appeared to encounter a mismatch between their reality as new teachers and the expectations that they had developed through their practicum experiences. As one observed:

Practicums are good but they only give you a glimpse of what teaching is really like. It’s a totally different world when you are teaching to being on practicum. Mel

The new teachers talked about the ideas that they had developed from “being in classrooms on practicum” and how they “started off with all these expectations about what you were going to do” and “what it was going to be like.” The reality was different:

You have this picture of what it is going to be like in your classroom and then you start and you know it’s not the ideal; it’s not the perfect classroom you imagined it would be. Chris

Others commented that they “only really started noticing things” when they started teaching. For example, some were surprised with “how long it takes kids to do things like setting up their books” or how much teacher time and effort at the beginning of the year goes into “setting up curriculum groupings.” Others didn’t realize the work that went into establishing mores for behaviour and “putting classroom routines in place.” For example:

When I started the year I had clear expectations of how kids should behave, like lining up. But I didn’t realize that you had to teach that kind of thing. I just took it for granted that they would line up quietly. You just take for granted so many little things that you have to teach quite explicitly. Robin

The new teachers attributed this lack of awareness regarding “what you really need to do at the start of the year” to the fact that on practicums you do not see teachers “starting from scratch” but rather “you’re running someone else’s programme that’s already been set up.”

On practicum everything is set up, the routines are established, and you have to pretty much just copy it. But when you start teaching, it is your job to set everything up from day one. Lee

The five participants who had undertaken an additional, voluntary two-week practicum at the beginning of the school year in the second or third year of their pre-service programme talked about being “lucky to get to see some of those setting up things” because on the other practicums “you walk in and the routines are set and the kids are moving around and doing everything perfectly.” One felt strongly that if she had not done the optional practicum she would have been “a complete and utter mess for the first few weeks.” All the new teachers believed that “the beginning of the year was the hardest” and thought a practicum at the start of the year should be compulsory and focus on “what you actually need to do to set everything up in your first few weeks of teaching”:

It would have been helpful to see how to set up a classroom and what you had to do to set up behaviour management, set up the environment, and get to know your kids. Chris

Five of the 12 first-year teachers sounded a note of caution in terms of expecting a beginning of the year practicum to completely address this practice-reality gap. There was a feeling that “practicums do the best they can but from there you have just got to find your own feet” because “a lot of it you just can’t know until you get out there.” For example:

Some of the things you come across when you start you couldn’t be prepared for, no matter how many years you trained or how you did your practicums. Nina

Another felt that it was part of the ‘learning curve’:

You are always going to get a shock when you first start because you have 30 kids and you don’t know what they are like or what their needs are.

Even a teacher who has been teaching for 20 years can't predict what their class is going to be like. Mary

While another likened it to driving a car:

You don't really learn until you are out there on your own doing it. Lee

The participants compared the high levels of tiredness they felt in their first term of teaching with being on practicum, remarking that "on practicum you get tired but this is completely different." They were particularly surprised at "how much you have to do after school, not just your own preparation, but all the meetings and extra things."

On practicum you don't realize all the meetings and how long they go on for because when you are on practicum, your associate says that you will be going to enough meetings when you are a teacher so don't worry about coming to them. But looking back, it would have been helpful to see what to do in them. Liz

It was more than just attending meetings that contributed to their tiredness. Comments such as "even when we attended meetings on practicum, we never got the responsibilities attached to the meetings" indicated that they "now had a different perspective on the size of the job." They looked back on their practicum as being "very much about day to day teaching and learning," with the focus on "dealing with your own plans and getting your own things ready." They observed that when they were on practicum, they did not comprehend "how much more is involved in teaching than you realize as a student teacher," and that they "didn't understand all the other things your Associate Teacher had to do":

We have to do a whole lot more that I didn't even know about. Practicums focus on teaching and learning in classrooms and not so much about the other things that go on in schools that teachers have to be involved in like all the administration, curriculum team meetings, etc. I just didn't see that on practicum. Chris

The first-year teachers attributed their tiredness to the "size of the job" and the associated workload. Participants commented on how they "never thought I would work through my whole weekend and still not get everything done" and how they needed to "work all weekend and late at night because I need to get on

top of things.” Some of the teachers talked about how “their mind was continually on teaching,” to the extent that “even when I go to sleep I am thinking about it.” One asked, “how do you stop the stuff going round and round in your head all the time,” while another commented, “I did not realize how teaching would dominate my life.”

I didn't expect to be so tired. When you are on practicum you know you are tired but it is completely different because you are constantly thinking of things all the time. The hard part is to shut off when you go home.
Frances

In spite of the “shock” of starting teaching, the workload, and associated tiredness, all the participants reported positive examples of how their first term was different to being on practicum. Most of these revolved around having responsibility for their own class and being able to “do what I want to do” in terms of “making decisions and making changes.”

The difference is that it's your own class. When you are on practicum, you have a class but it doesn't feel like your own. It's your Associate Teacher's and you have to do what your associate wants you to do. Lee

All of the first-year teachers commented on how much they enjoyed “having their own class” and “having the time to really establish a relationship with the children,” compared to being on practicum when they felt that “they did not have time to really get to know the children.” Five talked positively about “being on their own,” and “not being watched all the time,” and the effect this had on their confidence:

On practicum you are under a magnifying glass and everything you do is being judged, compared to teaching when they know you are new but you are still put in charge of your class from day one. You know that you are going to make mistakes but you can make them and improve things yourself, without feeling really pressured like on practicum. Nina

In summary, after about a month of teaching the beginning teachers continued to view the practicum as being a critical component of their pre-service programme in terms of preparing them for teaching. While some thought, “it's the closest thing you will ever get to the real thing,” their comments also revealed a mismatch between expectations and reality in that their practicum experiences did

not completely prepare them for their first term of teaching. The next part looks at how the participants viewed the practicum from the perspective of nine months of teaching.

After nine months of teaching: Being responsible

Coming to the end of their first year of teaching, the participants had not changed their views about practicum. They continued to see it as a key component of their pre-service programme, while at the same time identifying major differences between their practicum experiences and their reality as beginning teachers.

Participant comments mirrored and reinforced many of the themes that had been articulated in the first term. The difference in workload was still identified as being “a big issue,” particularly in relation to the “amount of paper work and administration” that the beginning teachers now recognized as being an ongoing part of teachers’ work. They talked about the workload being “continual” and “really draining,” but also how “they were getting used to doing a hard day’s work every week, every term.”

With practicum, you know you have an intense period when you are in full control and then it will ease up, whereas it’s just full on all the time when you are teaching. Mary

The first-year teachers reiterated comments about the difference of having their own classroom as opposed to being in someone else’s classroom on practicum. They compared the “feeling of pressure because you had someone watching you” and feeling that you “had to teach like your associate” and “prove yourself in a really short time” with the “joy” of “having your own space” and the feeling that “you could relax,” “have fun with the children,” “try things out,” and “be yourself”:

It’s your personality in the classroom and you love every day because you are not trying to meet somebody else’s expectations or style of teaching. Lee

Looking back over their first year of teaching the participants also identified some new and different aspects of the relationship between their practicums and their

experiences as first-year teachers. A major difference was the great sense of responsibility they felt as teachers. They talked about being “totally responsible for the children and everything that goes on in the class,” particularly in terms of the children’s learning: “I am the one being assessed on their progress, not the Associate Teacher.” Some commented that this responsibility felt “good” but was also a bit “scary” and that it “took a bit of getting used to.” One described the difference in responsibility in the following way:

When you are teaching, you worry about the kids more - you worry about them as people. You can’t give your class back after seven weeks. If they are upset or can’t do something, you just have to deal with it. You are responsible for them learning, for them succeeding. Mel

Another difference related to their relationship with the children they taught. All the beginning teachers talked about the importance of “having time to build a rapport with the children” and how the big difference from practicum was that they “got to really know the children” in terms of “where they are at and what they need” and how they now used assessment “to really track the children” in terms of their learning. They also commented on how the children reacted differently to them as teachers.

The kids show automatic respect from the start. As a teacher you are an authority figure in the classroom, whereas when you are on practicum, you are just a student. Kids show more respect when you are a teacher. On practicum, they’ll listen to you if they feel like it. Robin

The beginning teachers also observed that their relationships with other staff were different to when they were on practicum. They talked about “being responsible to your colleagues,” about getting to know the other teachers “at a deeper level” through “socializing” and “working alongside them” and how they felt “more respected by the other teachers” compared to when they were students on practicum. They felt that this led to them feeling “more comfortable” and “more at ease” and as a consequence they felt “more confident.” They now felt “part of the team.” One compared the difference as follows:

When you are a student teacher you feel that you are on the outer. When you are on the staff, you belong. You are not the outsider who is just there for a little time. Toni

For one participant the change from being a student to a teacher was summed up by the concept of a teacher “reaching out far beyond the classroom walls to become part of a learning community.” Other participants referred to “being part of a community” which included the children, staff and the parents. Four participants specifically discussed changes in relationships with parents. One observed that “parents seem to be interested in talking with me and getting to know me now I am a teacher,” while another commented that they “seem to have got to know me and respect me compared to practicum where they kind of ignored me.”

From the perspective of nine months of teaching, the first-year teachers were consistent in their perception of practicum being a critical component of their teacher preparation, while at the same time identifying areas where practicum had not prepared them for the reality of teaching. The teachers also identified positive differences in terms of how they were regarded by others, particularly in their relationships with the children, parents, and school colleagues.

Summary

Coming to the end of their first year of teaching, the beginning teachers “were enjoying teaching” and felt “a sense of achievement” with “making it through a long hard year.” They rated their pre-service programme as “being invaluable” in “preparing them for this.” While there was a belief that “what we did at College does happen out here,” there was also a perception that “the reality is just different.” The data indicate a mismatch between their expectations of what teaching was going to be like based on both the college-based and practicum aspects of their pre-service programme, and the reality of teaching, particularly with regard to the size and scope of a teacher’s job. Comparing teaching to being on practicum, these first-year teachers took a great deal of pleasure in being viewed as a ‘real’ teacher, and of being in charge of their own class. Teaching gave them the time and space to get to know and enjoy the children, more freedom to experiment, and to develop confidence in themselves as teachers. As one commented:

At the start of the year I wanted everything to be perfect. But I now realize that no one and nothing is perfect. I also realize that I don't need to be perfect; I can just be me and that's fine. Chris

Factors that Influence Beginning Teachers' Transition to Teaching and Development as Teachers

This section presents an analysis of participant data which enables the beginning teachers' experiences to be considered in terms of the key factors which affected their transition, development, and learning over their first year of teaching. The first part briefly addresses factors that the participants thought would be important to them prior to completing their teacher preparation programme. The second part analyses their perceptions after four weeks of teaching while the third part identifies the factors from the standpoint of nine months of teaching.

The End of the Teacher Preparation Programme

As noted in the previous section, at the end of their three-year teacher education programme, the 12 participants felt both ready to start teaching and recognized that "a lot more learning is going to happen next year." All 12 thought that support was going to play an important role in their "learning" and "survival" when they began teaching the following year. As one said:

I know I will be able to do it if I am helped through it. Chris

Three of the teachers talked about the need for "emotional support" from "family and friends." For example:

As I adjust to my new role as teacher, I recognize that the loving support of my husband and family will be essential. Sam

Seven thought that other beginning teachers would be important sources of support, either those at the same school (three of the participants) or their college friends who were starting teaching next year (four of the participants):

I need and want the support of fellow beginning teachers so I know that I'm not alone. Liz

Nine participants commented on the importance of being able to access "professional support" in their school. Three thought that informal support would be most important and hoped to have "someone at the school to approach and ask questions" or "discuss difficulties with." The other six believed that it would be formal support from their tutor teacher and senior management, including the principal, which was going to be critical to their success as first year teachers:

I'll be lost in the school if I don't have support from management staff and my tutor teacher. Lee

A few had specific ideas about the types of support needed from their tutor teacher and senior staff. Two wanted "planning and assessment support" while another wanted "positive reinforcement for what was going well and support for developing other areas." Most, however, had a more generalized view of the types of support required and believed it important that "support was available when needed," while another wanted to be "with people who believe in what I do."

While the participants had different views on who would be critical in providing support and what form it would take, they all had very clear ideas about the kind of school they wanted to teach at in the following year and how school factors would affect how they adjusted to their "new role as teacher." Five thought that being in "innovative" schools that were "up with the times and the latest theory," and supported professional learning was important:

I want to teach in a school that can demonstrate best practice and where teachers continue to learn and develop. Kathy

For one of the graduating students, an environment that supported experimentation and learning was critical in order to "stop me going back to teaching like I was taught." Another wanted to teach in a school that "let you try things out," while another wanted a school that "challenged her." Senior

management, especially the principal, was seen as a key factor in enabling such an environment:

You need a strong principal, with a coherent vision. Liz

The importance of being in a school that had a positive atmosphere was identified by the majority of participants, who used words such as “caring,” “supportive,” and “appreciative” to describe such an atmosphere for both teachers and children. Three of the participants also commented on the type of community they wanted to teach in. Two wanted to teach in “low decile schools with Maori and Pasifika kids,” because they wanted to “help them achieve success in learning.” One talked about working in a “supportive community,” while another wanted to work in a “community that appreciates education and supports children.” Two of the graduating students believed that being part of a school community that had a “strong partnership with parents” would be important to them as beginning teachers.

In summary, at the end of their final year of their three-year pre-service programme, all 12 participants believed that emotional support from family and friends, and professional, as well as emotional support from colleagues, would be critical to them in their first year of teaching. They also identified factors related to the school and community that would assist them in their transition from student to teacher.

My ideal is a school that is positive, with strong partnership with parents, where children are supportive of each other, and where staff are regularly patted on their backs for their efforts. Kathy

The next part looks at the participants’ perceptions of the factors that affected their transition and development as teachers from the vantage point of their first term of teaching.

The First Four Weeks of Teaching: Fitting In and Finding Out

The new teachers had a lot of finding out to do when they first started teaching. They talked about having “so much information coming at you” and needing “to

learn something new every day.” This new learning was not just related to the “everyday things of running the class” but also to all the “extra things you are expected to know and do.”

You are learning so much in a short time – about the children, the school and its routines, about myself and what I’m capable of, and what I am not.
Lee

They all felt that they were “developing well” as teachers and although teaching was seen by most as being “tough,” they all thought that it was “enjoyable” and that it “was great to be doing it at last.” For example:

There is so much to take on board, so much to learn. Sometimes it feels overwhelming, but I know I am getting there. Mel

Some thought that the stress that they were experiencing was because they were beginning teachers. As one commented:

When you are feeling that pressure, you have to remember that you are just starting out. Kathy

However, data analysis identified key factors that impacted positively and negatively on the transition, development, and learning of the beginning teachers when they first started teaching. These are discussed below.

School atmosphere and dynamics

The data revealed that factors related to school atmosphere and dynamics played a critical role in how participants adapted and developed in their first term of teaching. As one first year teacher stated:

It really feels that I am in a school that is willing to support my needs and be there if I need help. Chris

Eleven of the 12 participants portrayed their school as being “supportive,” while seven also described it as being “friendly.” These first-year teachers perceived such school qualities to be helpful in that they enabled them to “talk to the other teachers” and “to go to anyone” to “ask questions” and “get advice.” For example:

The teachers say all the time that if I need anything come and ask and they are always giving me ideas. I always have hundreds of questions and they say keep on asking. It's exactly what you need – to have the support like that. Liz

Two commented that a “friendly and supportive” environment made them “feel comfortable speaking out” and “contributing” to meetings, while another four identified such an atmosphere as being helpful in dealing with difficulties or “problems”:

If I am having a problem, I know I can go and talk to someone about it, rather than feeling that I am left to deal with it myself. Sam

These four first-year teachers commented that working in this type of environment meant that they didn't feel “threatened” or “judged” or “made to feel dumb” when they needed help:

It means that if I have done something wrong or if I am having problems, there is no reason why I can't go and talk to someone. I don't feel that I have to be secretive about anything, because no one is going to be judgmental. They'll just help you fix it. Toni

As well as talking about the “supportive” atmosphere in their schools participants commented on how the staff worked together and how this helped them when they started teaching. Ten of the 12 talked about how they had a sense of “belonging” and being “part of a team,” and how important this was to them. For example:

It's great to feel that you belong to a group that cares about you as a person. We are all there to support and help each other and make each other's lives easier. Chris

Five talked about the value of being part of a team which “shares information, resources, and ideas,” that is “open to questions” and where “people aren't afraid to say what they feel.” For two of the first-year teachers, these comments referred to their syndicate, which they described as a “really close team.” The other three participants commented that the “whole school operates as a big team,” that “we all work together,” while one reflected “at work it's like we are a big family.” The five participants believed that this team approach assisted their learning

because it meant that “no-one keeps to themselves,” that they got “advice and support from everyone, even teachers I hardly know,” and that they benefitted from the way “everyone shares ideas and talks about what’s going on in their programmes.” They appreciated “knowing that you are not alone” and not feeling “isolated.” As one first year teacher commented:

The school philosophy is that no one is perfect; that we are all learning, and that we are there to support each other. This means I can go to anyone, not just because I am a beginning teacher, but also because it’s school policy. Robin

Four first-year teachers spoke about how the staff in their school mixed socially as well as professionally. This was viewed as being a regular part of school life, with “Friday night drinks” or “get-togethers” and “a big social event once or twice a term.” They commented, “it was nice to mix socially” because “you get to know people” so you “feel that you can approach anyone.” Three of the participants made reference to their schools having “quite a young staff” and how this may have contributed to the supportive, as well as social, environment, because “they can remember back to when they were in our position a few years ago.” However, two participants talked about “older teachers who were really supportive and friendly and will go out of their way to help you.” For one participant the school’s atmosphere and dynamics were due to the “way people get picked for jobs.” She believed that the school “looks for someone who is going to fit in” and commented, “when she was on practicum (at the school) they checked that she got along with the other staff.”

Two beginning teachers did not have such a positive view of the atmosphere and dynamics in their schools. While Frances commented that she “couldn’t get better professional support,” she also portrayed her school as being “not really a community kind of place” and talked about being surprised about how some of the teachers in her syndicate “made negative comments about the syndicate head.” Kathy described her school as having “lots of structure in terms of who you go to for help” but how she “hadn’t really been involved enough to say how people worked together.” She talked about feeling “constrained from trying things for myself” because she had the feeling that the school wanted to “check out what

you were doing before you try anything.” While Kathy thought it helpful that there were structures “in terms of who you go to for help,” she also commented that “most things seem to be passed through your syndicate leader before you can do anything” and that “I am getting a lot of suggestions but I think it’s because they want me to do it their way”:

I think my syndicate leader is trying to guide me to do things as she likes it done, rather than let me have a go and see what happens, which is what I want to do. Kathy

Kathy’s feeling of being “constrained” appeared to be exacerbated by the organization of the school. She talked about being “unique with a split class,” with one class level and her tutor in the junior syndicate and the other class and her syndicate leader connected to the senior syndicate. She spoke about not being told of syndicate meetings or being “missed out” if she did attend a meeting. This situation had a big effect on her:

I don’t seem to belong in either place. I feel as though I am being pushed and pulled. I feel like a misfit. I am still trying to find out where my best place is, especially for support and guidance. Kathy

The other ten first-year teachers thought that their school structures, and how these played out in the ways in which people worked together, supported their professional development. While most participant comments related to the benefit of working as part of a team in a supportive environment, three made specific reference to hierarchies. One talked about there being “no real hierarchy” and that “it feels as though everyone is on the same level, even the principal” and how this meant that she didn’t feel “intimidated by anyone, not even the principal.” The other two described their school as having “hierarchical” structures with “senior teachers down to beginning teachers.” They also commented, “even though it’s hierarchical, everyone is approachable” and “it means that everyone has a defined job in terms of giving support” and “if you have a problem you know who to go to and how it’s going to be sorted out.” One, however, also observed that “with the more senior teachers sometimes you feel that this is the way they have done it for years and you don’t really want to rock the boat, being so new to the school,” which suggests that this participant sensed that the authority structures in the school acted as a check on her development.

While school atmosphere and dynamics influenced participants' transition and development, the data showed that the way schools implemented beginning teacher induction was also very important. The provision of the 0.2 beginning teacher time allowance and the role played by tutor teachers were identified as being particularly significant factors.

The 0.2 Beginning teacher time allowance and beginning teacher induction

All 12 participants identified the 0.2 time allowance provided for beginning teacher advice and guidance as being critical to their development and learning as teachers. Eleven of the 12 were allocated one day a week and all agreed with the sentiment expressed by one first year teacher who said, "I don't know what I would do without my release day." One participant was assigned a two-hour block of time because "there are four beginning teachers but only one is funded as a beginning teacher so we have to divide it between the four of us."

The schools used the time allowance to support beginning teacher induction in a variety of ways. Nine participants had formal meetings with their tutor teachers every week during their "beginning teacher time" when they planned out the following week's guidance programme together. Activities included attending beginning teacher courses at the local teachers' centre (six participants), being observed by their tutor teachers (five participants), observing other teachers (two participants), making resources (two participants), and marking (two participants). The participants whose tutor teachers had observed their teaching found the subsequent feedback to be particularly useful as it "lets you know exactly what you need to do next" as well as "making you feel as though you are doing OK":

It's great hearing that you are doing a great job. It's just what you need.
Sam

Formal meetings with colleagues were an important part of the participants' advice and guidance programmes. Tutor teacher meetings were viewed as being particularly important as they provided the opportunity to discuss any concerns, ask questions, have planning checked, and be informed of upcoming school events (like parent interviews) or requirements (such as student assessments in particular subjects). Three of the participants also met fortnightly, along with the

other year one and two teachers in the school, with the principal or the teacher in charge of beginning teachers. These group meetings were also seen as providing important opportunities to ask questions, raise concerns, and be informed of school requirements, expectations, and events. In one school all of the first and second year teachers had their release on the same day, an arrangement one participant saw as very beneficial because it enabled her to connect with a year two teacher:

We sit down together at release time and he gives me all this advice and shows me the resources he has made. Sam

Two of the first-year teachers did not appear to have their 0.2 time allowance used to provide a formal advice and guidance programme. One remarked that she “had not seen the guidance programme but apparently there is one.” The other commented that she had been given a beginning teacher book with a guidance plan but her tutor teacher “was a bit slow to get it started” and that she was “reluctant to ask about her professional development programme because she had been appointed for a year and she had not seen her letter of employment yet.”

In contrast, the other ten participants viewed their induction programmes very positively. Four of the beginning teachers talked about their advice and guidance programmes being embedded in a school-wide model of professional development. Two were in a school where every teacher was observed every term by three different members of the senior management team, the only difference being that first-year teachers were observed twice a term. This was in addition to their tutor teacher observations. While they admitted this to be a “bit scary,” they also commented on the “incredibly supportive and friendly” environment and thought that the system would mean that they were going to come out “as better professionals at the end of the day.” The third participant from a different school commented that she “felt part of the whole thing” and appreciated that professional development “was school policy and not just because she was a learning teacher.” The fourth talked about the “school-wide plan for professional development,” which focused on the development of “effective and reflective teachers in order to do the best for the children and build on each other’s talents.” This beginning teacher agreed with the approach but felt aggrieved that he was

not able to “act like a beginning teacher and observe other teachers” because he did not receive a full day beginning teacher release because of the funding issues mentioned above.

Another six talked positively about their schools’ strong and organized approaches to professional development. Three saw this as supporting their learning because “the way it’s structured,” it “is focused on children’s learning” and because “it really motivates me to keep improving myself and not get stuck in a rut.” The other three were more ambivalent about its effect on them. On the one hand they appreciated the fact that the school “had an emphasis on keeping up to date in terms of new ideas and theories” because “it is building on what I have already learned but it’s letting me see it in action.” On the other they also felt that there was “such a lot of new information to be taken in and you can only cope with so much.” As one commented:

“There’s a bit too much professional development at the moment. I haven’t enough time to take a breath.” Robin

Four participants thought that being provided with information about the school helped them in their first few weeks of teaching. Because of the information overload that they were experiencing, they appreciated being given an “induction manual” that listed things like bell times, lunch ordering, and planning examples. As one observed:

Getting an induction manual when we first started was great because it had answers to all those routine type questions - the things they could forget to tell us because they happen all the time. Mary

Another commented on the effect of not being provided with such information:

There is so much to know. I feel as though I wasn’t given a lot of information about what’s happening. I have to ask so many questions about things like timetables, formats for lesson plans, and sometimes I am not sure what questions I should be asking. Lee

A key component of the beginning teachers’ induction was the advice, guidance, and support provided by their tutor teachers.

Tutor teachers

All 12 participants viewed their tutor teacher as being “critical” to their development and learning as teachers. The majority talked about having regular informal contact with their tutor teachers, with six seeing their tutor teacher “at least daily.” They appreciated their tutor teachers “popping in” to their classroom to “see if I am OK” and to “check how I am doing.” The beginning teachers found regular contact “on a casual basis” invaluable because it enabled them to “ask questions” and “talk through any problems.” It also gave the new teachers a sense of reassurance. As one stated:

My tutor teacher always pops in and checks if I am OK and makes sure I know what is happening. She is willing to dedicate time to me when I need help. She gives me encouragement, she gives me support, and she offers advice. Chris

In addition to the informal contact, five new teachers talked about the weekly meetings they had with their tutor teachers to “discuss the high and the low points” and to “plan out what we are going to do next.” They appreciated the “feedback and guidance” that was given at those meetings, particularly in terms of understanding school requirements in terms of “how the school does certain things” such as planning and assessment and what they “have to do by when.” For example:

My tutor teacher is really useful because she lets me know what is coming up. For example, she let me know really early when the management folders were due and told me to have a go at doing one or two myself. She then looked at them and gave me really constructive feedback so I found it really easy to do the rest and meet the deadline. Mary

Seven of the beginning teachers commented on the importance of receiving feedback from their tutor teachers. Five talked about receiving verbal feedback about their classroom “looking good,” and about how they had made “a great start” and are “doing a great job.” They valued this type of feedback because the “positive reinforcement keeps you going” and “gives you confidence and makes you think that maybe you are doing all right.” Two of the seven commented that they had received written feedback, one following two formal observations by her

tutor teacher, and the other a progress report after her tutor teacher had “been in her class for a fair bit over the last few weeks.”

The tutor teachers of four of the participants held senior management positions in the school. One of the beginning teachers talked about how helpful it was to have her tutor teacher (who was also her syndicate leader) next door, especially since the tutor teacher didn’t have a class, because it meant “I can interrupt at any time if I have got any questions.” The three participants who had deputy or associate principals as tutor teachers identified them as being supportive, but also talked about “how busy” their tutor teachers were, how “they don’t have a lot of time” and that they saw them “when they can.”

While the data showed that tutor teachers played a critical role in supporting beginning teacher transition and development, it also indicates that the tutor teacher relationship was not the only critical connection. Participant comments revealed that supportive relationships with others, both within and outside the school, were important to these new teachers. The following outlines how these relationships impacted on the professional growth of this group of beginning teachers.

Beginning teachers in the same school

All 12 participants were in schools with other beginning teachers. The school with the greatest number of beginning teachers had six year one and year two teachers, while one participant was in a school, which had one other beginning teacher who was a year two teacher. All the first-year teachers were very positive about having other beginning teachers in their school. The opportunity to connect with other people who were experiencing the same things appeared to be very important, with four using the expression “being in the same boat” when talking about their beginning teacher colleagues. Their beginning teacher colleagues were an important source of support because:

When I talk to them, they understand and know where I am coming from because they’re starting out too. They’re in the same boat. Chris

Participants talked about the benefit of “getting together informally” to “hear how other people are going” and to be able to “talk to other beginning teachers in the school about how hard it is.” The reassurance they gained from these encounters is encapsulated in the following statement:

It’s comforting because we are all in the same boat. Just hearing about their trials and realizing you don’t need to feel as though you have failed if something goes wrong because it happens to everyone. Toni

The participants talked about how contact with the other beginning teachers supported their development by being able to “run things past each other” and “get different ideas” as well as feeling safe to ask “dumb questions”:

She knows what I’m going through so I know if I do have a dumb question she won’t think it is. The senior staff have said over and over that no question is dumb if you need to know the answer, but you just know that the kind of questions you really want to ask probably are dumb. Mary

They also commented on the benefit of “being able to offload to each other,” with one saying that that when she is “under stress she talks to other beginning teachers in the school.” One put this down to “knowing that you have a bond with them because you’re on the same level.” Four talked about how second-year teachers in their school supported their transition and professional learning by “giving good advice.” One said that it was helpful to be able to talk to someone who:

.... has kind of been through every thing last year but is still a beginning teacher. He can give me really good advice about what to do and what not to do. I’d say he has been most helpful because he is on my level. Sam

Two of these four participants referred to having second-year teachers in the room next door to them. They both commented on how useful it is to know “you have someone next door that can answer silly little questions.” As one observed:

The next door teacher is a second year and she is really helpful because she knows what it’s like. I can access her quickly if I’m a bit of a mess or if I just want to ask her something. Sally

The support of other beginning teachers was particularly important to Kathy, one of the two participants who did not have a positive view of her school’s atmosphere and dynamics. Kathy described the (six other) first- and second-year

teachers in her school as “probably my biggest support group” and believed they supported her development by:

Acting as a sounding board, checking out my ideas, and seeing if they think what I am doing is OK - not really getting permission from them, but just hearing someone say it sounds as though you are doing a great job.
Kathy

Kathy also commented on how the second-year teachers in her school helped her find teaching supplies and gave her ideas about “easier ways to do things.”

They’re the ones who will tell you things like when to pack up so you don’t get stressed or hurried. They tell me where to find resources or give me little pointers that make everything so much easier. Kathy

However, while beginning teachers in the same school assisted participants’ transition and development, the data indicate that friends and family also played a role in this process.

Friends and family

All 12 first-year teachers commented on the importance of receiving support from family and friends during their first few weeks of teaching. As one put it:

It’s really important to have a support network because it is such a steep learning curve. I don’t think I would have coped if I didn’t have the support. Nina

Six talked about support provided by friends who were experienced teachers. One had a friend who was an early childhood teacher, one was a secondary school teacher, and the other three had friends who were primary teachers. Two thought their teacher friends supported their development by “offering support and encouragement and advice if I have a problem.” Another observed that she had two friends that were teachers but said that although they tended not to talk a lot about school, “it’s good knowing that they are there if I want to vent.”

Another referred to the practical support provided by an associate teacher from practicum who had become a friend:

I asked her a lot of questions at the beginning of the year about setting up the classroom programme and routines, about swimming, noise levels, and behaviour management. Lee

However, most of the participant comments about friends and how they supported their development referred to those who were also beginning teachers. Ten talked about the “network of people” they had gone through their pre-service programme with and who were year one teachers in other schools. They observed, “it was good” to keep in contact with these friends because they “are in the same place” and “going through the same things,” so “they know what it’s like.” They talked together about “the school, planning, the kids, everything really” and thought that it supported their professional development because you “share ideas” and “hear about different ways of doing things.”

I talk to my friends about what’s not going right and share information, swap resources, and point each other in the right direction; that’s the kind of support we give each other. Sally

They commented that that they “offload to each other” and how it helped to get “reinforcement” and “encouragement” from others and know that “you’re not alone.” As one observed:

It is good talking to my college friends because we can compare what happens and what strategies we use to deal with things like if I am having a problem with a staff member. If they’re having the same problems it makes you feel that what’s happening is not so bad. Lee

One thought that the opportunity to compare experiences with beginning teacher friends in other schools was beneficial because it provided her with a kind of benchmark. She commented that:

Just hearing what’s going on in other schools makes you realize how lucky you are. Toni

Two of the participants talked about how meeting up with friends at beginning teacher courses was invaluable because of the chance to “share resources” and “experiences.” For one, this contact reassured her about how she was feeling:

It was good talking with the other beginning teachers at the course because we all said how grumpy we had been with our class. I had been thinking that this is just me and that I'm not handling this, but we all felt the same way. Nina

In summary, just as the participants predicted prior to graduating from their teacher preparation programme, school related factors played a key role in their transition and development as beginning teachers. School atmosphere and dynamics and the way schools used the 0.2 time allowance to support induction were important factors in enabling or limiting participants' professional learning. The tutor teacher was the key person in terms of providing emotional and professional support and guidance. Relationships with family and friends and other experienced and beginning teachers, inside and outside their school, were also found to be important in supporting the transition and development of this group of beginning teachers in their first few weeks of teaching. The next section provides an analysis of the data in terms of the factors that the participants perceived to affect their learning and development from the perspective of being in their final term of their first year of teaching.

After Nine Months of Teaching

After nine months of teaching, the participants in this study had a different view of teaching from the beginning of the year. In their first term in the job they found teaching "tough" and "stressful." Even though five had got very bad doses of flu at the end of Term Three, in their fourth term interviews they all now described teaching as being "less stressful." They depicted themselves as being "far more relaxed," "more comfortable," and "not being so nervous all the time." As one put it:

I wasn't comfortable at the start but I am now. Liz

They ascribed this change to "knowing what to do now." For example:

What's relaxed me is that now I do know what I am doing. Toni

They also ascribed this change to becoming more confident:

I have become more confident – I have learned to trust myself and make my own decisions. Chris

After nine months of teaching, these first-year teachers appeared to have a genuine sense of self-assurance in themselves as teachers. As one commented:

Term One was strange because I had to act like I was confident and knew what I was doing so the kids trusted me even though I felt that I didn't have a clue what I was doing. Now I know what I am doing and feel very confident in my teaching, planning, and organization. Sam

All 12 beginning teachers talked about how they had also become more “flexible” in terms of their teaching, with six illustrating this change by comments about not feeling as though they had to “stick to the timetable” and how they now “just go by what I have time for in a day.” For example:

In the beginning I just wanted everything to run how I had planned it and fit everything in so I knew I was covering everything. Now, for example, if maths takes longer it doesn't matter because what you are doing is valuable and you can sort of juggle everything else around and fit it in during the rest of the week. Mary

The data revealed that participants' perception of themselves as becoming more relaxed, confident, and flexible was a gradual process. They felt that “in the beginning there were too many things to think about and do,” but now they “can step back” and “not worry about things so much.” These first-year teachers identified this change occurring during Term Three, after approximately six months of teaching. In their final term of their first year of teaching, all shared the sentiment expressed by one participant:

It's a great job once you get used to it. Chris

Following is an analysis of the factors that influenced the transition and development of this group of 12 first-year teachers after nine months of teaching.

School Atmosphere and Dynamics

The data revealed that factors related to school atmosphere and dynamics continued to play a critical role in these first-year teachers' professional

development and learning. As in Term One, the beginning teachers still considered a “supportive school environment” as being a key factor in their development as teachers. However, after nine months of teaching it appeared that the views these first-year teachers held about the supportiveness of their work environment were linked to the type of relationships they had developed with other people in their school.

The important thing is to develop relationships and then there will be as much help or as little help as you need. Mary

Eleven talked about how “forming relationships” with the staff in their schools was critical to their development. These first-year teachers commented that not only had they become “more familiar with the other staff” and had “got to know them a lot better,” but also how the other teachers had “got to know them better as well.” One expressed the importance of this mutual relationship building in the following way:

All teachers go to each other for support, advice, feedback, and ideas so you really need to get to know each other. Chris

Eight talked about how “getting involved in school activities” such as productions, sports days, clubs, and staff social events helped them build relationships with other staff. For example:

The more I got involved in different events in the school then the more my relationships developed with different teachers. Kathy

Six referred to the “social side” as being an important aspect of “school life” particularly in terms of providing opportunities for developing relationships with other staff. As one commented:

The social side is a huge part of why I enjoy working here. You don’t only know your colleagues on a professional level; you also get to know them on a personal level too. Chris

They talked about how socializing provided the chance to “get together and unwind,” to “get to know staff really well” and enabled them to “see people in a

different context” and so form relationships with people they may not otherwise have, for example:

It’s important to get to know people because a lot of people can get the wrong impressions unless you actually spend time with that person. Lee

In Term Four, unlike Term One, all 12 first-year teachers commented on their relationships with their principal. Four said that they had always felt “comfortable” with their principal because they knew s/he was “approachable” and “helpful.” One observed that while she had not “really got to know” her principal because she was a “busy person,” she felt that since she had got a permanent job her principal had become “more committed to building a relationship” while one admitted that she “couldn’t be bothered with having a relationship,” with hers. Six participants, however, talked about how they had got to know their principal “much better” on a “personal as well as professional level” and how their relationship had now become “less official.” For these beginning teachers this change meant that they became “more comfortable” about interacting with their principal. For example:

I felt really timid at the start because it’s the principal, but now I can have a conversation with him. Toni

These first-year teachers thought that getting to know and developing relationships with their colleagues made their school “a friendlier place to work,” made staff seem “more approachable,” and enabled them to identify “like-minded people in the school.” This was important to these beginning teachers because it gave them access to more people who they could “talk to or ask about things.”

Developing relationships with colleagues was not all positive. Four first-year teachers identified some downsides with getting to know staff more closely. One talked about how she “now realizes that the staff is made up of an inner circle close to management and an outer circle” while another said she now “notices more about the people who always complain.” A third commented that:

I now see sides of people I didn’t before. Some people’s negative attitudes about teaching have sort of taken a bit of shine off my keenness, although I am trying to stay positive and not catch on to their cynical ways. Nina

These four participants also commented on their relationship with staff in terms of their position as beginning teachers. One believed that in her school “beginning teachers are the lowest sort of order in terms of most things,” another thought that “my ideas were a bit patronized because I was a beginning teacher,” while another wondered if “they don’t listen to me because I am not experienced.” A fourth talked about feeling a “bit of animosity” from some of the older teachers, which led to her feeling that she should “hold back more,” and “moderate how I am interacting.” These four also perceived that their colleagues’ attitudes towards them started changing from the middle of Term Three or around seven months into their first year of teaching and that, by the time they got to Term Four, they felt that they were “being listened to more” and had “moved from being a beginning teacher to part of the group.” One, however, talked about “still being seen as beginning teacher” and how:

Some teachers really want to help you because you are a beginning teacher and others just want to stay away. They basically don’t want to know. It’s like you are a project that they can’t be bothered with. Sam

The other eight first-year teachers did not make any observations about colleagues having negative attitudes to them in relation to their being beginning teachers. They did, however, comment in their Term Four interviews that they “had got to know everyone a lot better” and that they “really feel like part of the team now.” As one remarked:

The other staff have always been friendly but I feel as though I am really part of it now. Lee

As indicated above, one of the 12 first-year teachers in their Term Four interviews commented negatively about school atmosphere and dynamics and about staff attitudes to her as a beginning teacher. For Sam, this was a major shift from what she experienced at the beginning of the year when she observed that her development was “supported” by the school being “open, friendly, and sharing” and by her “incredibly friendly and supportive” colleagues. Although Sam’s views had changed nine months later, she did not believe that not having positive relationships with colleagues impacted negatively on her development because:

I keep reminding myself that teaching is about what's going on in the classroom and it's not about issues with other adults. I love every minute of the classroom stuff. Sam

In contrast, the other 11 first-year teachers in this study identified the growth of effective relationships with other staff as being a major factor that contributed to their development and learning as teachers. Not only did this give them access to “more people to call on for help and advice,” the building of relationships also made them feel “more comfortable” and “more confident” in terms of “asking questions,” “speaking out,” and “contributing more” to meetings and other school activities. They believed that staff perceptions of them and interactions with them started to alter from Term Three or around six months into teaching. The first-year teachers thought that there was now a greater “acceptance” of them “as teachers” and of their contributions to staff meetings. Some commented about feeling more “part of it” while others referred to becoming part of a “team.” For example:

I've got more familiar with staff and feel like I'm part of the team now. I am far more involved with them than I was in Term one. Lee

In summary, the data showed that building relationships with colleagues was important to the development of this group of beginning teachers. Further analysis indicated that relationships with particular staff were more critical in terms of influencing their professional learning than others. Particularly important were the relationships with members of their syndicate teams, their tutor teacher, and other beginning teachers.

Team relationships

All 12 beginning teachers commented on how their relationships with the people in their syndicate team had changed from the beginning of the year. For 11 of the new teachers, this was perceived to be a positive change. For example:

Getting to know the syndicate was the biggest change because, as they got to know me better, I started to feel more part of it. Robin

These new teachers talked about the importance of “getting to know” the people in their teams and how they had become “more like friends,” with one

commenting that her syndicate had “bonded as a unit.” Sam was the only one who talked about not being “close with any of the teachers in my syndicate.” For the others, the relationship building had a positive spin-off in that they became “more confident” and “comfortable” in “contributing to team meetings.” They talked about “speaking out more in syndicate meetings,” of “sharing ideas more” as well as “opinions” and “not being as afraid to ask questions,” with two commenting that they “now expected to be listened to.” For example:

I’ve gained heaps of confidence. Before I was shy in lots of the meetings, but now I can speak my opinion and don’t sit back as much if I disagree.
Toni

One of the first-year teachers talked about the relationships between her and the other syndicate team members having changed in the sense that:

We have got to know each other so well. I know about their teaching and a little about their lives. I have learned to recognize when they are really looking stressed out and I am able to ask if I can help. They are becoming more like friends as well and I don’t feel like they are trying to keep me afloat. I feel like I can stand on my own two feet now and actually give something back. Chris

Not only did the first-year teachers talk about how they had become more active in contributing to team meetings, but they also observed that the other teachers in the team changed towards them as they “got to know them (the beginning teachers) better.”

The middle of the year was again identified as the time when participants noticed that other teachers in the syndicate “listened to you more” and felt that they “valued your ideas a bit more.”

By Term Two I felt that I had a pretty good relationship with most people in my syndicate but now I feel that they have really got to know me better. I suppose it’s just time. I feel that I have moved from being a beginning teacher to sort of being part of the group. Robin

The beginning teachers commented that they felt “more part of it” when they became “more included in things” such as informal team socializing and taking more responsibility for syndicate tasks like unit planning. This change was very

noticeable for Kathy who had talked about feeling “like a misfit” when she first started teaching. Nine months later she commented:

The more involved I got in different things with the syndicate, the more my relationship developed with the other teachers and now I feel as though my ideas are listened to more and I am given a bit more responsibility. Kathy

Four first-year teachers made specific mention of the value of syndicate meetings to their professional learning because not only did they “get to hear how things were done” but also because they were all “doing the same thing” in their classes which meant that they got to “share resources and get to hear what others are doing.” As one commented:

I’ve become more confident in sharing my resources and found that the more you give, the more you end up getting back, so I’ve gained heaps from relationships with the other teachers in my team. It’s been really great being able to ask experienced teachers for help and advice when we are doing the same thing. Toni

In summary, for all but one of the participants, the relationships the first-year teachers had established with their syndicate were perceived as having a very positive influence on their professional development, as illustrated in the following quotation:

The most critical influence are the people around me - just watching the way they do things, planning together, just the knowledge rubbing off. I get so much support and guidance from the professionals in the team.
Sally

Tutor teachers

When the participants first started teaching they all viewed their tutor teachers as being “critical” to their development as teachers. Nine months later, their views of their tutor teachers in terms of their relationships with them and their impact on their professional growth had, in most cases, undergone changes.

Ten of the 12 participants had been working with the same tutor teacher all year. While one first year teacher said that their relationship “had not changed,” the other nine all commented favorably on the changes that had occurred in their

relationships with their tutor teachers. They talked about how, over the year, they had “got to know each other really well,” on a “personal as well as professional” level. For example:

We have worked really well as a team. We know each other’s expectations and ways of doing things and we’ve been able to fit together. We get on really well and we don’t get in each other’s way and if we ask for something to be done, it’s done. Now we can laugh and joke around with each other and talk about other things than school. Lee

Kathy’s comments about her tutor teacher illustrate the importance of the tutor teacher relationship for first year teachers. Kathy talked about how her tutor teacher had been “very critical at the start” and how she had got very “discouraged” by this. She stated that:

Maybe she (the tutor teacher) should have started out a lot gentler and remembered what it was like. She has a reputation as being a very efficient and excellent teacher herself and perhaps she needs to look at whether she is measuring what she is able to do rather than what beginning teachers should be able to do. Our relationship definitively improved as the year went on – maybe it was an acceptance of each other and maybe my classroom practice has changed so she can see I have tried to move myself on. Kathy

After nine months of teaching most of the beginning teachers described their relationship with their tutor teachers as being more “informal.” For three of them this meant that they no longer had as much “one-to-one contact” because they either had no or fewer scheduled meetings with their tutor teachers.

I don’t meet with him formally anymore. The middle of last term I told him that I’d just ask him things as I go along. Sally

Others thought that a more informal relationship helped their professional growth because:

It’s easier now that it’s more informal and that I have got to know her because when she gives me feedback I know it’s about my career and not about me personally. Mel

Four beginning teachers talked about how their relationship changed from “being the tutor teacher” to being a “friend” and a co-worker. For example:

We are colleagues and we are friends and I feel less now like she is the teacher and I am the student. I feel more like we are colleagues. I feel like I have got something to offer her now as well and when she is giving me all this advice and feedback about my teaching, sometimes I am able to say “have you tried this.” Instead of being a give/take situation, it is more like a give/give one now. I feel like I am actually giving something back to her. We know each other really well because we have worked together, so it is less like a student/teacher relationship. Chris

While the relationships between the majority of beginning teachers and their tutor teachers had become more “collegial” and “informal,” the first-year teachers still viewed this relationship as being important because they knew that if they “needed help” their tutor teacher “would be there” for them. Even though the new teachers now talked about feeling “confident” and “comfortable” about going to other teachers for “advice and support,” they continued to appreciate that their tutor teachers were experienced teachers to whom they could go and “ask about anything.” As one commented:

They know what you need to do because they have been in the game longer and know what needs to be done. Mel

Two of the 12 new teachers were allocated a different tutor teacher during their third term, about half way through their first year of teaching, when their original tutor teachers left their schools. They had contrasting perceptions of the effect of this change on their development. Nina talked about how “no one else wanted to take it on” and how it ended up “being a hassle instead of being a positive thing.” She said that made her sad because “you know how busy teachers are so the last thing you want to be doing is to be putting extra work on someone.” Nina stated that she hadn’t been observed or given feedback by her new tutor teacher but reflected that her tutor teacher was new to the role - “it’s hard for her too, because she is not quite sure what she is supposed to do.” Robin was the other participant who changed tutor teachers and her experience was different from Nina’s.

Robin thought that while her “first tutor teacher was lovely and really helpful...its actually worked out really well having a different tutor teacher” because the “new one is more relaxed compared to the old one who said that you should do this or that, whereas the new one says give it a go.” Robin believed, “changing tutor

teachers has certainly changed things for me” and described how “refreshing it was to bounce ideas off her.” She also thought that the “change in how people reacted to me” was because her new tutor teacher “talked to other teachers about the good things that are happening in my classroom.” Robin commented that through working with the new tutor teacher she had learned to be more confident in her teaching and had learned that:

If you are not going to take risks, then you are not going to get out there and share your ideas with other teachers, and you are not going to change.
Robin

Other beginning teachers

Nine of the 12 people in this study specifically mentioned other beginning teachers as being important to their development during their first year of teaching. Six of these nine commented about beginning teachers in their own school being a source of emotional and practical “support”:

Its really good just being able to talk to others who are in the same boat as me. We share experiences and resources and offer advice. We help each other a lot. Sally

As they did at the beginning of the year, the new teachers observed that “being able to get together” with other year one and two beginning teachers helped them “manage stress” because they were able to “offload to each other.” One had developed such a crucial relationship with another beginning teacher that she believed that “if she wasn’t here, I don’t know what I would do.” They met early every day to “chat” and “share resources” and “talk about how we are feeling as well.” A seventh participant who worked with one other first year teacher did not see their relationship as being beneficial because “she is not as enthusiastic as me.”

Three of the nine participants who mentioned other beginning teachers did so in relation to attending beginning teacher courses as part of their professional development programme. They valued the opportunity to “catch up with people you went through college with,” to “hear what’s working in their classrooms” and “how they are coping.” This appeared to be particularly important for those

beginning teachers who did not feel as though they were working in supportive environments. For example, Kathy commented that:

Those courses are valuable for sharing experiences. It's a good feeling to know that others are going through the same thing because it doesn't make me feel so isolated in what I am doing. Kathy

This was also the case for Sam, whose relationships with her tutor teacher and syndicate colleagues had deteriorated dramatically over the year. Sam, in reference to not being allowed to attend any beginning teacher courses, commented that she wished she had been able to attend them because it could have offered her a "life line to be part of a group of other beginning teachers."

The data also indicate that, in addition to their teacher colleagues, the participants also identified children and parents as playing an important role in their development as teachers.

Relationships with children

In their first term interviews, four participants talked about the children as being a "highlight" of teaching. Nine months later all 12 beginning teachers talked about the relationships they had developed with the children and how important this was to them and their development as teachers. As one remarked:

Once the students and I started to get to know each other my teaching changed because I learnt what they can do and what they need. I'm more relaxed now because they know me and I know them and we know what to expect of each other. Chris

All the first-year teachers talked about how their relationships with the children had changed and "grown" over the year. They thought the relationships had become "more open" and that they had become "more relaxed" in the way that they interacted with the children. For example:

At the start of the year it was like 'I'm the teacher and you are the student.' Now it's loosened up and I have a general chitchat with them, whereas I kept away from all that at the start of the year to get respect. Now I am letting down my wall a bit and they are opening up to me. Sally

They believed that a consequence of becoming “more relaxed” and “loosening up” was that it had enabled them to get “to know the kids really well.” They talked about how getting to “know all about their lives” and “what happens outside of school” helped them to become better teachers:

By getting to know them better you can talk to them about personal things to do with their lives. Getting to know them better and knowing things about their lives helps you to tune in to different children. Robin

Another consequence of becoming more relaxed as teachers was that it had helped them to “really be able to enjoy the children.” They thought that the children were now “more comfortable” with them, that they and the children had “got closer,” and that this had helped the children “disclose more” about themselves. As one commented:

I’ve got more relaxed and can have fun with them. As I’ve eased back on them, I’ve noticed that they have bonded with me and seem to respond to me more. Nina

Three of the first-year teachers spoke about the emotional connection they had developed with the children in their class. One talked about becoming “one of the important people in their lives,” while another commented that the children now “know that I love them and that they are appreciated.” They saw this emotional connection as being important in developing children’s attitudes to school:

I know them and they know me really well and they like me and trust me and we have lots of fun. It’s great because it means they love being at school. Sam

What the children thought about school was considered to be important by these beginning teachers because they linked this with children’s learning:

The kids have got to come here and want to learn because they are not going to learn if they don’t want to be here. That’s why you’ve got to have good relationships with the kids. Nina

All 12 first-year teachers believed that the changes in their relationships engendered by their becoming more relaxed and getting to know the children had resulted in them being viewed differently by their pupils. For example:

I think the children see me more as a person now. At the start of the year you are just a teacher. By having conversations with them and talking about what's happening in their lives, you just get to know them. I think it affects their learning because, if it's a positive relationship, then they feel more comfortable talking. If they feel comfortable enough to tell me things about their lives, then they are probably going to feel more comfortable to take risks in learning. Toni

The comment in the above quotation regarding a perceived connection between participants' relationships with the children in their class and pupil learning was echoed by all the other first year teachers in this study. They all talked about how "knowing" the children meant that the participants could "adjust their programmes and methods of teaching" in relation to the children's interests and abilities.

I have got to know the children a lot better and they now talk to me about a lot of things. This makes a difference to my teaching because when you know them better you can relate things to their interests and you know what will be too hard or too easy for them. Lee

Five also referred to getting to know the children in relation to changes in pupil behaviour. One believed that the "increased familiarity" meant that her pupils "now push the boundaries because they haven't got the fear." The other four, however, commented about positive changes in behaviour, not only because the children "now knew the boundaries and how far to push" but also because the participants could "read the children better" and had a far better idea of "when they were playing up and when they don't really understand." As one observed:

At the start I was getting the routines in place and enforcing them. Now they know the boundaries and know we can have a joke within the boundaries, but if they step over them, then they know that's it. Also, since I know the kids so well I know what their next step is going to be. Toni

The beginning teachers in this study identified getting to know and developing positive relationships with the children in their class as being the most satisfactory part of their job. As one commented:

The most satisfactory thing is the kids. They are probably also one of the most stressful things but they bring the greatest satisfaction. Mary

They all talked about how watching the children “grow in maturity,” “independence,” and “improve in their work” was a very satisfactory part of being a teacher.

What gives me most satisfaction is the children - just seeing the changes from the start of the year to now in terms of their personality, their confidence, and their academic ability. Liz

They all observed that they had seen a “big difference in what they are achieving from the beginning the year” in terms of “going up levels.” One commented that:

The big thing is seeing the kids progressing and knowing that you had a part in it. Toni

In summary, all 12 first-year teachers believed that the relationships between them and the children in their class had changed over the year. They observed that becoming more relaxed in their interactions facilitated a reciprocal change in the children’s behaviour towards them as teachers. This helped the new teachers gain more knowledge and understanding of the academic and social needs and strengths of the children in their class. Changes in relationships with parents were seen by some of the participants to contribute to their gaining a greater knowledge of the children in their class.

Relationships with parents

The beginning teachers all talked about how their relationships with parents had changed over the year. Although seven stated that they “don’t have a huge amount of contact” or “see a lot of parents,” all 12 thought that their relationships with parents had “improved as the year has gone on.” While one talked about this improvement in terms of “the parents feeling more comfortable with coming in to me with their concerns,” four of participants associated “improvement” with how comfortable they felt with parents, for example:

I don’t see a lot of the parents but I do remember the first contact I had with them. I was nervous. Now I feel more comfortable around the parents and more relaxed with them and think they sense that too. Chris

All 12 thought that they had got “more confident in communicating with parents” as they had got to know them. This was achieved in a variety of ways. For three of the participants the vehicle for “getting to know them better” was taking their class on a school trip, while two of them believed it was related to “the age group” because “with younger children you have a lot more contact with parents.” Another three talked about the Term Three parent interviews and how they felt more “comfortable” and “confident” about “opening up” and talking with parents about children’s behaviour and academic progress.

The beginning teachers believed that their “improved” relationships with parents impacted on their development as teachers in two main ways. Firstly, they believed that their relationships with the parents gave them greater knowledge and understanding of the children. For example:

Having more contact with parents gives me a broader picture of what the kids are like. Mary

One thought that knowing the parents helped them in terms of managing the children in their class:

The kids can’t get away with anything because I know their parents well and I have got a good relationship with them. Mel

Secondly, the participants were provided with feedback about their performance as teachers. They talked about parents being “interested in what and how their child was doing” and how they appreciated being told that the children were “happy and contented” and “loved school.” For example:

Feedback from parents gave me a sense of accomplishment and pleasure because I knew that I had the support of the parents for what I was doing. Kathy

Two commented on the importance of the relationship with parents in relation to being beginning teachers. One talked about the feedback she had received:

I got positive feedback at parent interviews. They know that I am a beginning teacher so I was really encouraged by it. Chris

Another talked about how the parents and she had changed their perceptions of, and interactions, with each other:

At the beginning I think they were a bit wary because I was a first year but now I think that's changed. I feel more confident, like when it comes to calling up a parent because of misbehaviour. At the start of the year I was terrified but now I know I can justify why I am ringing. Toni

In summary, after nine months of teaching, the 12 participants in this study all believed that the relationships that they had established over time with their principal, other teachers, children, and parents played an important part in their development as teachers. As one commented:

It's all about relationships. Mel

Analysis of the data indicates that the development of effective relationships was not the only factor that supported new teacher transition and development. Also important was the provision of professional learning opportunities.

Beginning Teacher Professional Development

The 0.2 beginning teacher allowance

At the start of the year all but one of the schools used the 0.2 beginning teacher time allowance to release their first-year teachers from class for one day a week to engage in the induction programme that had been designed to support them as beginning teachers. The participants called this their "beginning teacher time" and saw their "release day" as being critical to their survival and growth as new teachers. Nine months into their first year of teaching, none of the 12 had changed their views about the importance of the 0.2 provision in providing opportunities for professional development and learning. As one commented:

The 0.2 is really important because that's when I go to courses and observe other classes and people observe me and I catch up with paper work and get things ready for class. Liz

As suggested in the above quotation, the 0.2 time allowance was being used in a variety of ways to provide advice and guidance to the beginning teachers. The

data showed that schools used the 0.2 allocation in three main ways to support the professional learning of these first-year teachers. Three of the 12 participants talked about attending beginning teacher courses at their local teachers centre as being “very valuable” in terms of getting “an incredible lot of ideas,” “catching up” with people they trained with, and “sharing experiences.” The majority, however, identified by observing and being observed by other teachers as being most critical to their professional development over the year and it is these components that are the focus of the following sections.

Observation and feedback

Nine participants made explicit comment about how having their teaching observed by experienced teachers was critical to their development. For example:

Observations are important because they pick up on things that you are not actually aware of. Lee

Of these nine, four had been observed by both their tutor teacher and a member of the senior management team, while the other five had been observed only by their tutor teacher. Their statements indicate that it was the feedback that resulted from having their teaching observed that most contributed to their professional learning. They talked about feedback from these experienced teachers as being “most useful” and a “critical influence” on their development, not only because it “boosted confidence” but also because it gave them information about “what is going right” and “what can be improved.” They talked about the feedback “forming the basis” for their ongoing development as teachers:

The feedback gave me the knowledge to teach better and gave me more efficient ways of doing things. Sally

These nine beginning teachers received both written and oral feedback from the staff who observed their teaching and believed that both forms of reporting were important to their professional learning. As one commented:

I find oral feedback really helpful, as well as the written. It helps to actually hear what I am doing right and what can be improved. But then, if I have written feedback as well, later on when I am thinking about doing

something to the programme or behaviour management, I can look back and have it all there. Chris

The importance that the first-year teachers in this study placed on feedback is emphasized by a participant who felt that she did not receive enough of it:

I never got a lot of feedback from my tutor teacher or anyone, but then I think that they are probably happy with me because I would have heard. But sometimes you need feedback to say what's good and how you could look at things in a different way. All the time you are reflecting on what you're doing, so getting the feedback that you are doing well makes a huge difference. Nina

The tone and manner in which feedback was given was also important to these beginning teachers. They talked about the importance of receiving "positive" as well as "constructive" feedback. Kathy, for example, recalled vividly the tone of her tutor teacher's feedback at the beginning of the year and how this affected her:

She was really critical in her feedback at the start and I felt it personally and it was quite damning. Kathy

Three of the 12 new teachers talked about not having been observed by their tutor teacher or other staff. One had a tutor teacher who had been an associate teacher on her last practicum and said she was "relieved" she hadn't been observed because it meant that "I don't get tense and she doesn't feel like she is intruding." Another talked about not having her teaching observed since the second term and how the only feedback she now receives is from the relievers who look after her class. The third talked about her tutor teacher not observing her teaching until the end of the third term even though she had regularly met with her tutor teacher and received written feedback from these meetings. As she commented:

I think having the tutor teacher coming in and observing me and getting feedback from that would have been more important than just getting the written stuff from the meetings every three weeks. Frances

While the first-year teachers valued experienced teachers observing and providing them with feedback on their teaching, they also believed that observing other teachers helped them to learn and develop as teachers.

Observing experienced teachers

After nine months of teaching, seven of the first-year teachers identified observing other teachers as a key factor that contributed to their professional learning. They talked about “doing a lot of observations” of teachers, mainly in their schools, but also in other schools, and how valuable this was in terms of getting “fresh ideas” and seeing “different ways of doing things.” As one put it:

I have done a lot of observations of other teachers. It’s really helped because talking with and observing experienced teachers gives you a lot of good ideas that you can go away and use. Lee

Two of the seven remarked that while they had done a lot of observations earlier in the year, they were not getting the opportunities to do so now. They talked about feeling as though they were “running out of time” because this was their “last term.” They thought that observing other teachers in their fourth term of teaching would be very useful because they could then see what strategies other teachers used as the children in their class “moved up levels.” One suggested that it would be useful to revisit the teachers they had observed previously because:

Like in reading, the kids would have moved up levels so the strategies the teacher was using would have changed. It would have been good to go back and observe all those tiny little details of how they adjusted their teaching to match the changes in the kids’ levels. Nina

Three of the seven participants who commented on the value of observing other teachers made reference to how this made them “feel better” about their own teaching. Two talked about observing other teachers in their school. One suggested that the value came from giving her something to measure against when she tried out new ideas because she “knew if they were working well or not.” For another, the value was in terms of providing a benchmark for her development as a teacher:

You observe other teachers and they give me ideas to use myself. Then you see other teachers and you feel better about what you’re doing with your own class. Liz

The third beginning teacher talked about how observing the tutor teacher teaching her own class had helped her. She commented on how useful it was to her to “be able to sit back and watch them being taught by someone else,” not only because she got “good ideas” but also because it gave her “the freedom to try things” because she was working “closely with another person who really knows me and my class” and who “really supports me.”

In contrast to the first-year teachers who commented positively on how their schools used the 0.2 time allowance to support their professional learning, three participants had very different experiences. One of the three stated that she did not get “my 0.2 after Term One” and that her tutor teacher “doesn’t observe me but just checks on the paper work.” She said:

It could be my school but from the first week you are expected to be like every other teacher. The only good thing about being a beginning teacher here is that you have a good excuse if anything goes wrong. Sam

Another commented that “since changing tutor teachers” in the middle of the year she had not had any release time because the reliever had to cover for “people who got sick or had to go on courses.” The third talked about not having release during the fourth term because the school was using the time for “planning and stuff” but also indicated that this was not really of concern because of the benefits obtained from the school-wide professional development system that was in place to support the development of all teachers at the school. It appears that despite more variability in the use of 0.2 beginning teacher allowance by Term Four, the school’s approach to professional development could offset the consequences of not having a targeted beginning teacher advice and guidance programme.

School approaches to professional development

All 12 beginning teachers in this study commented on the importance of engaging in activities that enhanced their professional learning over their first year of teaching. All believed, whether they got it or not, that the 0.2 provision for beginning teacher advice and guidance was essential to supporting new teacher development. However, for five participants, the inclusion of their advice and guidance programme into a school-wide approach to professional development

was seen as being especially powerful. One identified her school's performance management system as being the "most critical influence on my development" because the feedback she received "formed the basis of what she was looking at and going to do for the rest of that term." She commented that:

Performance management is a school-wide thing; everyone gets appraised every term, but they just spend longer in beginning teacher classrooms.
Lee

Another participant also commented about how the "whole staff development has helped my development" because:

A lot of the time beginning teachers seem to do courses for the sake of doing courses but, if it's the whole staff, it means that it can be implemented in the whole school so you actually end up doing the stuff. The whole school thing also means that you can ask for the support of different people. Toni

Two of the first-year teachers in the same school talked about valuing being part of whole school approach and linked it with the reputation the school had for excellent teaching:

Great that it is a whole school system. That's where the quality comes from, because they don't just leave you after you have been teaching two years. They are constantly sort of on your back so it's good knowing that it's just not beginning teachers going through it. I'm surprised at the quality of my teaching as it's higher than I thought it would be in my first year. Sally

The five participants believed that a systematic and comprehensive approach to whole school approach to professional development really maximized their opportunities for learning. They particularly appreciated having their advice and guidance programme embedded in their schools' professional development because it meant that they did not feel "singled out" because they were first-year teachers. Other beginning teachers, however, did not appear to experience a planned learning support programme. Five commented that they initiated their own professional development activities. One said she went "around different classes and asked if I could sit in," while another said that she "just had to let my tutor teacher know what I wanted, like visiting other schools, and she organized it

for me,” while another talked about “doing it off her own bat” in terms of organizing to observe other teachers or visit other schools. Another commented that:

I plan what I want to do two or three weeks in advance and then show it to my tutor teacher so that she knows what I am doing and then I diarise what I have done afterwards. The other teachers suggest who I should observe.
Kathy

Three of the five who organized their own professional development were the same people who talked about not getting release time in their Term Four interviews. These three also referred back to the difficulties they had at the start of the year. One talked about having “no idea about the school systems,” while another commented that it was “just not knowing what questions to ask and no-one knowing what to tell me.” Another suggested that:

I think you need more information at the beginning. You need something written down because when a beginning teacher starts, they need to be told this and that because there a lot of things you just don't know, have forgotten about or people don't realize you needed to know. Liz

Two of the 12 participants said that they organized their advice and guidance programme in association with their tutor teacher. They believed that the guidance they received in terms of planning their professional development activities was an important factor in developing their knowledge and skills over the year. As one stated:

I don't get release to do what I want. At the beginning of the year I wanted to use the 0.2 to make resources but it's been so much more valuable to have a plan to be observed and observe my tutor teacher.
Robin

In the eyes of this group of 12 first-year teachers, the opportunity to engage in a professional development programme and activities because of the 0.2 beginning teacher allowance was an important factor in enabling their transition and development as teachers. As one commented:

The school has to have a programme in place where they look after the beginning teachers and understand that we are in transition from college to the real thing. Lee

In summary, after nine months of teaching, there appeared to be more variation in terms of how the schools used the 0.2 allowance to support the new teachers' professional development, or if it was used for the beginning teachers at all. However, whether or not the first-year teachers thought that they were getting adequate supervision and advice, they all believed that being observed and/or observing experienced teachers was critical to enhancing beginning teacher professional knowledge and skills. They all endorsed the recently approved 0.1 provision for second year teachers, believing that it would provide a "nice transition" and that they would be able to really utilize their time to continue their professional development. As one stated:

In the second year, you will be more focused on what you want to see, what you need to see, and areas you want to work on. Kathy

The participant data also identified another key factor that impacted on their professional growth. This was the type of teaching position they had been appointed to when they first started teaching.

Appointment to beginning teacher positions

Of the 12 first-year teachers in this study, six started the year in permanent positions. They talked about being "relieved" that they "didn't have to worry about the job thing." As one commented:

I'm really looking forward to next year. It will be like a fresh start, except I know the people I'll be working with and I know what the year will involve and I feel fully prepared for that. Liz

Another thought that it was important to start off in a permanent position because of the nature of the job. She believed that teaching was always going to be "a hard job and a highly stress job," and therefore having a permanent job helped her to feel "more confident" and "settled" about going into the second year of teaching. She stated:

It takes a long time to get to know the people and feel comfortable to contribute and offer opinions. It takes a while to learn about your school and for your school to get to know you. Chris

Of the six who had not started the year in permanent positions, five had been appointed to long-term relieving positions and one was initially appointed for the first term. By the time of the Term Four interviews, two of these six had won permanent appointments, two had their long-term, relieving positions extended for another year, and two were “not sure what is happening about the job next year.” Only one of these people approached the teachers’ union to query her status, but did not pursue it because “she didn’t want to kick up too much of a fuss.”

Five of the six beginning teachers who were appointed to relieving positions at the beginning of the year talked about having being “stressed” or “worried” about their situation and the “extra pressure’ it put on them. The one who said they were not concerned had been “promised a job by the principal,” and did indeed gain a permanent position at the end of the year. For the other five, some of the stress was related to the extra work around applying for jobs when they were already “flat out teaching,” while for others there were also a feeling of “self-doubt.” One beginning teacher talked about being “really affected” by the uncertainty:

Not knowing about the job got difficult towards the end of last term because I thought I will have to get my CV together and that was yet another thing I have to do. And then I went through that inferior stage, thinking if I don’t get offered something, is it reflective of me or is it because there is nothing there? Nina

Three of these teachers talked at length about the process of being re-interviewed for jobs in the same school for the following year. In one case, eight internal and external applicants were being interviewed for one position. In the other two cases, positions were only open to internal applicants: one noted four beginning teachers going for three positions, while the other said that five beginning and experienced teachers in the school were applying for three positions. They talked about being “very stressed” about having to reapply and the “possibility of not having a job next year.” These new teachers said that they “didn’t know what was happening,” a situation that was especially stressful for the participant who said the process had “started at the end of the third term and had been going on for over a month.”

Stress was not the only emotion experienced by these participants when re-applying for jobs. They also talked about feeling disgruntled and “let down,” for example:

I feel let down because all my work has been up to standard and I haven't been late with anything. I think I deserve to stay and at least finish my year two, yet I went to the job interview and came out feeling as though I wasn't going to get the job with no idea why. Frances

Another talked about the whole process leaving her feeling disillusioned, even though she eventually won a permanent position in her school:

It would have been nice to have been respected as a current and possible future employee. The whole process was like being given chocolate and then being told it was poisoned. It left a really bitter taste in my mouth. Sam

The six participants who had been appointed to relieving positions at the beginning of the year believed that new teachers should be appointed to their first position for a minimum of two years. They talked about wanting to have a “feeling of security” when they first started teaching, rather than being “worried” about not having a job and being “distracted” from “teaching the children” because of having to reapply for one. They thought that it was critical that they spent at least their first two years, but preferably longer, teaching at the same school. As one commented:

I look back how far I have come in one year and know that I need at least two years in the same school. But it's so unsettling being in a fixed term position; being permanent would give so much more security. Nina

These participants believed that having to move to another school after their first year of teaching would be detrimental to their development as teachers. They saw that having to “start from scratch” again meant that time and energy that could have been used to “build on” what they had learned so far would be “wasted” on developing new relationships and getting to know the new school's routines and expectations. They talked about how it took “time to get a feel of what's going on in the school and to get used to how everything is done.”

Different schools have different philosophies and are run differently. It would be really unsettling to be learning a completely different situation in your second year of teaching. Robin

Summary

After nine months of teaching the beginning teachers in this study had become less stressed, more relaxed, and confident as teachers. However, the data also indicated that the six who were appointed to fixed term positions felt more stressed and distracted than those who had permanent jobs. Emotional and professional support from a range of people inside and outside their schools supported their transition to teaching and their development as teachers. Tutor teachers, other beginning teachers, and the children they taught were identified as playing key roles in supporting the learning and development of this group of new teachers. School related factors also appeared to influence beginning teacher development. A supportive and friendly school environment encouraged social and professional contact among staff and facilitated collegial relationships, which widened the beginning teachers' support networks and helped them become more confident in themselves as teachers. Increased confidence enabled them to contribute more to meetings and activities, which helped them feel part of the team. The way schools used the 0.2 beginning teacher time allowance to support professional development was a key factor in terms of enabling or limiting the development of these beginning teachers. The influence of school factors on the construction of their professional identities is considered along with other factors, in the following section.

Developing Teacher Identity

This section examines the factors that affected the transition and development of this group of 12 beginning teachers in terms of the participants' construction of themselves as first-year teachers. It focuses on the ways in which factors to do with participants' teacher preparation, their school, as well as their biographies and beliefs, influenced the development of their professional identities.

The Influence of School-Related Factors on Participants' Construction of Themselves as Teachers

As identified above, starting their first year of teaching was described by the majority of participants as being tough and stressful. They talked about “being on a steep learning curve,” and while they recognized that they were “just starting out,” they also worried about doing the right thing at the right time and admitted to being somewhat “overwhelmed” by the demands of the job and to a lack of confidence in coping with all the things that teachers had to do. One used the following metaphor to describe these feelings:

Like a dressmaker trying to make a garment for someone who keeps on changing, so you can't quite get the fit just right, and when you do, something else alters. You've got your sewing case, but maybe not all the right tools for the job, because you can't get everything to fit and get things to come together. Kathy

In contrast, by the end of the year, the participants saw themselves as being more relaxed, comfortable, and self confident as teachers. This shift from diffident novice to confident teacher was seen as being a “very gradual process.” Analysis of the data gathered over the participants' first year of teaching indicates that the ease or difficulty of this shift was influenced by the school context. The following sections discuss aspects of school-related factors identified previously in terms of their impact on participants' construction of themselves as teachers.

School atmosphere and dynamics

All 12 first-year teachers in this study talked about feeling stressed and lacking in confidence. Such emotions were most commonly, but not exclusively, experienced when they first started teaching. An important ingredient in terms of counteracting the potential of such negative emotions undermining the participants' construction of themselves as teachers was a positive, friendly, and supportive school environment. Key to such an environment was the manner in which the staff worked together and related to each other. These first-year teachers talked about the importance of feeling as though they “belonged” and were “part of a team” and the positive effect this had in terms of making them feel

more comfortable and confident interacting socially and professionally with their school colleagues.

The development of formal and informal collegial relationships contributed to these first-year teachers' construction of their professional identities in the following inter-related ways. Positive relationships with senior management, their tutor teacher, and other experienced, as well as beginning teachers, broadened and increased participants' access to the school and syndicate-related knowledge and support that they needed to navigate their way through context specific expectations, customs, and practices. A supportive environment meant that they were less likely to feel stupid, threatened, or judged when seeking advice and assistance, which helped them become more confident in accessing support. This, in turn, assisted them in becoming more active in terms of contributing to syndicate meetings and school events, which resulted in a greater sense of belonging, of being "part of the team." It is interesting to note that by the end of the year, six participants had taken on school-wide responsibilities such as coaching Saturday netball, teaching te reo throughout the senior school, organizing staff functions and school sports, and producing the end of year school concert. All six referred to how this extra-curricular involvement not only increased their self-confidence, but also that it helped them feel as though they were making a real contribution to their school.

As collegial relationships developed over the year, the first-year teachers felt that there was a change in the way they were perceived by other staff. They talked about Term Three, or after about six months of teaching, being a turning point in terms of their ideas being valued and listened to more and felt that this was because their colleagues stopped seeing them as beginning teachers. This perceived change in how the participants were viewed by others made them feel more accepted as teachers and contributed to their feelings of self-assurance. The increase in self-confidence and a sense of belonging contributed to a change in how they viewed themselves as teachers. The following statement made during a fourth term interview illustrates this:

I feel a lot more confident as a teacher now. I know how to do it. Chris

The effect of school atmosphere and dynamics on the participants' construction of themselves is perhaps best exemplified by Kathy in terms of how she experienced her work environment. Kathy taught a mixed year two and year three class and described herself as being "split in two" because she had to work across two syndicates: a junior syndicate where her tutor teacher was located, and a senior syndicate where she reported to the syndicate leader. In her first term interview she talked about being "pushed and pulled" between the two groups and described herself as a "misfit" because she didn't feel as though she "belonged" to either syndicate. She gave examples of being "missed out" of the syndicate meetings because she had either not been informed of them or because they ignored her when she did attend. Kathy talked about wanting to "fit in" but that she felt "constrained" and was "struggling" to "find out where my best place is, especially for support and guidance." She felt that the "school doesn't really work together" and thought that beginning teachers were viewed as "the lowest sort of order in terms of most things." These experiences and emotions contributed to Kathy viewing herself as a somewhat isolated and anxious beginning teacher.

By Term Four, however, Kathy had become more self-assured as a teacher - a change she partly attributed to the way her relationships with other teachers had developed over the year, which had given her the confidence to become "more involved" in school and syndicate events. Increased involvement led to Kathy being given more syndicate responsibilities, which in turn improved her self-confidence, as well as increased her sense of "belonging." She also described herself as becoming more "assertive" in terms of deciding "what's important and what's not important" and more confident in "speaking up" for herself. Kathy felt that the other reason for the change in the way she saw herself and others saw her was related to the resolution of employment issues. Kathy had believed that she was appointed to a permanent position, but senior staff held that she was a Long Term Reliever for the year. Her permanent employment status had been confirmed in Term Three and she talked about how this had coincided with what she perceived to be a "shift" in staff attitudes in terms of becoming more "accepted" by her colleagues. It appears that Kathy's confirmed permanent status also contributed to a change in how she viewed herself and how she interacted

with colleagues. She felt that she had become more assertive “because I am here to stay so I’ll vocalize my ideas a bit more and expect to be listened to.”

Employment issues were a flash point in terms of emotions for six of the 12 beginning teachers who had not been appointed to permanent positions at the beginning of their first year of teaching, especially for three of these six who had to re-apply and compete for positions in the same school for the following year. They talked about being “really affected” and “stressed” by the uncertainty of their situation as well as feeling “let down” and “not feeling respected” as members of the school community. They were also troubled by feelings of “self-doubt” about themselves as teachers. In addition to impacting on their confidence as teachers, these negative emotions affected how they viewed their school environment, especially their relationships with senior staff. As one commented:

It just destroys your trust. You can have appraisals every month and you get told that everything is fine and everything is good. But then you feel really let down because you have to reapply and go for an interview. It makes you feel pathetic. Frances

The experiences of the 12 first-year teachers in this study indicate the influence of their schools’ atmosphere and dynamics on their growth as teachers. The other major school-associated factor that affected participants’ construction of themselves as teachers was related to the approach taken to beginning teacher professional development.

Professional development and learning

The findings outlined previously show that the school’s approach to professional development, particularly in terms of beginning teacher advice and guidance, was a critical factor in terms of supporting participants’ growth as teachers. A key aspect of this was these first-year teachers’ relationships with the colleagues with whom they worked most closely, namely their tutor teacher and other teachers in their syndicate.

At the beginning of the year, all the first-year teachers in this study viewed the formal and informal support provided by their tutor teachers as being critical to

both their development and construction of themselves as teachers. The reassurance given by their tutor teachers during the early period of anxiety and uncertainty was particularly appreciated as the following comment exemplifies:

A lot of the feedback is really affirming, so it makes me feel like I am doing well and makes me want to carry on working hard. Also, there's always feed-forward as well, like saying what else I need to do. Toni

Tutor teacher behaviour in terms of providing positive and affirming feedback on the appearance of participants' classrooms and their performance as teachers gave them a sense of self-confidence as beginning teachers. The approachability and availability of their tutor teachers was also important, as this reinforced the participants' feeling of being valued, albeit new, members of the school community. Ease of access to their tutor teachers also enabled the participants to address any questions or issues quickly, "before they became problems," and helped them come to grips with school expectations, requirements, and timelines. As one commented:

My tutor teacher has been amazing. She has helped me with resources and I talk with her a lot about all kinds of school things. She has been in my class a fair bit over the last few weeks and has written a progress report on how I am going. It's really encouraging. Robin

After nine months of teaching, the relationship between the first-year teachers and their tutor teachers had become more collegial, which one described as being "less of a give-take and more like a give-give." The participants recognized that their tutor teachers had played a critical role in providing them with the practical and emotional support that helped them develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence as teachers, as well as helping them adjust to the role of the teacher, particularly in terms of their schools' customs and practices. However, they also observed that their relationships with the other teachers in their syndicate had increased in importance as the year progressed. They talked about bonding with and becoming friends with people in their syndicate. This appeared to have three major, but connected, spin-offs in relation to their development as teachers. Not only did participants value the opportunity to work alongside and learn from experienced teachers, but also as relationships developed over time they came to feel more included and part of their team. This contributed to their feelings of

self-confidence as teachers, which in turn enabled them to become more active in terms of contributing ideas and asking questions. The more these first year teachers participated in formal and informal syndicate team activities, the more included they felt, which resulted in them feeling more confident about sharing their resources and ideas. The development of reciprocal relationships on both personal and professional levels assisted the participants to consider themselves as teachers who could confidently contribute ideas and resources to and alongside other members of their syndicate team. As one participant commented in her fourth term interview:

At the start of the year I was really nervous and got a lot of support from my Tutor Teacher. But now I am more comfortable. I am more familiar with the other staff in the syndicate so it's like I am part of the team now. I am far more involved than I was in Term One and people treat me differently. It's like you become part of the community. Liz

Robin's experience illustrates the effect tutor teacher and syndicate relationships have on beginning teacher professional development and construction of teacher identity. Robin was appointed to a one-year relieving position. Although she received "lots of positive feedback" from her tutor teachers and other teachers when she started teaching, she dismissed this as being "just positive reinforcement to keep me going" because she believed that it was hard for others to know "how I am really going because they are not in the class with me all the time." At the beginning of the year, Robin talked positively about the school being "progressive" and "big on professional development" but also admitted to being a bit "overwhelmed" by what she thought was a "bit too much professional development at the moment," on top of the day-to-day demands of the job and observed that she "didn't like coming to work that much." In her fourth term interview, Robin talked enthusiastically about teaching and her development and confidence as a teacher. She attributed her change in attitude mainly to her new tutor teacher who she described as "a breath of fresh air" in terms of her ideas and how she teaches and also because of the way she "can sit down and bounce things off her." Robin also talked about how working with the new tutor teacher was "refreshing" because she encouraged her to "be more confident in being herself" and to take risks with her teaching in terms of trying out new ways of doing things - of "giving things a go." This attitude was reinforced by feedback from senior

staff, as Robin commented, “it definitely makes me feel better about what I am doing when the principal and the deputy principal say positive things to you because they are pretty high up in the chain of things.” Robin believed that her increased participation in syndicate activities was tied to the growth in her self-confidence and that these factors not only helped her to get to know the people in her syndicate better but also helped them get to know her. This resulted in her being viewed differently by other teachers in that she “sort of moved from new beginning teacher to being part of the group.” Robin also believed that her new tutor teacher, who was a senior staff member, helped facilitate this change through acting as an advocate when she talked to the other teachers in the syndicate, as well as senior management, about the “good things that are going on in my classroom.”

In summary, the data indicate that school factors helped or hindered this group of 12 beginning teachers’ professional growth in relation to their construction of themselves as teachers. The following parts identify the influence of biography on participants’ career choice, their beliefs about teaching and learning, and their construction of themselves as a teacher.

Biography and Beliefs

The influence of biography

Six of the 12 first year teachers in this study had relatives who were teachers, while another two had close family who were teacher librarians. Of the six who had teachers in their immediate family, one had a mother working in early childhood and a father who was a secondary teacher, two had aunts who were primary teachers, and one had an uncle who had recently retired as a primary principal. One of the participants had a stepsister who was a secondary teacher, while another’s mother and grandfather were primary teachers. Four of the eight participants who had family connections to teaching also commented that prior to beginning their teacher preparation programme, they had close friendships with people who were teachers. Of the four participants who had had no family connections to teaching, three talked about long-standing friendships with teachers. Four of the 12 teachers in this group had children of their own. Only

one participant said s/he had no relatives or friends who were teachers or had any children.

The data indicated that there were three main influences on this group of first year teachers with regards to their choice of teaching as a career. Firstly, with regard to family, five out of the eight participants who had close relatives who were teachers or teacher librarians, specifically referred to family as being a key factor in their determining to become teachers themselves. One commented that she had been “encouraged to go teaching” by an aunt, while another talked about growing up in a teaching household and thought it was an “attractive lifestyle” that “seemed to be lots of fun” even though “it takes over your life.” A third stated that “I got to the seventh form and didn’t know what I was going to do and Mum was a teacher so I went with that” but added that she got her “passion for teaching” from her pre-service programme and that this “passion has been strengthened by teaching” this year. Two of these five participants talked about how their mothers had wanted to be teachers but didn’t complete their training and that one of the reasons they went teaching was because, in the words of one participant, “I wanted to do it for her.” One of the first-year teachers who had no teacher relatives nevertheless saw her family as having a major influence on her career choice because “my parents were always making negative comments about children and I wanted to show them that I could make a difference.”

Past teachers and having their own children were the two other main influences identified by participants as impacting on their decision to become primary teachers. Six of the 12 participants commented on the teachers they had experienced at school. Three of them talked about being “inspired” by teachers who had taught them and who they viewed as “role models.” Two of the six were explicit about the role of previous teachers in their career decision. For example:

I always wanted to be a teacher. My teachers believed in me and helped me and I wanted to do the same. Lee

A third appeared to understand this in retrospect:

Thinking about it now, I think that some of my past teachers influenced me without me realizing it. Liz

Four of the participants had school-age children of their own and, for two of them, going teaching was related to having children because “from a Mum’s perspective, it would be a good career.” However, these two also talked about going teaching as something they “always wanted to do.” For example:

When I left school many moons ago, I applied for Teachers’ Training College and got accepted but then decided I wasn’t ready as a seventeen-year-old. It was something I shelved until I had children of my own and got involved when they started school. It kind of awakened what I originally wanted to do. Kathy

The first-year teacher in this study who had no family or close friends as teachers, or children of their own, was also the only participant who did not express strong reasons to become a teacher:

I like working with people and love learning myself, but, to be honest, I am not really sure I wanted to go teaching. One of my teachers at secondary said I would be an amazing teacher and I thought why not and if it doesn’t work out I will have a degree at the end of it and I can take it all over the world and travel with it and there’s plenty of other things I can still do. Robin

The 12 people in this study all thought about teaching as a career when they were still at school but differed in terms of when they actually decided to go teaching. Five of them talked about deciding to go teaching at primary school because they “loved primary school” or “had really good teachers” that “inspired them” and three of these five began their teacher education programme immediately after leaving secondary school. The other two had “always thought they might become teachers” but did other things before starting their teacher preparation programme: one started after her youngest child turned five and the other after she had done some traveling overseas because “I wanted a break from study after secondary school.”

Seven of the first-year teachers said that they had decided to go teaching while at secondary school. Two “left school thinking about teaching,” one decided after doing an introduction to teaching course in the sixth form, and another decided in

the seventh form because she “didn’t know what else to do.” A further three had decided to go teaching while at secondary school, but entered their teacher preparation programme after having children.

Beliefs about children and learning

Seven of the 12 beginning teachers said that they “did not know anything” or “didn’t have any idea” in terms of beliefs about children and how they learn, prior to their teacher preparation programme. Of the five who did have views about this, one talked about “knowing a bit of Piaget” through doing psychology in secondary school, while the other four contextualized their comments in terms of having children of their own. For example:

I thought that children were individuals and that they needed specific things to help them learn. I’ve got two children of my own. Mary

One of the four with children talked about her son as being “pretty bright” and described herself as being “naive” in thinking that “kids would automatically learn unless they had something wrong with them.”

All of the first-year teachers discussed how their teacher preparation programme had developed their beliefs about children and their learning. For example:

Before I started I thought that if kids sat there and listened to you and did what they were told, then they would learn. But then I realized that if I was on practicum and taught something and realized that a kid hasn’t picked it up, you think, what’s wrong with me, what haven’t they understood? At college, I realized that all the kids had different needs and need different strategies to get them to learn. Toni

These first-year teachers referred to theorists such as Vygotsky and concepts like constructivism and talked about using strategies like modeling and co-operative learning to “facilitate” children’s learning. They also observed that their first year of teaching had “reinforced” and “extended” their beliefs about children and how they learned in two major areas. Each of the 12 participants talked about the importance of “really getting to know the children” in terms of their “culture,” “family,” “interests,” “talents,” and learning “strengths and needs.” For example:

I think it's really important to be aware of how different children learn and their backgrounds and what each one brings to the classroom and how that affects their learning. Sam

The second and related aspect they gained from their preparation programme was the understanding of how they, as teachers, needed to know “how each of the kids in my class learns best” in order to “develop the best learning programme” for “the huge range of children in the class.” As one commented:

I didn't realize that there were so many different ways that kids could learn. I thought you went into the classroom and told them what to do and they went away and did it. I didn't realize that there were so many different stages to learning. From the programme, I learned about the different ways children learned and when I went teaching I learnt that not all kids respond to things in the same way. Some kids really seem to enjoy and be able to cope with sitting down at their desk quietly and doing what they need to do. Some students need to talk to others around them. It's really pointed out to me that students do have different needs and I try to take account of that in my teaching. Chris

The data indicated that, for the majority of participants, understandings about children and how they learned were developed through their pre-service programme and reinforced and extended through their first year of teaching. This contrasts with participants' beliefs about teachers and teaching, which is explored next.

Beliefs about teachers and teaching

Eleven of the 12 teachers in this study talked about the ideas that they held about teachers and teaching before starting their teacher preparation programme. Seven of these referred to teachers who had taught them when expressing their beliefs about teachers and teaching. For example:

I thought it was important that kids like you. I always remember the teachers I didn't like and the ones I did like. I liked the teachers who knew what the kids were into – what books we read and what TV we watched. I think it's important to stay young in your outlook and be interested in what the kids are doing. Sally

Two talked about their memories of school as being “behaviourist” with the teacher “up front” and in control and that it was “nice to see how things had

changed.” A further two beginning teachers talked about their beliefs being “based on family experiences” of having parents as teachers. One could not recall any beliefs about teachers or teaching prior to entering the programme.

Before graduating from their teacher preparation programme, the 12 participants had clear ideas about the kind of teacher they wanted to be. They all expressed the desire to “make a difference” to the children they taught, with seven commenting specifically about wanting to “impact positively on children’s lives” and to have an “influence on children in terms of their growth and learning.” They thought that it was important to get to know their children “really well on a personal level,” to be “kind and supportive,” and to “have fun so that the kids will enjoy learning.” As one first year teacher remarked:

I want to support and scaffold the children’s intellectual and emotional growth, and through their engagement and enjoyment in my programme, see the children blossom and grow. Kathy

Three participants also talked about the importance of connecting not only with the children but also with other members of the school community. Two wanted to be “approachable” and “friendly” to “both the children and their families,” while the third commented that:

I want to be someone who is trustworthy so that the parents, children, and colleagues can count on me. Mary

When interviewed in their first term of teaching, the participants’ had not changed their fundamental beliefs about teachers and teaching, although there were variations in terms of how closely they felt their beliefs matched their practice. Seven of the 12 first-year teachers believed that there was a fairly close match between their beliefs and actions although they also thought that they “still had a way to go.” They commented that they felt that they were “getting there” and “growing into it” and gave examples of how they were endeavouring to get their actions and beliefs to correspond. For example:

My philosophy is still a lot the same as I wrote at college. I don’t think my philosophy is idealistic.... I think it does match what I am doing. Its focus is on life-long learning, so encouraging students to become responsible

and independent learners is important. That's why I do a lot of group work and co-operative learning. I also think it's critical to involve the parents which is why I write notes to parents in the kids homework notebooks and parents can write back to me too. Toni

Three of the 12 first-year teachers felt that while their beliefs about teaching "still held true" to what they felt prior to graduating, they also thought that they had "changed since going teaching." All three talked about how they now prioritized "the social side" and "developed the right climate" through "developing relationships" with the children so that "you really know them as individuals" including "their backgrounds and what each one brings to the classroom." For example:

Developing relationships with the kids has been really important to me - also treating them as individuals. I think the social side has to be addressed before the academic. Kids have to be happy and motivated to be here and want to come to school every day, because if they are troubled socially, it's going to affect their learning. Lee

One talked about her beliefs "changing as time went on," while at the same time holding to her fundamental view about the need "to make them happy":

I still believe that you have to put the kids right up front - you have to make them happy because they are not going to learn unless they are happy. At the beginning it was getting a positive environment...and now I want to challenge the kids and push them as far as I can. Nina

Two beginning teachers felt that there was a mismatch between their beliefs and their practice. For one, this mismatch was due to how and when the school engaged in planning for teaching:

I believe in empowering the kids by having them involved in the planning, implementation, assessment, and evaluation of the programme. I haven't been able to do that yet because the planning was done last year and I wasn't here. It seems that the kids have no say and I want to give them more responsibility. Mel

For the other, the mismatch between beliefs and practice was because of the conflicting demands and realities of the job:

I believe that a teacher should be kind and supportive but the first few weeks of teaching has affected this a bit. Being kind means you have to be patient, but it's hard to be patient all the time. For example, in the morning before school it's a good time to listen to the kids and get to know them. I do that, but then I have to say enough is enough, because they talk and talk and I have to get on with getting things ready. Robin

Nine months into their first year of teaching all 12 participants still adhered, at the most fundamental level, to the beliefs about teaching that they had expressed prior to graduating from their pre-service programme and in their first few weeks of teaching. Four of the first-year teachers in this study commented that, while their beliefs about teaching had not changed over the year, they felt that there was now a much closer match between their beliefs and their practice. For example:

I still believe it's about building a community of learners and an environment where the children feel safe to take risks with their learning and become independent. I now know that as a teacher I have the power to set the tone in my classroom. I also still believe in wanting to make a difference to children but now I really listen to what they say and look at how they demonstrate their learning and understanding in their work so that I can really target kids' specific needs. Kathy

However, as was the situation in Term One, many of the participants had also modified their beliefs. Five had become more pragmatic in terms of their beliefs about teaching. They talked about becoming "more realistic" and being more able to "put up with stuff" and "put things into perspective more" compared to the beginning of the year. As one commented:

I know a lot more about teaching and about people and what's going on in relationships. I have become wiser and learnt to pace myself and not take things personally. Lee

For two the change was around workload as they now believed that they had "learnt not to take too much on" and that "I can't and don't have to do everything." For another two, the change was to do with relationships, with one commenting that "I now feel it's OK not to get along with everyone; sometimes it's just not possible," while the other thought that "not every problem needs to be fixed and you can't expect to have good relationships with everyone." The fifth

participant still believed in “empowerment” but also now put a greater emphasis on “behaviour management and getting routines to work.”

Three of the 12 beginning teachers commented that while their philosophy of teaching “still held true,” it had also “shifted” in terms of the influence of teacher behaviour on children’s learning. Two commented about new understandings about the influence of teacher attitudes on practice. One talked about this in relation to the children. For example:

Sometimes there are things that you just have to get through and some things are really boring. Before I used to say to the kids, “lets get it over and done with,” but now I realize that it’s all in the way you present it. At the end of Term Three, I realized that it was up to the teacher’s attitude as to whether or not the kids enjoy the lesson or not. I now know that I can make the lessons enjoyable and get the kids learning even if it’s something I don’t think is that exciting. Chris

The other linked attitude to her work as a teacher, believing that:

It’s important to stay true to your passions and beliefs. I have learnt that teaching is more enjoyable when it is something you enjoy. Robin

The third commented on the importance of teacher attitude on children’s behaviour:

I still believe that the key is having positive relationships with the children because then they will take risks and become more independent as learners. It’s about getting to know each kid academically and socially. But I also came to realize that the attitude I had was often reflected in them. If I was negative about their work then they had a kind of negative attitude towards it as well. I realized that if I say neat things about them then they work harder. Toni

Beliefs about themselves as teachers

By the end of their first year of teaching all 12 participants held positive views of themselves as teachers. These judgments were made against two types of measures: the beliefs that they had about an ‘ideal teacher’ and their impact on the children they taught.

In terms of an ideal teacher, all the beginning teachers described qualities and attributes of what they believed was a good teacher, rather than portraying an idealized image. While five explicitly referred to previous teachers when describing these qualities, all 12 participants used similar words for the attributes of a good teacher. They talked about the importance of being the type of teacher that can “respond to children” on an “emotional level as well as a teaching level” and be “open” and “approachable.” As one commented:

I don't really have an ideal image but I believe that teachers should be warm, caring, and friendly. Robin

Nine months into their first year of teaching, the teachers in this study believed that they displayed the qualities which they perceived as relating to being a good teacher and that their pupils “enjoyed” and “responded to them” as teachers. They also talked about how their experience as teachers had strengthened their views about there not being such a thing as an ideal teacher. As one stated:

Teaching has reinforced my beliefs that one size does not fit all. I always thought that teachers could be very different but still be effective. I had teachers who were so different and yet I was successful with different styles so I don't think that there is one way a teacher should be or that there is a perfect teacher. I believe that there isn't a standard way to do things but lots of ways and it's a matter of finding the best fit with the kids in your class. Mary

With regard to the second measure, all 12 participants commented on the “progress” they had made over the year and thought that they were “able to teach” and were “doing a good job.” These opinions were always framed in relation to the children in their class. For example:

It's really satisfying to see the kids progressing and knowing that you had a part to do with that. Toni

All the first-year teachers in this study talked about “making a difference,” both in terms of their pupils' attitude to learning and to their academic progress. They got “satisfaction” from “seeing how well the kids were doing” and knew that they were learning “because I can see the results.” They also talked about how their

pupils were “enthusiastic” and “loved coming to school.” As one participant commented:

I am so happy with them and they are so happy with themselves and it's great seeing the kids learning and seeing them go up the levels. Sally

While these beginning teachers held positive views of themselves as teachers, they also were “looking forward to being over” their first year of teaching and having “a year's experience” behind them. They felt that they “still had a long way to go” and were looking forward to their second year of teaching and making a “fresh start,” “doing it all over again,” and “doing it better.” As one remarked:

I am happy with what I have done so far but I can't wait in some ways for next year so that I can actually start improving what I am doing and changing things that didn't work so well this year. Nina

Looking to the future

As they came to the end of their first year of teaching, all of the participants retained their commitment to making a difference to children. They had successfully come through a tough year of professional challenges, with six also experiencing significant life changes including getting divorced, married, engaged, and moving house. Eleven thought that they had “definitely made the right decision” and would still be in teaching five years hence. One who had been ambivalent about becoming a teacher commented that, while her first year of teaching had confirmed her desire to work with children, she thought that she would rather do this as a psychologist than a teacher. In terms of career aspirations, most would like to become syndicate leader and most indicated that they wanted to be associate teachers in order to work with student teachers. Seven teachers were contemplating further postgraduate study, although not in the near future. Five indicated that they intended to travel overseas in the next five years, but believed that they would return to teaching as that was their passion.

Summary

The participant data indicate that their biographies had a powerful influence on this group of 12 first-year teachers in terms of their choice of teaching as a career.

The majority identified past teachers and family who were, or wanted to be, teachers as being key people in determining their career choice, while a third talked about having their own children in relation to their decision to become teachers.

In terms of their beliefs, the data indicated that most of these beginning teachers had not entered their teacher preparation programme with strong beliefs about children and learning. These beliefs were developed during their programme and enhanced during their first year of teaching. In contrast, 11 of the 12 participants recalled entering their teacher preparation programme holding beliefs about teachers and teaching which had been influenced by previous teachers, family, and their schooling experiences. All the participants had developed clearly articulated philosophies of teaching during their teacher preparation programme and appeared to “hold true” to their beliefs over their first year of teaching. They also admitted, however, that while their beliefs had not changed fundamentally, there had been shifts in emphasis and in terms of how closely they matched with their practice.

By the end of their first year of teaching all these beginning teachers held positive views of themselves as developing teachers. They judged themselves as having the ‘right’ qualities and attributes to enable their pupils to respond positively to them as teachers. They also believed that they had “made a difference” in terms of their pupils’ attitude to learning as well as their academic progress. All but one intended to be still teaching in five years time and over half were contemplating postgraduate study in the future.

This chapter presented an analysis of the data that illustrated the patterns of transition and development that 12 primary teachers underwent during their first year of teaching; the factors that did or did not support their development and learning; and how their experiences influenced the way they constructed themselves as teachers. The following chapter, Chapter Five, presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the key research questions that shaped this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Using a qualitative approach, this longitudinal study investigated the first-year teaching experiences of 12 beginning teachers in 11 Auckland primary schools. The intention was to gain a better understanding of the process of transition and development that beginning teachers undergo over their first year of teaching through exploring their perceptions on an ongoing basis.

Data derived from interviews and surveys were analyzed to identify the factors that influenced the teachers' professional learning during their first year of teaching. Of particular interest was an understanding of how the pre-service teacher education programmes, the contextual features of the school, and their own beliefs and biographies influenced and impacted on their transition to teaching and their development as beginning teachers.

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the key research questions that shaped this study. The teachers' accounts provided a rich source of information about their beginning-to-teach experiences. Factors found to have influenced the transition, learning, and development of this group of beginning teachers are critiqued within the context of existing literature. The following chapter discusses the limitations of this study, considers implications for practice, and identifies issues that could be examined through further research.

Patterns of Transition from Student Teacher to First Year Teacher

The findings of this study paint a complex picture of the relationship between preparation and practice and the effect of this on participants' transition to teaching. In terms of perceptions, all 12 beginning teachers held generally positive views about the way their teacher education programme had prepared them for teaching. These beliefs were articulated prior to graduating from their teacher

education programme and maintained throughout their first year of teaching. Such views are supported by other New Zealand research, which reports comparatively high levels of beginning teacher satisfaction with their pre-service teacher education programmes (Cameron & Baker, 2004).

However, in spite of holding such positive perceptions, 11 of the 12 beginning teachers in this study experienced considerable stress and ‘culture shock’ when they first started to teach. Stress related to “transition shock” or “practice shock” when moving from the teacher education setting to the everyday realities of the classroom is well documented in the literature (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004; Corcoran, 1981; Grudnoff & Tuck, 2005; Lang, 2001; Stokking, Leenders, de Jong, & van Tartwijk 2003), and borne out in the findings of this study. This study indicates that “transition shock” was mainly related to a mismatch between the expectations that the participants developed through their pre-service programme and what they actually experienced when they first started teaching. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the coursework and practicum components of their teacher preparation programme had different effects in terms of facilitating the shift from being a student to becoming a teacher. This is perhaps not surprising given that these two components offer distinct occasions and different opportunities for learning to teach (Grossman & Richert, 1988). What is of interest are the differences in terms of impact that the coursework and practicum components had on the first year teachers’ transition and adjustment to teaching.

The Influence of Coursework

At the end of their first year of teaching half of the first year teachers in this study were “applying what they learnt at college” and “referring back to college resources for ideas,” which challenges the contention that ideas developed during pre-service teacher education are “washed out” by the real world of school (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). The findings identified three major aspects of coursework as being most helpful to the beginning teachers. Curriculum courses,

along with related planning, teaching, and assessment knowledge and skills, were consistently identified as being the most useful to these beginning teachers. This is not surprising given that a major cause of teacher satisfaction is the “core business” aspects of teaching connected with helping children to learn and experience success (Scott & Dinham, 1999).

Particularly highly-rated were curriculum courses that were “practical” in terms of providing “resources and ideas to use in the classroom.” This corresponds with Ball’s (2000) comments on the importance of preparing teachers who have “usable content knowledge” in order to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice. The experiences of 11 of the 12 beginning teachers who ranked their mathematics curriculum courses as being the most useful to them as beginning teachers provides further evidence on the importance of matching what is experienced in teacher preparation programmes with what is happening in schools. All 11 were teaching in schools that were part of the numeracy project - a major New Zealand Ministry of Education teacher professional development initiative aimed at increasing teacher understanding and competence in teaching numeracy to primary children. The content of the participants’ mathematics courses paralleled the content and approach of the numeracy project and the benefits of this linkage from the viewpoint of the beginning teachers was that they “felt up-to-date” and confirmed that “what we did at college does happen out here.” The one participant who held a contrary view regarding the usefulness of the mathematics courses to them as a first year teacher was in a school that was not part of the numeracy project. This participant did not feel confident in teaching mathematics, which reinforces the importance of matching teacher preparation with what happens in practice.

The second aspect of coursework that was identified as being useful to the beginning teachers was educational theory. Prior to graduating, five of the 12 participants identified educational theory as being critical to influencing their “effectiveness in the classroom,” particularly in terms of “improving children’s learning,” although only three identified this as being very useful once they were teaching. One of these was Sam, who had changed her perception regarding the relevance of theory. Prior to graduating and when starting teaching, Sam had

asserted that educational theory was “interesting, but not useful in the classroom” but, by the end of the year, perceived it to be helpful when working with the children. This change appeared to relate partly to what was happening in the school. The principal had introduced a professional development focus to staff meetings that investigated theories of learning and Sam talked about feeling positive about the knowledge she had gained from her preparation programme in this area and how it made her “feel good about being able to contribute to the staff meetings.” While participants were unable to clearly explain how educational theory was useful to them as beginning teachers, it would be interesting to see what their responses were over a longer period of time. Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) put forward the idea of a ‘latency period’ when teachers first start teaching, during which workload and school requirements take priority over the practices and ideas developed during teacher preparation. It is, however, worth noting that the participants’ views of reflection contradict this concept.

Reflection is the third aspect of the coursework component of the preparation programme identified as assisting the beginning teachers’ transition and adjustment to teaching. Reflection is both a course and a philosophical underpinning of the pre-service programme undertaken by the beginning teachers. It assumes an inquiry approach to learning and teaching which positions teaching in Lampert’s (1998) terms as a “thinking practice,” and one, which requires the integration of reasoning and knowing with action. The change in perceptions regarding the usefulness of reflection to practice is interesting. Prior to graduating none of the participants identified reflection as being useful to them, although by the first-term half of them believed that “although they didn’t like it at college,” their skills of reflection had helped their transition because it enabled them to “step back” from what they were doing and think about what they could do differently. The teachers’ engagement in reflective practice and their conviction of its usefulness to them in terms of assisting their professional learning was maintained over their first year of teaching - a situation that supports some writers’ position that reflection is a necessary condition for learning and professional development (Zeichner, 1982; Schon, 1987; Korthagen, 1992; Freese, 1999).

In summary, this study found that beginning teachers identified three broad aspects of their teacher preparation coursework as being most helpful in assisting their transition from student to teacher, although there was no universal agreement about which of the three aspects were most useful. However, in spite of rating their pre-service training as being “invaluable in preparing us for this,” the study also found that their preparation programme did not fully prepare the new teachers for the “transition shock” that they experienced when first starting to teach. The difficulties they encountered appeared to relate mainly to a disparity in expectations developed from their practicums and what they confronted as beginning teachers.

The Practicum Effect

Although this study does not support research showing teachers consistently deny the influence of their formal coursework and assert the primacy of field experiences in terms of their learning about teaching (Lortie, 1975; Lanier & Little, 1986), it is consistent with New Zealand studies that rate practicum as being a crucial component of the pre-service programme (Cameron et al., 2006; Lind, 2004; Renwick, 2001). In the current study, however, while the findings show that practicum was consistently viewed as being very important and critical to their preparation and practice as teachers, they also reveal a mismatch between student practicum experiences and the realities of being a beginning teacher. The impact of this mismatch was primarily restricted to the beginning of the year and impacted on participants’ transition to teaching in two main areas.

The first area is related to stress experienced at the beginning of the year. The difficult transition from student to teacher for the majority of participants was mainly because they did not fully comprehend what starting off the year entailed. These novice teachers did not really know how to set up their classroom nor did they realize how long and how much effort it took to establish routines and behaviour management strategies nor how to introduce curriculum programmes and set up curriculum groupings. The structure of their compulsory practicum placements meant that they had not been in schools at the start of the year to observe teachers setting up their classrooms and start teaching. One beginning

teacher expressed the difference as, “on practicum everything is set up, the routines are established and you pretty much have to copy it,” compared to teaching, “when it is your job to set up everything from day one.” Those that had undertaken a voluntary beginning of the year practicum placement were convinced that it gave them a better understanding of what was required in terms of starting the year, although they too experienced stress. All the beginning teachers advocated for a change in the practicum structure to introduce a beginning of the year placement so that students could “focus on what you actually need to do to set everything up for your first few weeks of teaching.”

The second area where there was a mismatch between expectation and reality was related to the size and scope of the job of teaching. The practicums primarily provided opportunities for practicing and developing their skills and understandings about learning and teaching in the context of the classroom. As beginning teachers, however, their context of operation extended beyond themselves and their own classroom. The number of syndicate and staff meetings that they were required to attend after school was a surprise to them, as was the work that was related to those meetings. They were also ‘shocked’ at the amount of record keeping and ‘paper work’ that was required of them as teachers - a finding that is consistent with other New Zealand studies (Grudnoff & Tuck, 2005; Kane & Mallon, 2006; Lang, 2002). The new teachers in this study described the workload as being continual and full on with none of the let-up that they experienced on practicum. Their practicum experiences had not exposed the full range of work and responsibilities in which their associate teachers were engaged, sometimes because their associate shielded them by not requiring them to engage in the out-of-classroom activities. The consequence, however, for these beginning teachers was an unrealistic expectation and shock at the range and amount of work entailed in teaching. They felt that teaching had taken over their lives. They were constantly tired, not only because of their classroom and school responsibilities, but also because they constantly thought of teaching and were not able to shut off, even at home. This was partly related to the feelings of responsibility they had as teachers compared to when they were students on practicum, where they were working under an associate teacher. As teachers they

now felt fully responsible for the achievement and well-being of the children in their class and worried more about the children because of this responsibility.

While this research highlights a mismatch between participants' practicum expectations and their beginning-to-teach experiences, it is questionable whether practicum can ever completely bridge this practice-reality gap (Loughran, Brown, & Doecke, 2001; Northfield & Gunstone, 1997; Renwick, 2001). In New Zealand, student teachers are required by the Teachers Council to be supervised by registered teachers and teacher preparation programme assessment requires student teachers' teaching performance to be observed and judged. This means that a student teacher can never be exposed to all the challenges and 'unknowns' that they will encounter when they first start teaching. It is also argued (Kestner, 1994) that the "transition shock" from student to teacher is particularly acute because of the abruptness with which full responsibility is assumed. Unlike other professions where responsibility is assumed gradually, beginning teachers immediately take on the same role responsibilities that they will have as experienced teachers. However, while recognizing these constraints, the findings of this study do suggest that the way practicum is structured and what students are required to focus on could be better adapted to help smooth the transition from student to teacher.

Practicum reorganization may not in itself be sufficient. Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, and Le Cornu (2007, p. 155) argue that the way practicum is conceptualized and organized could be very different to how it could have been for the teachers that students work with in their practicum schools. They suggest that the focus in many preparation programmes has shifted from viewing practicum as a site for students to implement curriculum knowledge and practice teaching skills and techniques, to one where student teachers are both teachers and learners. Participants in the current study commented on how everything was 'set up' on practicum and talked about 'copying' their associates, which suggests that supervising teachers may have held traditional views of practicum. Such views could affect student teachers' opportunities to come to grips with the scope and complexity of teaching, and impact on their transition to teaching. This suggests that providers need to work closely with their practicum schools and teachers to

enable awareness and understanding of the purposes of practicum as it relates to their specific programme aims. In New Zealand, this could be particularly difficult to do in some areas. For example, in Auckland, the competition for practicum placements is such that many primary schools take student teachers from multiple providers throughout New Zealand. As teacher education providers have different approaches to teacher preparation, this situation must be very confusing for schools, associates, and student teachers.

In addition to difficulties arising from disparities between practicum and practice, this study also identified differences that assisted the beginning teachers' transition and adjustment to teaching. They liked feeling part of a community of practice and this sense of "belonging" gave them a confidence as a teacher that was lacking when they were a student on practicum and felt as though they were "on the outer." Getting to know the school staff and feeling part of a team made them feel more respected by their colleagues which led to them feeling more at ease and more confident. As teachers, they believed they had "automatic respect" and so were treated differently by the children and their parents. They no longer felt ignored as they sometimes did with other teachers and parents when on practicum. The beginning teachers appreciated having the time to develop relationships with the children, of really getting to know them as learners, and being able to relax and have fun with them. They enjoyed the sense of autonomy they now had compared to when they were on practicum. They liked the freedom of being themselves and making their own decisions rather than "copying" their associate teacher. They also appreciated having their own classroom and not being constantly "under a magnifying glass" and "feeling nervous" because someone was constantly observing and judging them. The autonomy they now felt as teachers gave them greater confidence to change teaching plans, experiment, make mistakes, and "improve things yourself without feeling really pressured like on practicum."

Summary

The beginning teachers in this study felt that their pre-service teacher education programme had generally prepared them well for teaching. This finding does not support the criticism that teacher education programmes suffer from a lack of

practical relevance (Barone, Berliner, Blanchard, Casanova, & McGowan, 1996). The findings do align with research that shows that moving from “being prepared” to full-time teaching is challenging and difficult (Gold, 1996; Hulin-Austen, Odell, Ishler, Kay, & Edelfelt, 1989; Veenman, 1984). Some authors argue that preparation will be inevitably inadequate (Northfield & Gunstone, 1997) as pre-service programmes cannot create or sustain an environment that genuinely equates with the reality of full-time teaching (Loughran, Brown, & Droecke, 2001).

However, the concerns around teacher education programmes not adequately preparing students for the complexity of the teaching (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Reynolds, 1995) should be acknowledged. The findings in this study suggest that the practicum components of teacher preparation programmes, as well as providers’ relationships with schools, need to be examined to ensure that practicum is constructed and organized to give student teachers optimum opportunities to develop realistic expectations and appropriate knowledge, skills, and understandings in order to minimize “transition shock” (Corcoran, 1981) when starting to teach. This is an area that would benefit from further research. Despite the importance accorded to practicum by student teachers and teachers (Dobbins, 1996; Renwick & Vize, 1993) I am unaware of any New Zealand studies that have investigated the practicum from the perspective of the beginning teacher in terms of assisting their transition to teaching. While Lind (2004) examined the perceptions of student teachers, associate teachers, and visiting lecturers regarding the adequacy of the practicum for the preparation of primary first-year teachers, the data were drawn from a case study of the final year pre-service teaching practicum, and, as such, did not examine the perspectives of actual beginning teachers.

By the end of the first term of teaching many of the new teachers in this study were no longer experiencing the extreme stress that they had been exposed to in their first few weeks of teaching. This suggests that the “transition shock” they faced as beginning teachers was relatively short-lived. However, the study also shows that the beginning teachers experienced challenges, as well as high points, throughout their first year of teaching and that these experiences were mainly

connected with school-related factors. The next section discusses the role schools played in the transition and development of these beginning teachers.

Key Factors that Affect the Transition and Development of First Year Teachers

On the whole, the beginning teachers started off the year feeling worried about meeting their school's expectations and overwhelmed by the demands of the job, but ended their first year of teaching feeling relaxed and self-assured as teachers. This study indicates that the ease or difficulty of this shift from unsure to confident teacher was influenced by environmental factors, particularly in terms of school atmosphere and dynamics and the school's approach to, and provision of, professional learning opportunities.

School Atmosphere and Dynamics

Prior to graduating, the participants in this study predicted that working in a positive environment and being able to access professional support in their school would be fundamental to enabling them to survive and develop as teachers. The findings show that they were correct in their assumptions. School atmosphere and dynamics did indeed play a critical role in how this group of beginning teachers adjusted to their "new role as teacher." As discussed below, a supportive and encouraging atmosphere helped make the participants feel comfortable interacting with their colleagues. This was particularly important at the beginning of the year when they were sharply confronted with the realities of teaching, not only in relation to the demanding and complex nature of teachers' work but also in terms of undertaking this work in the context of their school's expectations of how things should be done. Responsive interactions with their colleagues gave these first year teachers the confidence to approach other teachers for practical assistance and emotional support which, in turn, helped to counteract their feelings of insecurity and offset the effects of 'transition shock.' These findings corroborate New Zealand research by Cameron, Baker, and Lovett (2006) on promising primary and secondary early career teachers which identified the

importance of being able to access emotional support. They observed “commonly, beginning teachers reported feeling uncertain and insecure in their first few months and looked for emotional reassurance and encouragement from their colleagues” (p. 48).

The present study identified a supportive school environment, in-school relationships, and social interactions as being the key aspects of school atmosphere and dynamics, which impacted on beginning teacher development. These three factors influenced the ease and speed with which participants became clued-up about their school’s practices and expectations which, in turn, affected the extent to which they felt part of their school community.

Supportive school environments

The nature of the school environment played a strong mediating role in the transition and development of these beginning teachers. The beginning teachers used words like friendly, positive, and supportive to describe the kind of environment that facilitated their progress as teachers. The staff in schools with supportive environments appeared to work together collaboratively and took account of each other and of the needs of new teachers. The beginning teachers commented on the importance of feeling as though other teachers “helped and supported each other” and that they “care for you as a person.” Working in such an environment assisted the novices to feel comfortable in connecting with their colleagues. As one commented, “The teachers say all the time...just ask. I always have hundreds of questions and they say, “keep on asking.” It’s exactly what you need to have - support like that.” A supportive environment that engendered positive interactions between staff produced a “Matthew effect” (Stanovich, 1986) for these beginning teachers. Applying Stanovich’s rich-get-richer and poor-get-poorer concept to this study shows that such an environment helped these first year teachers transcend feeling stupid or threatened when wanting assistance, especially with problems, and helped them gain the confidence needed to seek help and advice from colleagues. One stated, “If I am having a problem, I know I can go and talk to someone about it, rather than feel that I am left to deal with it myself.”

The role supportive school environments play in beginning teacher development is identified by Flores (2005). In her longitudinal study of 14 Portuguese elementary and secondary beginning teachers, all her participants reiterated in their interviews the importance of a supportive environment. However, unlike the present study, only one of Flores's new teachers actually worked in a school that was identified as supportive. That was a small, rural, elementary school, which led Flores to postulate that the dynamics of school culture may be associated with school size. In the present study, all but one of the participants worked in urban schools of varying sizes and most of them felt that they worked in supportive environments. It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for the differences between the two studies, given the similarities in terms of sample size and data gathering methods. It may be due to differences in how new teachers entered their first year of teaching. The Portuguese teachers had a five-year preparation programme that comprised four years of full-time study followed by an academic year of teaching practice. Because of teacher recruitment issues, Portuguese policy means that teachers were assigned and reassigned in their early years of teaching.

In comparison, the New Zealand teachers in this study graduated after a three-year pre-service programme and applied directly to schools that advertised teaching positions. This may mean that New Zealand beginning teachers are perceived differently because of the way that they are appointed. Perhaps schools which actively recruit and appoint their own beginning teachers (as is the situation in New Zealand) have a different view of beginning teachers, or have different characteristics, than those that do not. The differences may also be due to school cultures, as New Zealand primary schools have a strong tradition of teachers working collaboratively and meeting informally together in the staffroom for morning and lunchtime breaks as well as for after-school staff meetings. While the reason for the differences between the findings of the two studies is not clear, it is apparent that supportive school environments assisted the transition and development of the beginning teachers in the current investigation. What this study does not provide is clear data on the specific aspects of school environments that support or hinder new teacher growth. Further research identifying key aspects would be beneficial for the beginning teachers in terms of guiding their

decisions about their first job. It would also assist schools who employ first year teachers in ensuring that they have the kind of school environment that supports first year teachers' transition and development.

While the beginning teachers identified a supportive environment as being important to their development, the data indicate that, by the end of the year, they were rating their school's level of supportiveness according to the types of relationships that they had developed with their colleagues.

In-school relationships

The present study found that relationships between staff played an important part in assisting beginning teacher development. A positive relationship with their tutor or supervising teacher was particularly important at the beginning of the year because this was when the beginning teachers tended to be confronted with the sharpest learning curve in terms of coming to grips with the demands and responsibilities of being a teacher. The more emotional support and encouragement that the beginning teachers received from their tutor teachers, the more assured they became as teachers. Although their tutor teachers continued to be important to these beginning teachers, from the middle of the year relationships with their syndicate or teaching teams increased in importance. The more these first year teachers got to know the other teachers in their team, the more confident they became which helped them to participate more in syndicate meetings. The participants talked about developing reciprocal relationships with the other members of the syndicate and how this helped their confidence and made them feel as though they could legitimately contribute ideas and resources alongside their more experienced colleagues. However, the findings indicate that while relationships with individuals or groups of staff were important for teacher growth, also critical was the manner in which staff related to each other.

Analysis of what a supportive, positive, and friendly environment meant in practice revealed that the beginning teachers were, in fact, describing ways in which the staff in their schools worked with, and related to, each other. Schools which encouraged and facilitated the development of positive, collegial relationships helped the beginning teachers to feel part of the team which, in turn,

influenced the ease and speed with which they came to grips with their role as teachers and their school's expectations of them. For some, the relationships that they developed with members of their syndicate or teaching team were the key mechanisms through which they came to know and feel part of the team because that was the focus for sharing information, resources, and ideas. For others, the whole school operated as a team where everyone worked together which meant that the beginning teachers felt that they could access information, advice, and support from everyone.

The more the beginning teachers developed professional relationships with colleagues, the more self-assured they became and the more they participated in syndicate and school events. When this was not the case there were consequences for the beginning teacher with regard to how effectively they were able to carry out their work in terms of meeting school expectations. An example in the current study is Sam who, when looking back over her first year of teaching, talked about how she spent the first three terms "doing things and being told it was wrong and having to redo it and not knowing why because no one was telling me what I should be doing." Sam had initially felt very positive about the support she was getting from her tutor teacher and the school but by around the middle of the year she had begun to notice that there was an "inner and outer circle" in the school and by Term Four she felt that she was on the outer reaches of the outer circle. She had become particularly isolated from members of her syndicate. All of these factors impacted on Sam's chances to get assistance from experienced teachers who knew the ropes. With their advice, she may not have had to go through a protracted trial and error process in order to learn how to meet her school's expectations.

In contrast to the above example, schools which encouraged and facilitated interactions and relationships between novices and experienced staff helped the beginning teachers to understand what was expected and to perform according to expectations. Relationships with colleagues broadened and increased beginning teachers' access to context-specific knowledge and support, which they needed to help them navigate their way through their school's expectations, customs, and practices. Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, and Liu (2001) comment on the

importance of the type and quality of relationships that novice teachers have with their colleagues, observing that:

...it is to them that she looks for advice about how to teach well and for support in how to become a full-fledged member of the teaching staff. Whether the novice can count on those colleagues will depend largely on the prevailing norms and patterns that exist within the school (p. 251).

The findings of the current study support Kardos et al.'s contention that whether beginning teachers are successful or not depends not only on their knowledge and skills, but also on the quality of the interactions and relationships that novices have with their colleagues. While Kardos et al.'s (op cit) qualitative research is an American cross-sectional study of 50 elementary, middle, and high school first-and-second year teachers which examined the experiences of new teachers in relation to the professional cultures of their schools and the current study is a longitudinal study of New Zealand first-year primary teachers, the findings of both studies are in accord. Beginning teachers had the best chance of 'counting on their colleagues' in schools where the 'prevailing norms and patterns' support them as novice teachers and facilitate their interaction with experienced teachers in an ongoing and collegial manner. The present study concurs with Kardos et al. in their contention that integrated professional cultures provided most support for beginning teachers. Those were the cultures that enabled frequent and meaningful interactions with colleagues across all levels of the school. This contrasts with four of the beginning teachers who, like the example of Sam above, experienced what Kardos et al. describe as a veteran-oriented culture where the workplace norms are set by 'veteran' teachers who protect their own autonomy and who have little interaction with beginning teachers. The four beginning teachers worked in schools with a high proportion of 'veteran' or senior teachers. While three of these participants did not have such a dramatic experience as Sam, they did comment that, as they got to know staff better, they noticed cynicism and complaining among staff and that they felt that their colleagues had somewhat negative attitudes towards them because they were beginning teachers.

While the present study concurs with Kardos et al. (2001) regarding the importance of meaningful interactions with colleagues across all levels of the

school, this study identified another important factor. That is, the part social interactions played in the transition and development of these beginning teachers.

Social interactions with colleagues

The findings in this study point to the significant role that opportunities for mixing socially with school colleagues play in teacher development. The number of participants who identified the “social side” of school life as being important increased from a third in Term One to half in Term Four. The beginning teachers viewed mixing socially with colleagues, for example, Friday night drinks, as a normal and valued part of school life. The social activities helped beginning teacher transition and development in three main ways. Firstly, it helped the new teachers “unwind” by talking with colleagues in a relaxed situation. Social interactions helped them to get to know people on a personal level, which helped them to identify “like-minded people.” It also allowed the new teachers to see colleagues in different contexts and helped them form relationships with people that they may not otherwise have. One thought “you can get wrong impressions unless you actually spend time with people.” Secondly, socializing provided opportunities for developing relationships with a range of staff. Mixing socially increased their contacts across the school which meant that they could go to a number of teachers for help and advice. For one, the “social side is a huge part of why I enjoy working here. It’s nice to mix socially because you get to know people and feel that you can approach anyone.” Thirdly, beginning teachers’ professional relationships were enhanced through getting to know their colleagues on a more personal and “deeper level.” Getting to know other teachers socially, as well as by working together, helped the beginning teachers feel as though they were colleagues rather than novices who were reliant on others for support. One participant said, “We have got to know each other so well. I know about their teaching and a little about their lives. I have learned to recognize when they are really looking stressed out and I am able to ask if I can help.”

The social aspects that were described by half of the participants were regular and planned school events. While events such as dinners with tutor teachers or going to the pictures with other staff they had become friendly with were commented on by the participants in this study, it was the organized staff social occasions that

were seen as making a difference to their growth as teachers. No clear picture emerges of the demographic features of the schools where planned social events were a feature of school life. For example, while four schools had a mix of experienced and young teachers, two of the schools where three of the six beginning teachers worked had a young staff. Although these three participants believed that having lots of young teachers might have contributed to the emphasis on social relationships because “they can remember back to when they were in our position a few years ago,” in reality it was the (older) principal and senior management who ensured that social events were a regular part of school life. There were some similarities among the beginning teachers, however. Participants with children of their own tended to be in schools with a more established and experienced group of teachers and where regular and planned socializing with colleagues was not an established part of school life. It would be interesting to investigate the extent to which principals take into account social characteristics and social fit when making appointments to their schools, as well as how they judge such characteristics.

The present study has identified the importance of planned, school-led, social interactions with colleagues. Such interactions were another mechanism which assisted the beginning teachers to develop relationships across the school and so enabled access to a wide range of professional knowledge and support and helped them to feel part of the staff. Given these findings, it would be valuable to investigate further the impact of social factors on beginning teacher development. Previous research has focused more on the link between social interactions and professional outcomes. For example, Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans (1989) in their study of staff relationships in primary schools identified talk as a key feature of collaborative schools, while Little (1990b) argued that true collegiality was not engaging in social pleasantries and offering assistance and sharing ideas but rather it was “joint work” in which teachers shared responsibility for teaching. There appears to be little in the literature that directly investigates the effect of social relationships on beginning teacher transition, learning, and development.

In summary, the beginning teachers identified the importance of developing good social and/or professional relationships with colleagues in assisting their growth

as teachers. Believing that other teachers were approachable and willing to help and support them made their school seem a “friendlier place” to work and helped them feel part of the team.

Professional cultures and becoming part of the group

The findings in this study confirm the important part that school professional cultures play in the transition and development of beginning teachers. According to Kardos et al. (2001, p. 254) a school’s professional culture, defined as the “distinctive blend of norms, values, and accepted modes of professional practice, both formal and informal, that prevail among colleagues,” not only influences new teachers’ induction into that school, but also influences future professional development. In the present study, the first year teachers received information about their school’s professional culture and how it would affect them as soon as they started in their schools, as the following two examples illustrate. The start to the year for two participants in the same school was a two-day involvement in whole staff induction and team building designed to facilitate getting to know colleagues and school expectations which resulted in these teachers “getting clear guidelines as to what we should be doing and where we should be going” as well as “breaking the ice in terms of getting to know other teachers.” In contrast is the experience of another participant who started the year with formal staff meetings focused on administration matters and time on her own to set up her classroom. The message she received about her school’s professional culture was that, as a beginning teacher, she was expected to fit in and be like everyone else and to get on with the job of teaching. The differences in these norms and patterns of behaviour were played out over the year in terms of how, and the extent to which, the beginning teachers were able to access support and professional development opportunities. If the professional culture of the school does not encourage constructive interactions between colleagues then beginning teachers are likely to be hindered in terms of how quickly they come to grips with the prevailing norms, customs, and practices which has consequences for how they do their work and how they view themselves in terms of members of the group. As Kardos et al. (2001, p. 1) note, “It is the professional culture that will provide formal and informal information about how to teach and how to be successful in the school.”

Becoming a member of the schools professional community was a key undertaking faced by the beginning teachers. The ease or difficulty of this task was related to their being able to gain knowledge about school specific norms, practices, and expectations. The informal and formal, social and professional interactions with colleagues which facilitated relationship development played a critical part in helping the beginning teachers in “one of the major activities of any member when she enters a new group...to decipher the norms and assumptions that are operating” (Schein, 1992, p. 13). The critical role played by the professional culture of the school in easing the transition from student to teacher is exemplified by the beginning teachers who had most difficulty with finding out what was expected of them and developing a sense of belonging. Not only had they experienced fewer formal and informal opportunities to interact with colleagues compared to the other beginning teachers, but also the atmosphere and dynamics in their school made them acutely aware of their status as beginning teachers in that they felt that other staff “ignored” or “patronized” them because they were inexperienced. This made them want “to hold back” in terms of their interactions with colleagues, which reduced opportunities for relationship building and got in the way of their being able to feel part of the team. It is interesting to note that these participants tended to be in schools which had staff who had been at the school for a long time and who had not recently worked with beginning teachers. The experiences that these beginning teachers had with their colleagues are similar to what Kardos et al. (2001) describe as occurring in veteran-oriented professional cultures in which privacy and autonomy are the prevailing professional norms and there is not much interest in or interaction with beginning teachers.

Cameron et al. (2006) also point to the impact of professional cultures on how novices learn and develop as teachers. As in the present study, they found that collaborative work cultures enabled beginning teachers to learn from their more experienced colleagues. It is interesting that the findings of the two studies differed in relation to the actions that the beginning teachers were prepared to take if their workplace conditions were not perceived to be conducive to their development. Cameron et al. found that their participants were prepared to change schools in such situations, whereas this did not appear to be considered an

option for the beginning teachers in the present study. This may be because the Cameron et al. study was a cross-sectional investigation of beginning teacher experiences from the perspective of a group of promising third- to seventh-year primary and secondary teachers. In comparison, the present study was longitudinal and followed a group of primary teachers as they experienced their first year of teaching, so their impressions and reactions are as they have lived them, rather than as how they remembered them. This difference may also be related to job factors, an area which is discussed later in this chapter. The precariousness of their job situation for half of the first year teachers in this study may have meant that they were more concerned about ensuring that they stayed in their current school for their second year of teaching, rather than facing the disruption of finding another one, regardless of how they perceived their workplace conditions.

In summary, professional culture as expressed by school atmosphere and dynamics was a key influence on the ease with which beginning teachers adjusted to their new role and developed as teachers. The findings indicate that a supportive environment that facilitated professional and social interactions among staff made the school a “friendlier” place to work. While the concept of ‘friendliness’ does not appear to be a construct used in the literature, some writers draw attention to the role that a helpful and encouraging environment plays in teacher development. Wu (1998) in his study of newly qualified English secondary teachers found that participants believed that the values and attitudes of the school would affect their competence and that it was therefore important to work in a school with a ‘good feeling’. Inman and Marlow (2004) identified support from colleagues and a positive work environment as factors that assist novices to achieve a sense of self-worth as teachers. In their study, a friendly, positive atmosphere facilitated social and professional interactions among staff that increased and broadened the beginning teachers’ access to colleagues who could support them as developing teachers and assist them to understand and meet school expectations and requirements. The development of these social and professional networks among colleagues engendered a sense of belonging and assisted these beginning teachers to fit in and become part of the team.

The findings of the present study are in accord with Flores (2001, p. 140) who contends, “workplace conditions appear to be a powerful variable in the process of becoming a teacher. Not only are they crucial in shaping new teachers’ professional behaviour, but they lead to the re-analysis of new teachers’ thinking and practices.” School atmosphere and dynamics was not the only ‘workplace condition’ that affected the ease or difficulty with which these beginning teachers made the shift from unsure to confident teacher. Another vital ingredient was the schools’ approach to professional development.

School Approaches to Professional Development

By the end of their first year of teaching, the beginning teachers in this study believed that they had “made huge progress” and were “doing a good job” as teachers, while at the same time recognizing that they “still had a long way to go.” Although they all linked their growth as teachers to participation in professional learning activities, the findings reveal that there were both similarities and differences in terms of the kinds of professional support that they experienced and how this impacted on their development. In contrast to overseas studies such as Johnson et al. (2004) who investigated American new teachers’ experiences in high and low income schools, this study found that differences were not related to school decile level, but rather to how schools approached and provided professional development opportunities to their beginning teachers.

0.2 beginning teacher time allowance

The beginning teachers were unanimous in their view that the 0.2 allocation to schools for the induction of beginning teachers was a critical success factor contributing to their growth and learning as teachers. As previously explained, New Zealand is one of very few countries that have nationally-mandated and funded induction programmes for beginning teachers, with the Ministry of Education allocating a 0.2 time allowance (equivalent to one day a week) to state primary schools that employ a Year One teacher for the provision of an “advice and guidance programme.” Schools are required to appoint a mentor or tutor teacher who has the responsibility of working with the beginning teacher to develop a professional development programme tailored to the needs of the new

teacher. While the requirement is for the 0.2 time allowance to be shared between the first year primary teacher and their tutor teacher, all the beginning teachers in this study referred to the 0.2 as “their beginning teacher time” and were convinced of the importance of having release from teaching their class on a weekly basis in terms of helping them survive the beginning of the year and develop as teachers. The findings show that the schools used the beginning teacher 0.2 time allowance in a variety of ways, as indicated by a participant comment that “the 0.2 is really important because that’s when I go to courses, observe other classes and other people observe me, and I catch up with paper work and get things ready for class.” It is also apparent that while the first year teachers were consistent in their assertions regarding the importance of their time allowance, how the schools used the 0.2 became more variable as the year progressed. When interviewed in their final term of their first year of teaching, five of the 12 beginning teachers stated that they organized their own professional development activities, and three of these five commented that they were no longer getting release time. While the effects of different types of induction activities on teacher development is discussed later in this chapter, it is interesting to note that being entitled to a time allowance was considered an essential ingredient in assisting their professional growth. All the participants were looking forward to receiving the recently approved 0.1 provision for second year teachers and felt that they could maximize that time allowance as they were now very clear about what they needed to do to further develop their knowledge and skills.

Mentoring

This study confirmed the vital role that tutor teachers play in the professional lives of the beginning teachers. The provision of a mentor, or tutor teacher, is a key aspect of the New Zealand induction system and all participants attested to the value of having experienced teachers as mentors because “they know what you need to do because they have been in the game longer and know what needs to be done.” The beginning teachers appreciated informal face-to-face contact, particularly early in the year when their tutor teachers called into their classroom to in see them at least once a day. The start of the year was a time of information overload for the new teachers, so regular contact with their tutor teacher gave them the opportunity to ask questions and get practical information on an

as-needed basis. Tutor teacher comments about how well they had started teaching and on the appearance of their classroom provided them with much needed and welcomed reassurance which helped them feel more confident as teachers. Formal meetings with their tutor teacher were also seen as valuable as they provided further opportunities to ask questions and receive feedback about their progress as well as opportunities to gain information about school expectations and practices, particularly planning, assessment and reporting requirements, and associated timelines. Meetings were also used to discuss and plan professional development activities as part of the schools' required beginning teacher advice and guidance programme. The role that mentors play in the induction of New Zealand beginning teachers is supported by Cameron et al. (2006) who found that primary teachers viewed highly supportive tutor teachers as important components of their advice and guidance programmes. The findings of the current study, however, suggest that, while mentor support was perceived to be important, there was variability in the type and amount of support experienced. A third of the participants had a deputy or associate principal as a tutor teacher and, while describing them as "supportive," they also commented that because they were so busy with their school-wide roles, they "caught" them when they could, as well as suggesting that they were reluctant to approach them because they knew that they had so many other demands on their time. For one participant this situation was mediated because her classroom was next door to the tutor teacher's office, which meant that she had ready access to assistance when required. Cameron and her colleagues also noted that for new teachers to be physically located near their tutor teacher was a helpful practice.

In beginning teacher induction the type of support is important. In this study, the type of interactions and support were more likely to be informal than formal and systematic, with just over half of the first year teachers reporting regular and planned meetings with their tutor teacher. This suggests that, for a number of participants, there were limited opportunities for tutor teacher interactions and therefore for a systematic approach to professional development, which calls into question the quality of their required advice and guidance programme. The findings also indicate that formal contact decreased, particularly from the middle of the year, mainly because participants perceived that their increased experience

and confidence meant that there was less need for support - a finding similar to Renwick (2001). The beginning teachers in the present study also attributed the reduction of formal contact to a change in their relationship with their tutor teacher - one that they described as now being more colleague and co-worker and less novice and mentor. They continued to view their relationship with their tutor teacher as being very important to them and appreciated the fact that their tutor teacher was available for professional guidance if required.

The results back up Odell and Huling (2000) in their contention that the success of a mentoring programme depends on the beginning teacher being able to regard the mentor with trust and as one who cares. Two of the first-year teachers had relationships with their tutor teachers that had a negative impact on them. One became discouraged early on because her tutor teacher had been very critical from the beginning of their relationship and did not appear to recognize her emotional needs, while the other changed her initial view of her tutor teacher being supportive when she was reprimanded by the principal for not recording assessment information as required after being told by her tutor teacher that she was doing it correctly. Her trust was further eroded when the tutor teacher did not acknowledge her own role in the problem nor back the beginning teacher up when she was being reprimanded. The result of this was a breakdown in the relationship and a greater sense of isolation on the part of the beginning teacher.

While the findings identify the relationship with their tutor teacher as being a key factor in the transition and adjustment to teaching for these beginning teachers, they also suggest that many of the tutor teachers focused their role on providing emotional support and practical assistance rather than implementing systematic approaches to develop their beginning teachers' professional knowledge and practice. The study suggests that for many of the beginning teachers, the mentoring they received was what Little (1990a) characterizes as "situational adjustment, technical advice, and emotional support" rather than what Feiman-Nemser (2001b) terms "educative mentoring," where the focus is on strategies that developed the novices' thinking and practice. Although Feiman-Nemser suggests that her case study "provides a vision of the possible rather than of the probable" (ibid, p. 28) the example of Robin in this study does illuminate the

effects of 'educative' compared to support-focused mentoring on beginning teacher growth. Robin was one of the two participants who changed tutor teachers part-way through the year. She viewed her first tutor teacher as being "lovely and helpful," but believed that she had learned most from the second mentor who she described as being innovative and a real 'ideas person.' Robyn valued being able to watch this mentor teach her class in different ways and valued the opportunity to bounce ideas off her and work out new ways of doing things. She believed that working with the second tutor teacher helped improve her thinking and her practice through modelling, discussion, and by learning that professional growth is about trying things out and taking risks because "if you are not going to take risks....then you are not going to change."

This study supports New Zealand (Mansell, 1996; Renwick, 2001; Cameron et al., 2006) and international research (Odell & Huling, 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a) that has identified the important role that mentoring plays in the induction of new teachers as well as in their retention in the profession (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). It is, however, difficult to draw definite conclusions regarding the particular attributes of mentors or activities that facilitated the growth of the first-year teachers in this study. This problem is not unique because, as Smith & Ingersoll (2004) comment, the word 'mentoring' covers a variety of purposes and a number of different types of activities. Odell (2006) asserts that, like teaching, mentoring is a professional practice that has to be learned. It would be useful for future beginning teacher induction if tutor teacher approaches to mentoring could be developed into a more coherent system. Considering the amount of government investment in the induction of beginning teachers and the critical role played by tutor teachers in this process, it would seem important to identify the mentoring conditions that maximize the professional growth of beginning teachers and to require that tutor teachers to engage in associated professional development. This may help ensure that beginning teachers have more consistent mentoring experiences, not only in terms of emotional and practical support, but also in assisting them to improve their thinking about learning and teaching and so strengthen their professional practice. Empirical research that examined the affective and professional characteristics of effective mentors that develop the professional growth of new teachers in the New Zealand context would be

beneficial. This study suggests that beginning teachers were best served by tutor teachers who had personal attributes of being friendly, available, and emotionally supportive, as well as the knowledge and skills to provide a planned and systematic advice and guidance programme that developed the beginning teachers' thinking and practice.

This study found that, while mentoring played an important part in the induction of the beginning teachers, tutor teacher support was not sufficient in itself to enable the professional growth of these new teachers. Carroll, Fulton, Yoon, and Lee (2005, p .4) argue, "Mentoring alone is not enough...A system of induction should include a network of supports, people, and processes that are all focused on ensuring that novices become effective in their work." The results indicate that there were three major induction activities that most contributed to the new teachers' professional learning. Of the three, the area perceived to have least impact was attendance at one-off courses or support groups at local teachers' centres where beginning teachers were given workshops by experienced teachers on strategies like behaviour management and time management. While the courses were appreciated for the chance to get new ideas, the main benefit appeared to be the opportunity they provided for meeting up with other beginning teachers and sharing experiences. This is similar to Cameron et al. (2006) who found that the opportunity to connect with their peers was thought to be the most valuable aspect of this activity and identified observing and being observed by other teachers as being more important contributors to the professional learning of their beginning teachers.

Flores (2005), in her investigation into ways in which teachers learned and developed professionally, interviewed and surveyed 14 Portuguese new teachers and their head teachers. She found that externally offered short courses were perceived to be less valuable than learning to teach in the school context. The new and experienced teachers in the Flores investigation viewed learning as an individual rather than a collective process whereby listening, observing, and sharing experiences with colleagues were said to be less relevant to their learning than their focus on reflecting on and in their own practice. While the beginning teachers in the current study also considered reflection to be an important

development strategy, learning in context for them meant engagement in an induction programme that was planned and implemented in collaboration with experienced teachers, rather than being an individual activity like Flores's teachers. The two induction activities that were perceived to be most valuable are discussed below.

Observations and feedback

In this study, feedback from experienced teachers following their observation of beginning teachers' classroom practice was viewed as being "most useful" and a "critical influence" on the development of the new teachers' professional knowledge and skills. By the end of the year, three-quarters of the participants had been observed by their tutor teacher with almost half of those also being observed by a member of senior management. Feedback on what was going well was seen as a confidence booster, but more important in terms of professional development was the way the observation information was used for collaboratively planning the beginning teachers' advice and guidance programme. This feedback and feed-forward provided the beginning teachers with specific information about how they could improve their practice in terms of individual children as well as more effective and efficient ways of doing things, such as marking children's work or managing behaviour. These beginning teachers received oral and written reports from their observers and valued both forms of feedback. As one said, "It helps to actually hear what I am doing right and what can be improved. But then if I have written feedback as well, later on when I am thinking about doing something to the programme or behaviour management, I can look back and have it all there."

A quarter of participants had minimal or no observations of their teaching and consequently received little specific feedback on their practice. While one was relieved that this had not occurred because it would make her tense, most wished that they had been given the opportunity to learn about their teaching from another person's perspective. For example, one thought that "sometimes you need feedback to say what's good and how you could look at things in a different way," while another believed that it would have been more useful "than just getting written stuff from meetings." Given that research confirms the importance of observation and feedback for the induction of novice teachers, it would appear

that these teachers missed out on important opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and skills. Odell (2006) suggest that discussions based on observed lessons help novices to teach more effectively and to develop attitudes and skills for analyzing and transforming their teaching, while Ball and Cohen (1999) advocate constructing novice teachers' professional practice as sites of inquiry through the use of classroom observations and feedback. Cameron et al. (2006) found that feedback on their teaching from colleagues was an important component of successful induction, although they also noted that their beginning teachers felt that there were few opportunities to obtain formative feedback on their teaching.

The tone and manner in which feedback was given was also a factor in assisting or hindering development. Feedback that was constructive and positively framed, particularly from their tutor teacher early in the year, helped the beginning teachers view their colleagues as being approachable and available for support, which made them feel more comfortable about seeking feedback and advice. One participant received information on her teaching that was framed in a critical and negative manner and talked about how this affected her confidence and her motivation to seek opportunities for further feedback. Although studies have confirmed the importance of professional conversations based on shared experiences (Odell, 2006) there appears to be little research that directly addresses the effects of feedback on beginning teacher learning and development. Given that receiving formative feedback is identified as an essential practice in studies on teacher learning (Fieman-Nemser, 2001b), it would be useful if there was more empirical data on the characteristics of effective feedback in terms of their effect on the development of novice teachers' professional practice. A New Zealand study on student teachers (Timperley, 2001) found that conversations between student teachers and their mentors were largely concerned with practical considerations rather than designed to facilitate student teacher inquiry into their teaching decisions, although it also suggests that the quality of these professional conversations can be improved with mentor training.

Around sixty per cent of the first-year teachers in the current study identified observing other teachers as being a key factor that contributed to their

professional learning. These findings corroborate those of Cameron et al. (2006), although unlike their study, observing other teachers was not considered to be the most helpful induction activity. The current study indicates that participant observation of experienced teachers in their own, as well as other schools, served two purposes. Firstly, it enabled them to get new ideas and see different approaches and secondly, it provided opportunities for them to benchmark their development as teachers. Around half the teachers believed that observing experienced teachers had a positive effect in terms of their evaluation of their own teaching and, while this had a positive effect on their confidence, it is not clear what led them to this conclusion. It may be that the comparisons were made in terms of their own, novice knowledge base rather than the experienced teachers' actual practice, which would align with the Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford and colleagues (2005) work on expert and novice teachers, which indicates that beginning teachers notice less when observing classrooms in action.

Robin was the only participant who observed her mentor teaching her own class. Discussion and analysis of her mentor's teaching with this experienced teacher became a regular part of Robin's beginning teacher's advice and guidance programme. She believed that observing her tutor teacher and reviewing this afterwards had the most impact on her teaching. As noted previously, Robin's thinking and practice was improved through professional discussions on the effects of the mentor's teaching on her children's learning and by her tutor teacher modelling innovative teaching and risk taking. This collegial and collaborative approach to professional development engendered development of confidence and professional competence and support. Lave and Wenger (1991) also contend that working together and talking about common experiences provide access to a mentor's more developed knowledge and ways of doing things.

The study also showed that the beginning teachers had more opportunity to observe other teachers in action in the first half of year. It appeared that from the middle of the year schools were less likely to use the 0.2 time allowance to release their beginning teacher and were more likely to use it for activities like covering other teachers' sickness and in-service course attendances.

Induction programmes

New Zealand's approach to beginning teacher induction has received positive comment from international researchers. For example, in a recent article comparing induction practices in five countries, Wong, Britton and Ganser (2005, p. 381) commented that they were "struck by the variety of the sources of support in New Zealand and by how the schools make use of a range of induction activities. Throughout the educational system there is a universal commitment to support beginning teachers." However, in terms of their definition of induction as being a highly organized, comprehensive, and sustained form of staff development, the findings of the current study concur with other New Zealand research in painting a less glowing picture of how induction is experienced in practice by New Zealand beginning teachers (Cameron et al., 2006; Mansell, 1996; Renwick 2001). This research also found variability in the amount and quality of the professional support received by participants.

Arends and Winitzky (1999) argue that induction policies are not panaceas for school shortcomings. In the present study, schools fell into two broad groupings in terms of how induction was conceptualized. The differences in these approaches impacted on the quality of the beginning teacher's professional learning opportunities. The schools which embedded their advice and guidance programme in a whole-school approach to professional development provided optimum conditions for beginning teachers' professional learning in that they provided the most opportunities for the new teacher to access experienced teachers' knowledge and improve their own practice by working alongside and sharing common experiences (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The professional development in these schools was organized and systematic, with a focus on both pupil and teacher learning. Professional discussions based on in-class observations and regular appraisals, as well as engagement in joint activities, were routine for all teachers - a situation appreciated by the beginning teachers not only because it did not make them feel "singled out" as beginning teachers but also because it facilitated collaborative working relationships between novice and experienced teachers across the school. As one commented, "the school philosophy is that no-one is perfect, that we are all learning and that we are all there to support each other. This means that I can go to anyone, not just because I

am a beginning teacher, but because it's school policy.” This matches Kardos et al.'s (2001) description of integrated professional cultures in which there was a two-way interaction about teaching and learning among new and experienced teachers.

In integrated professional cultures, novices were expected to be learning and improving their teaching practice and were supported in this endeavor by meaningful mentoring, which included classroom observations and frequent and useful feedback, and teacher meetings focused on issues of teaching and learning. Cameron and her colleagues (2006, p. 53) also found that beginning teachers “flourished when schools enabled them to learn from more experienced colleagues, in collaborative work cultures.” However, the experience of one beginning teacher in the current study suggests a need for a balance, particularly at the beginning of the year, between school-wide professional development which naturally focuses on big issues of learning and teaching, and the needs of beginning teachers to concentrate on the specifics of their classroom and their own teaching practice. While this teacher viewed the emphasis on school-wide professional development positively, she also felt that the number of after-school meetings that she had to attend in the first five weeks of teaching restricted her progress because she did not have enough time to focus on her classroom and her teaching.

The other beginning teachers worked in schools where their induction programmes were neither co-ordinated nor systematic. The novices in these schools were less likely to have been provided with an induction manual containing practical information about school routines and expectations. These teachers were more likely to have experienced greater difficulties when they first started teaching. This may be, in part, because they were not able to easily access information like bell times and planning formats that would have helped reduce their need and anxiety and enabled them to focus their requests for assistance on less routine matters. One thought that “you need something written down because there are a lot of things beginning teachers don't know or forget about, or people don't realize you need to know.” Unlike the beginning teachers in schools with an integrated and systematic approach to professional development, this group of

first-year teachers not only initiated and organized their own professional development “off their own bat,” but they were also less likely to have consistently received release time in the second half of the year. These teachers did not necessarily perceive their environment to be unsupportive and many of them commented positively on being able to access support and assistance from their tutor and other teachers when needed. However, these first-year teachers were disadvantaged because they did not experience sustained and systematic opportunities to develop their professional learning and expertise. They more closely resemble the experiences of novice teachers described in American studies as being “lost at sea” (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003) as they were mostly left alone to succeed or fail in the confines of their own classroom (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Cameron et al. (2006) also described a group of teachers in their study who taught in schools that provided minimal or ad hoc induction. Feiman-Nemser (2001a) argues that “sink or swim” induction practices are likely to encourage behaviours that focus on the survival of the teacher rather than those that develop and extend the novices teaching repertoire. As Bartell (2005, p. 6) points out, the goal of support for new teachers is not just for them to have “survived” their first two years of teaching, but to “succeed and thrive.”

Although school principals did not appear to have a direct role in the induction of beginning teachers in their school in this study, they did play a critical part in creating the professional culture that facilitated the professional growth of the novice teachers. The schools that had an embedded approach to beginning teacher professional development had collegial and collaborative cultures that both recognized the special requirements of first-year teachers while at the same time putting in place systems and practices that ensured that they became part of the team. This is consistent with Breaux and Wong (2003) who, in their examination of induction programmes in the United States, found the inevitable presence of a leader who had created organizations and comprehensive induction programmes that stressed collaboration and professional growth. Cameron et al. (2006) also reported that principals were important in creating the environmental conditions that contributed to effective induction practices that supported beginning teacher professional learning.

Summary

Feiman-Nemser (2001a, p. 1026) contends that “New teachers have two jobs – they have to teach and they have to learn to teach. No matter how good a pre-service programme may be, there are some things that can only be learned on the job.” The findings of this study indicate that beginning teachers’ ability to ‘learn on the job’ is helped or hindered by the conditions under which they work. They show the critical role that school norms and patterns of behaviour play in the transition and development of beginning teachers. When the professional culture of the school supported collegial and collaborative practices across experience levels, beginning teachers were more likely to encounter the emotional and professional support necessary to develop their confidence and sense of belonging. Receiving emotional reassurance and encouragement from colleagues was especially important early in the year when participants’ feelings of insecurity and anxiety were particularly acute.

Beginning teacher induction was also critical to beginning teacher development, although the findings show that there was variability in how induction programmes were conceptualized, implemented, and experienced. The beginning teachers believed that their tutor teacher was a critical factor in contributing to both their emotional well-being and their professional practice, although the findings suggest that tutor teachers were more likely to provide practical and emotional support than educative mentoring. Effective induction practices included beginning teacher observations and feedback by experienced teachers and the opportunity to observe other teachers. Induction programmes that were embedded in a whole-school approach to professional development provided optimum conditions for beginning teachers’ professional learning. The opportunity for sustained and systematic professional learning was not available to those participants who experienced unco-ordinated or ad hoc induction programmes. The importance of having an effective induction programme is highlighted by a participant who commented, “The school has to have a programme in place where they look after the beginning teachers and understand that we are in transition from college to the real thing.”

This section of the discussion has identified the effect of school-related factors on beginning teacher learning and development. In his review of research on becoming a teacher, Bullough (1997, p. 95) concluded: “Midst the diversity of tales of becoming a teacher and studies of the content and form of the story, two conclusions of paramount importance...emerge: prior experiences and beliefs are central to shaping the story line, as is the context of becoming a teacher.” The following section explores the role that prior experiences and beliefs play, along with their experiences as first-year teachers, in participants’ construction of their professional identities.

First Year Teachers’ Construction of Themselves as Teachers

The findings of this study are in accord with the relatively few studies that have highlighted the complex and inter-relating factors, which influence new teachers’ views of teaching and of themselves as teachers. As Feiman-Nemser (2001a, p. 1029) has stated:

Constructing a professional identity is a complex, ongoing process. Beginning teachers form a coherent sense of themselves as professionals by combing parts of their past, including their own experiences in school and in teacher preparation, with pieces of their present in their current school context, with images of the kind of teacher and colleague that they want to become and the kind of classroom they want to create.

This section discusses the influence of contextual and biographical factors, and the interplay between these factors, on the construction of these first-year teachers’ professional identities.

The Influence of Biography

The data confirm the influence of personal histories on teaching as a career choice and on the way novices construct images of teaching and of themselves as teachers. Friends and family who were teachers and former teachers played a key role in this group of first-year teachers’ decisions to go teaching. All but one

stated that teaching was something they had always wanted to do. This strong commitment to teaching as a career is somewhat different from Flores and Day (2006) who found that teaching was not the first choice of most of their 14 Portuguese beginning teachers and from Cameron et al. (2006) where only a quarter of their New Zealand sample stated that they had always wanted to be teachers. It is, however, not surprising that the beginning teachers in this study were attracted to teaching for idealistic reasons. The desire to make a positive difference has been identified in other New Zealand (Cameron et al., 2006; Kane & Mallon, 2006; Locke, Vulliamy, Webb, & Hill, 2005) and international research (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto, 2003). The desire to “make a difference” and “impact positively on children’s lives” were values these teachers brought into their pre-service programme and maintained through their first year of teaching, a finding which supports Woods, Jeffery, Troman, and Boyle’s (1997, p. 152) contention that “teaching is a matter of values. People teach because they believe in something. They have an image of a good society.” These beginning teachers were similar to those described by Cameron and her colleagues (2006, p. xi) in that they:

...defined their professional identities in altruistic and moral terms, which had strong synchrony with their reasons for becoming teachers.” Without exception these were related to their commitment to children and to their desire to impact positively on their lives by helping them become “better people” and “the best person they can be.”

Beliefs about Teaching and Learning

In the present study, the first-year teachers’ values and images of what it meant to be a teacher were formed mainly through their experiences as learners. While many viewed past teachers as “role models,” they did not see them as being “ideal teachers” in terms of aspiring to be just like them. Instead, they referred to attributes such as being caring, interested, and likeable and being aware of what was going on in children’s worlds when describing the type of teacher they wanted to be. They believed such qualities were important not just for affective reasons but for developing the kind of classroom climate that would facilitate children’s learning. They adhered to their fundamental beliefs about the teachers’ role in developing positive relationships with children so as to provide the social

and emotional conditions necessary to facilitate children's learning throughout their pre-service programme and their first year of teaching. There were differences, however, in terms of how closely their beliefs matched their practice. Earlier in the year, the beginning teachers tended to be more focused on meeting work expectations (for themselves and for their pupils), although they were aware of the effect that trying to manage the demands and realities of teaching had on their beliefs. As one commented, "I believe that a teacher should be kind and supportive but the first few weeks has affected this a bit. Being kind means you have to be patient but it's hard to be patient all the time." Flores and Day (2006, p. 227) in their study of 14 first- and second-year Portuguese teachers also identify a tension between beliefs about good teaching and actual practice, noting that their teachers faced the "dilemma between providing students with a pleasant learning environment, which was associated with issues of flexibility and responsiveness to their needs, versus keeping order for the classroom."

The participants in this study also thought that they were less relaxed and flexible at the beginning of the year, partly because a key focus for them as teachers was classroom control, a concern that the literature indicates is common among beginning teachers (Cameron et al., 2006; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). Some of the participants described themselves as being more "behaviourist" in their teaching than they thought they would be, but put this down to "the whole beginning teacher thing" with one stating that she did "not want the kids to run wild and will pull back the reins later." Other writers have also identified the challenges that novices face to teach "against the grain" (Cochran-Smith, 1991) as the tendency is for their teaching practice to become more traditional compared to the innovative teaching practices that they may have developed during their pre-service programme (Loughran, 1996; Flores & Day, 2006). On the other hand Loughran, Brown, & Doecke (2001) interpret such behaviour as being more of a coping mechanism in response to the demands of being a fulltime teacher, rather than being a deliberate policy for practice. This study indicates that the greatest disparity between what participants believed and how they acted occurred early in the year - a finding that lends support to the view that coping behaviour, rather than a shift in practice, was the cause of this disparity.

By the end of their first year of teaching all the teachers in this study believed that there was a closer match between their fundamental beliefs and their practice. They characterized their interactions with their pupils as being more relaxed and open and believed that this had enabled them to gain a greater knowledge and understanding of their pupils' academic and social needs. They used this information to guide their choice of teaching resources and strategies in order to better cater for the children's interests, learning needs, and strengths - all of which they believed improved their teaching and so enabled their children to progress and achieve. Their experiences over the first year also helped advance their understanding of teaching and the role of a teacher with a quarter of the participants identifying a major shift in thinking about the impact of teacher behaviour on children's learning. One participant commented, for example, "I still believe that the key is having positive relationships with the children...but I also realize that the attitude I had was often reflected in them...If I was negative, they had a negative attitude as well...If I say neat things about their work, then they work harder," while another's beliefs on teaching had moved from a focus on "empowerment" and relationship-building to include behaviour management. However, in most cases, major modifications to their beliefs were not so much related to their classroom teaching but rather to how they viewed and responded to the task and role demands of being a teacher.

By the end of their first year, the participants had become less anxious about workload, having learnt to 'pace' themselves, and were more pragmatic about managing school expectations and relationships. While the beginning teachers adjusted their beliefs over their first year of teaching, they all held true to wanting to make a difference to the lives of the children that they taught and still believed that teacher attributes were important to developing a classroom climate that would facilitate learning. These findings differ from Cole & Knowles (1993) who found that many new teachers become disillusioned about the realities of teaching and so change their idealized images to what they perceive as more "realistic" expectations. The findings corroborate that of Cameron et al. (2006) in that, although the teachers faced many challenges and stressors when they started teaching, they did not become disillusioned, and that while they may have modified their beliefs, they did not change them at a fundamental level. This

research indicates that what did change was the perception that over time there was a much closer match between what the participants believed and how they actually taught.

The findings suggest that apart from those with children of their own, the beginning teachers did not bring into their pre-service programme strong beliefs about children and learning. Unlike their beliefs about teachers and teaching which were influenced by biographical factors, their beliefs about learning appeared to develop in their pre-service programme through coursework and practicum experiences. These beliefs were reinforced and extended by their experiences as teachers, particularly in terms of the importance of really understanding each child in terms of their backgrounds and learning strengths and needs, and of developing programmes to cater for the ‘huge’ range of children in their class. This finding is not congruent with reviews of American research, which have pointed to a lack of transfer from teacher education to practice (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Wideen et al., 1998). It is not clear why these teachers experienced a match between their beliefs about learning in their teacher preparation and in their first year of teaching. It may be that currently New Zealand teacher education programmes are predominately taught by people who have been successful classroom teachers and who are therefore experienced in taking a child-centred approach to learning which is a basic tenet of New Zealand primary education. There appear to be few studies that investigate how images of children’s learning as opposed to teacher learning are developed or how this contributes to the development of teacher identity.

The professional identities of the beginning teachers in this study were bound up with their beliefs about learning and teaching which bore a strong relationship to their reasons for becoming teachers. This is exemplified by how they judged their own development as teachers. By the end of the year, all held positive views of themselves as teachers against two measures: what they perceived to be the qualities of an effective teacher and their impact on the children they taught. The participants believed that they were successful because their pupils “enjoyed” coming to school and being in their class and “responded to them” as teachers. They referred to past teachers in describing qualities that engendered such

outcomes like being open, approachable, and responding to children on an emotional as well as a pedagogical level. They commented that their first year of teaching had strengthened their views about there being no such thing as an ideal teacher: “Teaching has reinforced my belief that one size does not fit all...I don’t think there is a perfect teacher...nor that there’s a standard way to do things...it’s a matter of finding the best fit with the kids in your class.” The second measure of effectiveness was in terms of pupil progress. For these teachers their greatest satisfaction was seeing how their children learnt and achieved over the year and the role that they played in this. They could see both from the children’s attitudes to learning and from their academic progress in terms of assessment results, that they had indeed made a difference: “The big thing is seeing the kids progressing and knowing that you had a part in it.” This was affirmation for these beginning teachers as the commitment to making a difference in the lives of children was the reason most of them had become teachers. In terms of evaluating themselves as teachers these novices gained a sense of self-esteem from their positive relationships with their pupils as well as from the children’s learning gains. This is in accord with Kelchtermans (1993) study in which almost all of the Belgian primary teachers reported positive self-esteem. He comments that “looking for the determinants of this self-esteem pupils appeared to be the most important factor, by their school results as well as by the quality of the personal relationship with the teacher (p. 449).”

This study corroborates research that has investigated the influence of prior experiences on teachers’ beliefs both at the pre-service level (Calderhead & Robson, 1991) and as beginning teachers (Flores, 2001; Knowles, 1992). The teachers’ images of good teaching were linked to their own experiences as learners - beliefs that were internalized during what Lortie (1975) terms the “apprenticeship of observation.” As in Flores and Day’s (2006) study, former teachers provided a frame of reference for the development of the beginning teachers’ professional identities. However, the findings of this study differ from international studies that identify a much weaker relationship between pre-service programmes and teacher beliefs (Flores, 2001; Flores & Day, 2006; Hauge, 2000). While these first year teachers retained their fundamental beliefs about teachers and teaching, they also identified ways in which their knowledge and

understanding had been extended through their teacher preparation experiences. It may be that the constructivist approach of the novices' teacher preparation programme played a role. Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) suggest that constructivist teacher education programmes may provide a different developmental outcome than that suggested by Lortie (1975) who characterised new teachers as tending to emulate the rather conservative pedagogies that have dominated their "apprenticeship of observation." Korthagen and Kessels (1999) describe constructivist teacher education as "realistic teacher education" and assert that such programmes eliminate the gap between theory and practice. Their research also emphasized life-long learning and viewed pre-service teacher education as but the first stage in the teachers' ongoing professional development.

In summary, while the teachers in this study were attracted to teaching for idealistic reasons, they also appeared to have a realistic view of what teaching would be like. Prior to graduating, they did not expect major difficulties in matters to do with classroom teaching but were concerned about establishing relationships with colleagues and being able to access support in order to help them to meet school expectations as well as managing the paperwork and maintaining a work-life balance which were the very aspects most of them found particularly challenging. They also believed that "like beginning anything, it will be difficult at first," while at the same time being surprised at exactly how hard starting off actually was. They appeared to recognize that they still had a long way to go in terms of learning about teaching and developing as teachers, reminding themselves that "when you are under pressure, you have to remember that you are just starting out."

While the findings have identified the influence of biographical factors on the identity formation of 12 beginning teachers, they also identified the role that school-related factors played in the construction of their professional identities. According to Beijaard et al. (2004), much of the research on teacher professional identity emphasizes the 'personal' and underestimates the part that context plays in this. The following section, therefore, discusses the influence of school-related factors on the construction of these beginning teachers' professional identities.

The Impact of Context

This study identified the importance of school contextual factors on the construction of new teacher professional identity. These beginning teachers, in common with novices elsewhere, faced a complex and formidable set of challenges in terms of their professional learning and the development of their teacher personas. As one participant said, “You are learning so much in a short time – about the children, the school and its routines, about myself and what I’m capable of.”

Unlike many transitions to full-time work, beginning teachers are given immediate responsibility for a full range of tasks and roles within the profession, yet their novice status is recognized formally through the requirement to participate in an advice and guidance programme. Thus, on the one hand they are accountable, like every other teacher, for the well-being and achievement of the children in their class, while on the other they are reliant on the active support of colleagues to carry out their responsibilities according to the expectations and mores of their school. This sets up a tension that Corcoran (1981, p. 20) describes as: “Implicit in the role of teacher is the notion of being knowledgeable, a notion that contradicts the very essence of being a beginner.”

The findings support Reynold’s (1996, p. 113) contention that, what surrounds that person, what others expect of that person, and what the person allows to impact on himself or herself, greatly affect his or her identity as a teacher. The interplay between the contextual features of the school and the individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour were key factors in shaping and reshaping these beginning teachers’ identities over their first year of teaching. The professional culture of the school, in terms of the extent to which it facilitated the development of positive, reciprocal relationships between colleagues, played a major role in this process.

A key finding in this study is the critical role that relationships play in the development of professional identity. The beginning teachers went through two broad phases in terms of constructing their identities as teachers and each phase

was characterized by affiliation factors, particularly in how they perceived and were perceived by significant others in these relationships. The first phase occurred in the first half of the year. It was characterized by a sense of uncertainty and insecurity that was most evident in their first six weeks of teaching. Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) note that emotional support is one of the strongest needs of beginning teachers and this was certainly true for the teachers in this study. While the participants acknowledged the importance of having a support network of family and friends who both encouraged them and provided hands-on support like babysitting, providing meals, and a listening ear, it was their relationships with colleagues which provided the critical emotional and practical support which impacted on how they viewed themselves as teachers. These professional relationships helped them to navigate the tension of having to appear confident, while at the same time being keenly aware of their novice status. This tension was summed up by a first-year teacher who, reflecting back to the start of the year, observed that “Term One was strange because I had to act like I was confident and knew what I was doing so the kids trusted me even though I felt I didn’t have a clue what I was doing.”

In the first phase, tutor teacher relationships and interactions with other beginning teachers played a key part in the development of their perceptions of themselves as teachers. Positive and regular interactions with their tutor teachers provided them with affirming feedback about how well they were coming to grips with their role as teachers, as well as providing them with inside information about how they should carry out their role in order to meet school expectations and requirements and therefore appear competent in the eyes of their colleagues. The beginning teachers who did not have a positive relationship with their tutor teacher were more likely to have difficulties about knowing what was expected of them and to feel discouraged because they were not getting positive messages about how they were performing. The more positive the relationship, the more they gained in confidence, the more their self-esteem increased, and the more motivated they became, as suggested in the following comment: “A lot of the feedback [from the tutor teacher] is affirming, so it makes me feel like I am doing well and makes me want to carry on working hard.” Kelchtermans (1993) also identified a need for reassurance and linked this with the feelings of vulnerability

that beginning teachers' experience as a result of being observed and judged by others. This backs up the importance of affirming feedback from significant others in contributing to novices' sense of self-esteem as teachers. As indicated in the present study, if the relationship with their tutor teacher is not affirming, the beginning teachers' confidence levels can decrease, while their feeling of vulnerability increases. Kelchtermans (1993) also suggests that, because beginning teachers feel vulnerable in their own limits of competence, they are driven to want to do a good job and to have this recognized by significant others. In common with other studies (Cameron et al., 2006; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Nias, 1989), the beginning teachers in the present investigation made a huge investment in terms of time and energy in their work, almost to the point of exhaustion. It is not surprising therefore that significant others can play a critical part in how beginning teachers construct their professional identities. Positive and affirming relationships with their tutor teachers appear to be especially important at the beginning of the year when beginning teachers are at their most vulnerable.

Relationships with other beginning teachers also played an important part in this phase of identity construction. Connecting with others who were at the same stage and going through similar experiences was an important source of reassurance for these teachers. They valued the opportunity to "offload to each other" when under stress, ask questions, and seek advice and feedback from peers who knew what they were going through and would empathize with them and not judge them. As one said, "It's comforting because we are all in the same boat. Just hearing about their trials and realizing that you don't have to feel as though you have failed if something goes wrong because it happens with everyone." This statement confirms the vulnerability they felt about their teaching, and highlights the positive effect that associating with others in similar situations can have in countering these feelings. This finding supports Kelchtermans (1993), who also found that comparison with other new teachers was important for beginning teachers' self-esteem. Relationships with other beginning teachers were especially important for those who did not have supportive interactions with their tutor teachers or other experienced colleagues, not only because they acted as a sounding board, but also because they provided much needed reassurance. One

suggested that, “just hearing someone say it sounds as though you are doing a great job, makes a huge difference” to how they felt about themselves as teachers.

The second phase in the beginning teachers’ construction of their identities occurred around the middle of the year and was characterized by a perceived shift in status. This was when that they felt they moved from being a novice teacher to becoming a colleague and member of the team. Key to this shift was the expansion of their collegial relationships. In this phase, members of their syndicate or teaching teams were added to tutor teachers and other beginning teachers as significant others in contributing to the construction of their professional identities. As their confidence in themselves as teachers had increased over time, they had become more active in contributing ideas and resources in team meetings which helped them to feel part of the team. The more involved they became in syndicate activities, the more they got to know their colleagues and vice versa. The more meaningful the interactions, the stronger their relationships with colleagues became. Around the middle of the year was the turning point in terms of how they perceived themselves and how others perceived them as teachers. It was at that point that they felt that they had become accepted by their colleagues as ‘teachers’ as opposed to ‘beginning teachers.’ The more their colleagues appeared to value their ideas and opinions, the more assured the beginning teachers became in taking part in syndicate activities like planning. This contributed to their sense of becoming fully functioning members of the group. As Chris said, “I don’t feel like they are trying to keep me afloat; I feel that I can stand on my own two feet now and actually give something back.” This corresponds with Ewing and Manuel’s (2005) study of early career teachers. They found that the priority for beginning teachers was gaining the essential, practical knowledge that would enable them to function effectively in a new environment. Once this had been achieved, teachers focused on building their professional identity and voice that involved becoming fully functioning members of school teams, just like the teachers in the current study.

This study also identified the significant role that children played in participants’ perception of themselves as teachers, rather than beginning teachers. While the children they taught were consistently viewed as the highlight, their relationship

with the children altered around the middle of the year. This change was related to how participants viewed themselves and how they behaved as teachers. As they became more confident and comfortable in their role, they shifted focus from “keeping control” and became more relaxed and open as teachers that helped them to “really be able to enjoy the children.” This change in their behaviour not only resulted in their getting to know their pupils on a deeper level, which helped them teach more effectively, it also resulted in them being viewed differently by the children. They believed that the more confident and relaxed that they were as teachers, the more their children came to “bond” with them and open up to them about themselves and their lives. This affirmed them as teachers, as they experienced a closer match between beliefs and reality in terms of establishing a classroom climate that would facilitate positive pupil-teacher relationships and children’s learning. All the first-year teachers connected the positive relationships that they had established with the children with increased pupil learning and identified these two aspects of teaching, (getting to know the children and the progress that they had made over the year), as being the most satisfactory part of the job. These teachers gained most satisfaction from what Scott and Dinham (1999) refer to as the “core business” of teaching, which are those activities and processes that directly, facilitate learning. The progress and achievement of their pupils was also a critical factor in the development of self-efficacy, the self-belief of teachers that they can exert a strong positive effect on their students’ success, which contributes to teachers’ self-esteem and motivation (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999; Kelchtermans, 1993).

The findings also indicate that changes in participants’ relationships with parents contributed to how they saw themselves as teachers. There was a feeling early in the year that parents were a “bit wary because they were first years,” but the more confident that the participants became as teachers, the more comfortable they felt in their interactions with parents and the more at ease the parents felt with them. The beginning teachers valued their improved relationships with parents for two reasons. It gave them more insight into their pupils, as well as provided them with reassuring feedback that the parents viewed them as bona fide teachers.

It is not surprising that time and experience in the job consolidated these first-years' views of themselves as teachers. The middle of the year was a turning point in terms of how they viewed themselves and how they were viewed by their colleagues, children, and parents. It is interesting that this shift occurred around the middle of the year for all of the first year teachers, no matter how easy or difficult their start to teaching had been nor how supportive or non-supportive their school context. This is similar to Lang's (2001) study of first-year New Zealand primary teachers who noted that most of her teachers found the second half of the year easier than the first half, commenting that "it had taken around six months to get beyond the survival stage" (p. 93). The present study shares some commonalities with the literature that conceptualizes the process of becoming a teacher in terms of developmental stages. Katz (1977) and Vilani (2002) identify the start of teaching as being the survival stage in terms of coping with (often unexpected) work demands and being accepted by colleagues, particularly when they first started teaching. This was certainly true for the majority of participants in this study. Berliner (1994) suggests five stages from novice to advanced beginner through to expert, with the progression being characterized by an increasing sense of responsibility and a deepening emotional involvement - responses that the beginning teachers in the present study experienced in relation to their pupils and colleagues. The term 'stages' implies a linear process of professional development, with clear transitional stages, which has been challenged by a number of researchers (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Grossman, 1992), with Pigge and Marso (1997) arguing that the process may vary for individuals. This is supported by the experiences of the beginning teachers in the present study in that they indicate that professional identities are not developed in a sequential fashion, nor are they fixed. The findings concur with Bullough (1989, p. 17) who asserts, "Human development defies easy categorization. It is seldom smooth, never conflict free, and frequently characterized by backsliding." This is most clearly exemplified by the beginning teachers' reactions to their employment situations.

Half of the beginning teachers in this study started the year as permanent members of their schools' staff. These teachers felt confident about going into their second year of teaching, because they believed that they had become

integrated into the professional cultures of their school and felt comfortable in their relationships with colleagues. The ones with permanent positions felt relieved that they didn't have to worry about jobs because "it takes a long time to get to know the people and feel comfortable to contribute and offer opinions. It takes a while to learn about your school and your school to get to know you." Their feelings of security and self-assurance contrasted markedly with those who had been appointed to relieving positions. As the year progressed these new teachers became more worried and stressed about their job possibilities for the following year, with the extra pressure distracting them from the thing that gave them most satisfaction: teaching their children to the best of their ability.

Lack of job security also impacted on how participants perceived themselves as teachers. They started to doubt their teaching competence. Not only was their self-esteem affected, but it also influenced how they perceived the school and their colleagues, as they felt let down and disappointed that their hard work and effort was not being recognized nor respected. These beginning teachers also worried about the impact that changing schools would have on their development as teachers. They seemed to be acknowledging the important role that professional cultures played in their development and recognizing the amount of time and energy that is required to get to know and become known in the school. One teacher in this situation commented that "Different schools have different philosophies and are run differently. It would be really unsettling to be learning a completely different situation in your second year of teaching."

The beginning teachers' feelings of vulnerability in relation to job status was similar to the study by Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) who found that formally being a member of the school in terms of their employment status was critical to their self-confidence as teachers. They suggested that not having a continuing contract implies not only giving up relationships with the children, colleagues, and parents, but also losing their identity and status as teachers. Kelchtermans and Ballet argue that "The longer the time of uncertainty about a job, the more the beginning teachers' self-esteem becomes threatened and the more they start doubting their professional competencies" (p. 113). In the present study, two people won permanent positions at their school around the middle of the year - an

event that appeared to have a positive effect on their professional identities. They felt that the change in their employment status had helped them to become more confident in their interactions with colleagues, with one describing herself as “becoming more assertive, because I am here to stay.” They also thought that their colleagues viewed them differently and that people had become more committed to building a relationship with them once they became permanent staff members.

It is evident that employment issues engendered intense, emotional responses in these beginning teachers, although this was not the only situation where strong feelings were evident. Hargreaves (1998) argues that teaching is an emotional practice - a view that is supported by the present study, which found that emotions were a key component in the way the beginning teachers viewed their work and themselves as teachers. Even after ten months of teaching, they had vivid recall of starting to teach, not only in terms of what occurred, but also in terms of the conflicting emotions they experienced. They clearly remembered the feelings of relief to be teaching at last and the excitement of having their own class, but also how worried they were about doing a good job as teachers and making a positive impression on colleagues and parents. The beginning teachers who had some familiarity with their schools, either through practicum, spending time when appointed, or through their children attending the school, described feelings of relief that they did “not have to walk into the staffroom and see a sea of people you don’t know.” While they may have felt less nervous about fronting up to their first job than those who had no prior contact with their school, all participants faced the same challenge of having to quickly establish relationships with the children, their parents, their tutor teacher, syndicate, principal, and other teaching and support staff, as well as coming to grips with the demands and complexities of their work as teachers, both inside and outside the classroom. It is not surprising, therefore, that they sought emotional support and reassurance from peers, colleagues, friends and family, in order to counter their feelings of vulnerability. As these beginning teachers struggled to appear and become knowledgeable, their feelings of self-doubt and worry had the potential to undermine how they perceived themselves as teachers, hence the important role that professional cultures play in beginning teacher development. Those which

facilitated collegial and collaborative relationships helped to counterbalance the negative effects such emotions could have on their developing professional identities.

The importance of working in a positive environment which provided access to emotional as well as practical support was something every participant identified as being critical to their survival prior to taking up their positions - a belief that they maintained throughout their first year of teaching. Such conditions helped them to address their need for affiliation, expressed as their desire to become, and be recognized, as part of the team. The effects on professional identity of not feeling part of the team is exemplified by Kathy, who taught a mixed-year levels class and who was accountable to two syndicates. For work related to one class level she reported to her tutor teacher and for the other, she reported to the syndicate leader. She felt that she did not belong in either syndicate and described herself as a misfit. Kathy became increasingly anxious and depressed about not being able to fit in and become part of either team. The emotional impact of feeling isolated and alone affected her self-esteem as a teacher, as well as her professional learning. Kathy's confirmation as a permanent staff member later in the year gave her the impetus, as well as the confidence, to address this situation successfully, which had a positive effect not only on how she perceived herself as a teacher, but also on how her colleagues viewed and acted towards her.

The beginning teachers in this study devoted a large amount of emotional energy, as well as time, to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. In the beginning they were "shocked" at the amount of work entailed in being a teacher and felt that teaching had taken over their lives. They felt constantly tired, not only because of their work in and outside the classroom, but also because they could not stop thinking about teaching and their pupils, even when they were at home. The feeling that teaching dominated their lives was not only in terms of the workload and amount of learning that they were doing as teachers, but also because of their intense feelings of responsibility. They wanted to be a good teacher for their pupils and a good colleague to their co-workers - goals that they maintained over their first year of teaching. The beginning teachers in this study had a deep, emotional involvement with their work as teachers for the same reasons and with

similar consequences that Nias (1996) identifies. Nias argues that the emotional dimension to teaching is inevitable for three reasons: firstly, because teaching is a job that involves interactions between people, and as one teacher in this study asserted, “It’s all about relationships.” The second reason is because teachers invest their personal identities in their work, often erasing boundaries between their personal lives so that their teaching and their classroom becomes the main sources of self-esteem and satisfaction, as well as their vulnerability or, in the words of one participant, “the kids are probably the most stressful part of the job, but also the greatest satisfaction.”

The third reason for the intensity of teacher emotions towards their work, according to Nias (1996), is because they invest so heavily in it. This could help explain the reason why job security became a flashpoint of emotions for the beginning teachers that did not have permanent jobs in the present study. Nias argues that this emotional investment is because teachers work hard and spend a lot of time with their pupils and come to love them and rejoice in their successes and achievements. When the beginning teachers in the present study felt that they were being effective teachers, it was because their students were learning and achieving and this is when they experienced the most satisfaction. The “joy” that they got out of seeing the role that they played in their pupils’ achievement was an important source of their self-esteem as teachers, which was also linked to their feelings of self-efficacy. They felt this most strongly from around the middle of the year, as they became more confident and comfortable in their role as teachers. This is when they all talked about “loving the job.”

The beginning teachers experienced anxiety and sometimes panic when they felt that they were not teaching effectively. Such emotions, while typically experienced in the period of transition shock were also triggered by work-related situations, such as less than positive relationships with colleagues and uncertainty around their job status. In such situations, the self-esteem and sense of self-efficacy that participants gained from their relationships with pupils seemed to over-ride the potential that such negative emotions could have on teacher identities. An example of this is Sam whose relationships with colleagues had soured over the course of the year to the extent that she felt estranged from her

tutor teacher and syndicate team. Sam believed that she was not affected by a lack of collegial support or affirmation because of her “passion” for the children: “I keep on reminding myself that teaching is what’s going on in the classroom and it’s not about issues with other adults. I love every minute of the classroom stuff.” Sam’s experience supports Woods et al.’s (1997, p. 61) assertion that “in situations where teachers otherwise feel under pressure, the one thing that keeps them going is their relationship with pupils.” It is interesting that regardless of how they experienced their first year of teaching, 11 participants believed that they would still be teaching in five years time, while the other wanted to become a child psychologist. This seems to support previous writers (Lortie, 1975; Hargreaves, 1998, 2000) who have argued that primary teachers derive their job satisfaction from the psychic or intrinsic rewards of teaching, or from the emotional bonds and emotional understandings that they have established with their class.

Bullough and Young (2002, p. 418), in their study of English primary school interns, comment that even when the first year of teaching is judged successful, it is a trying time and one that tests the beginning teachers’ competence, commitment to teach, and conceptions of self. They argue that moving from a novice to an expert teacher involves working on and through one’s emotions in context. The findings of the present study, concur with their argument that the emotional component of learning to teach may shift in its intensity and wax and wane over time, but it never goes away. This is because emotions are at the heart of teaching (Hargreaves, 1998; 2000).

Summary

In his review of research on teacher identity, Van den Berg (2002, p. 586) argues that a growing number of educational researchers are becoming convinced that teaching and learning does not involve only knowledge, cognition, and skills, but also involves an affective component of “emotional practices.” He also suggests that the research base on the emotional aspects of teaching is somewhat limited. Zembylas (2001, 2003), who investigated the significance of teachers’ emotions in the context of science teaching, holds that identity formation and emotion are

inextricably linked, an argument that is supported by the present study. This finding is not surprising given these beginning teachers' strong beliefs about teaching, about wanting to make a positive difference to children and their lives, and the amount of time and energy that they invested into their teaching and relationship-building with children and colleagues.

The present study indicates that beginning teachers' feelings of confidence and effectiveness are key ingredients in the construction of their teacher identities. Context played a major role in this. The findings suggest that when the professional culture of the school supported collaborative practices across the school, beginning teachers were more likely to encounter the emotional and professional support necessary to develop their confidence and professional competence. They also suggest that a collegial atmosphere that encouraged social as well as professional interactions assisted participants to become self-assured and contributing members of their school community. A major factor in supporting beginning teacher learning and identity development was their relationships with colleagues and pupils.

The present study supports previous research (Nias, 1989, 1996; Hargreaves, 1994; Sumsion, 2002) that has argued that teachers' identities are not only constructed from the technical and emotional aspects of teaching, but "...can be conceptualized as the result of an interaction between the personal experiences of teachers and the social, cultural, and institutional environments in which they function on a daily basis" (Van den Berg, 2002, p. 579). The findings show that while biography, beliefs, emotions, and context influenced the way that the beginning teachers perceived and conceived of themselves as teachers, it was the interplay between these factors that was critical to their professional development and learning. The study also indicates that there is an interrelationship between personal and contextual factors that affects how teachers perceive themselves. Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons (2006) argue that teacher identities are not stable or fixed. This position is supported by this study that shows that teachers' views of themselves changed in relation to context-specific circumstances, and that these views were framed according to whether their emotional reactions were positive or negative. This confirms the important role that school-related factors

played in the development of these 12 beginning teachers. It also reinforces the need for induction policies and practices to take account of the role that school culture plays in the transition, development, and professional learning of beginning teachers.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

“It’s a great job once you get used to it”

This research project was motivated by a desire to gain a greater knowledge of the process of transition and adjustment that beginning teachers undergo as they move from being pre-service students to becoming teachers. The aim was to examine and understand this process from the perspective of beginning teachers.

Using a qualitative approach this longitudinal study investigated the first-year experiences of 12 beginning teachers in 11 Auckland primary schools. Data derived from interviews and surveys undertaken prior to the participants graduating from their pre-service programme and throughout their first year of teaching were analyzed to identify factors that enabled or limited the beginning teachers’ professional development and learning. I identified research questions from the literature and from my own experience as a teacher educator and researcher on beginning teachers. Of particular interest in the present study was an examination of how the participants’ pre-service teacher education programme, the contextual features of their school, and their own beliefs and biographies influenced their transition and development as first year teachers. Also of interest was an understanding of how these factors affected participants’ construction of themselves as teachers.

This chapter provides a summary of the investigation’s key findings and discusses implications for policy and practice. Limitations of the study and matters arising from the study that could be developed through further research are also identified.

Summary of Key Findings

I have talked a lot to you this year about teaching being really hard and it being really stressful, you know, but that's only part of it. It is hard and it is stressful but what I think I haven't said quite so much is how much I do enjoy it. At the start of the year, if people said to me, "Oh a teacher, why do you want to be a teacher?" I used to think, "yes, I am kind of wondering that myself." Now I'm like, teaching is great, what are you on about? And I really enjoy it and I love working with the staff and I love working with the kids. The paperwork doesn't bother me so much and having all that organized makes me feel that I'm better able to be a teacher. But I've talked about how hard and stressful it is, and it is, you know, but I do love this job. I do love teaching and it's a great job. And once you get used to it – not once you get used to it, but once you learn a bit about it and about your school and you get to know your school and your school gets to know you, it's really good.

The above comment, made by Chris in the last term of her first year of teaching, epitomizes the experiences of the beginning teachers in this study. By the end of their first year of teaching, the participants felt affirmed in their choice of teaching as a career. While they believed that teaching had become less stressful as they became more experienced as teachers, they all recognized that teaching was, and will always be, a challenging profession. What made the job worthwhile for them were the children whom they taught and the people they worked with. Chris's positive attitude towards teaching was also related to her perception of herself as a teacher. In common with the other beginning teachers, Chris's first year of teaching was a time of huge professional learning and identity development in which school-related factors played a key role. However, the findings of this study identified that it was not one factor, but a number of factors and the inter-relationship between these factors which affected the beginning teachers' professional growth over time as well as influenced their views of teaching and themselves as teachers.

The influence of the pre-service teacher education programme

Although the beginning teachers believed that, overall, their pre-service programme had prepared them well for teaching, the findings show that the coursework and practicum components had different effects in terms of facilitating the shift from student to teacher.

- Coursework component: The curriculum courses and associated planning, teaching, and assessment knowledge and skills, were the aspects most consistently identified as being most useful to these beginning teachers. While none of the participants predicted reflection as being useful prior to graduating, once they started teaching, they identified their knowledge and skills of reflective practice as playing a major role in their development as teachers.
- The practicum component: While this was perceived to be critical to participants' preparation and practice as teachers, the data revealed two main areas where there was a mismatch between their practicum experiences and the realities that they faced as first-year teachers. One disparity related to the stress that they experienced when they first started teaching, while the other related to understanding the size and scope of the job of teaching. The participants' practicum experiences had not enabled them to gain a realistic understanding of what a teacher had to do to set up a class from scratch at the beginning of the year, nor had they exposed them to the full range and complexity of teachers' work demands and responsibilities.
- The beginning teachers thought that there were major differences between their practicum and their teaching experiences in terms of assisting their development as teachers. On practicum, the participants felt a lack of autonomy because they felt that they had to follow their associate teachers' routines and practices, whereas as beginning teachers, they felt part of a community of practice, which supported them to become confident and independent teachers.

The role played by school atmosphere and dynamics

This study found that the professional culture of the school, as conveyed by school atmosphere and dynamics, played a critical role in assisting the beginning teachers' transition to teaching and development as teachers in the following ways.

- A supportive school environment which engendered positive staff interactions and relationships helped the beginning teachers to connect with their colleagues and to gain confidence to seek help and advice from other teachers. Staff in such schools worked collaboratively and took account of each other and the needs of beginning teachers.
- A supportive environment was particularly important at the beginning of the year in terms of facilitating the transition from student to teacher, because this was when the beginning teachers were confronted with the sharpest learning curve in terms of coming to grips with the demands and responsibilities of being a teacher and the mores of their school. A positive relationship with their tutor teacher played a key role at this time as the more emotional support and encouragement the beginning teachers received from their tutor teachers, the more assured they became as teachers. While their tutor teachers continued to be important to the beginning teachers, the relationship with their syndicate or teaching team grew in importance from around the middle of the year. Developing reciprocal relationships with members of their syndicate increased their self-confidence and self-belief, which contributed to their feeling of being bone fide teachers (rather than beginners) who could legitimately contribute ideas and resources to the team.
- A key finding relates to the role that social interactions with colleagues played in the professional lives of these beginning teachers. The data point to the significant role that regular and planned social events played in beginning teacher development. Socializing with colleagues helped to assuage the first-year teachers' stress and uncertainty and helped them to build relationships with staff across the school, which increased their access to support and advice. Getting to know staff on a personal as well as a professional level also made them feel more like colleagues rather than novices, which helped them to become part of their school community.
- The professional culture of the school was a key influence on the ease and speed with which beginning teachers adjusted to their new role and developed as teachers. Schools that encouraged and facilitated the development of

positive collegial relationships and networks enabled the beginning teachers to gain access to information, advice, and support from a range of staff. These collegial relationships could be at the level of teaching teams and/or the whole school, but their effect was to help the beginning teachers fit in and become part of the team. This, in turn, influenced the ease and speed with which they came to grips with their role as teachers and their school's expectations of them.

- Conversely, professional cultures that did not encourage constructive, collegial interactions impeded development and learning as participants found it more difficult to figure out their school's prevailing customs and practices. This affected their work and how they viewed themselves. The first-year teachers who experienced fewer formal and informal opportunities to interact with colleagues tended to be acutely aware of their beginning teacher status, sometimes feeling that other staff ignored or patronized them because they were novices. This made them want to hold back from interacting with their more experienced colleagues, which reduced opportunities for relationship-building and got in the way of their becoming part of the team. As a consequence, they were more likely to go through a protracted trial and error process of understanding and meeting school requirements and expectations.
- In summary, becoming a member of the school's professional community was a key task faced by the beginning teachers. The ease or difficulty of becoming part of the group was related to their ability to understand school specific norms, practices, and expectations, hence the critical role played by the professional culture of the school in beginning teacher transition and development. Schools with collaborative work cultures facilitated the development of informal and formal, social and professional staff relationships and interactions, which enabled the beginning teachers to get to know and learn from their more experienced colleagues, which helped them to fit in and become part of the team.

The effect of beginning teacher induction and professional development opportunities

This research found that while induction was critical to the professional development of the beginning teachers, there was variability in how schools conceptualized and implemented induction programmes and that these differences affected beginning teacher transition and development.

- Participants identified the 0.2 time allocation to schools which is mandated for the induction of New Zealand first-year primary teachers as being a critical success factor contributing to their growth and learning as teachers. They also looked forward to receiving the recently approved 0.1 provision for second-year teachers and felt that they would get maximum benefit from this, as they now had a clear idea of their professional development needs.
- This study confirmed the vital role that tutor teachers, a key aspect of the New Zealand induction system, play in the professional lives of beginning teachers. Regular informal and formal contact with a tutor teacher whom they felt they could trust and who cared about them was important, particularly at the beginning of the year when the first-year teachers were confronted by an overload of information and learning. Not only did this enable the beginning teachers to ask questions and get practical information on an as-needed basis, it also provided opportunities for the new teachers to receive emotional support and reassurance about their classroom and their teaching.
- This study found that tutor teacher interactions and support were more likely to be informal and irregular than formal and systematic and that mentors prioritized emotional support and practical assistance rather than implementing systematic approaches to developing beginning teachers' professional knowledge and practice. While formal contact with their tutor teachers decreased over the year, this was mainly because the beginning teachers felt that their increased experience and confidence meant that they did not need as much support.

- The data identify three major induction activities that contributed to the new teachers' professional growth and learning. The activity with least impact was attendance at one-off beginning teacher courses held off-site, although participants, especially those who were finding it difficult to establish relationships in their own schools, valued the opportunity to get new ideas and to meet and share experiences with other beginning teachers. Just over half of the sample identified observing experienced teachers in their own and other schools as an important induction activity because it helped them to get new ideas and enabled them to benchmark how they were developing against more experienced teachers.
- The induction activity rated as most useful was feedback from experienced teachers following their observation of beginning teachers' classroom practice. While feedback on what was going well was seen as a confidence booster, it had the most impact in terms of professional learning when beginning teachers were provided with specific information arising from observations of their teaching and when this was used to collaboratively plan their advice and guidance programme. A quarter of the participants had minimal or no observations of their teaching and so missed out on the chance to receive specific feedback on their teaching which may have assisted them to analyze and improve their professional practice.
- The tone and manner in which feedback was given to the beginning teachers was also a factor in assisting or hindering their development. Feedback that was constructive and positively framed, particularly from their tutor teachers early in the year, helped the participants to view their colleagues as being approachable and available for support, which made the beginning teachers feel more comfortable about seeking and receiving feedback and advice.
- The schools that employed the beginning teachers fell into two broad groupings in terms of how induction was conceptualized. The differences in these approaches impacted on the quality of the beginning teachers' professional learning opportunities. Some schools' induction programmes appeared to be neither co-ordinated nor systematic, with participants initiating

and organizing their own professional development activities. While these participants did not necessarily perceive their working environment to be unsupportive, the data suggest that beginning teachers who had an ad hoc approach to induction were more likely to have experienced greater difficulties. In contrast, schools which embedded their induction programme into a whole-school approach to professional development provided the most positive conditions for beginning teacher growth and learning. Professional development in these schools was organized and systematic, focused on both pupil and teacher learning, enabled participation in activities that facilitated professional discussions, and regular appraisals were the norm for all teachers in the school. The participants valued this approach because it did not make them feel singled out as novices and also because it facilitated collaborative working relationships between experienced and beginning teachers across the school.

The place of biography, beliefs, context, and emotions in beginning teacher professional growth and identity development

- Personal history played a key role in terms of participants' choice of teaching as a career and on the way they constructed themselves as teachers. While friends and family who were teachers and former teachers played a key role in this group of first year teachers' decisions to go teaching, their values and images of teaching and what it meant to be a teacher were formed mainly through their own experiences as school students.
- While the teachers in this study were attracted to teaching for idealistic reasons related to making a difference to children's lives, they also appeared to have a realistic view of what teaching would be like. Prior to graduating, they did not expect major difficulties in matters to do with classroom teaching. They were concerned about establishing relationships with colleagues and being able to access support in order to help them to meet school expectations, as well as managing the paperwork and maintaining a work-life balance. These were the very aspects that most of the participants found particularly challenging.

- A key finding relates to prior beliefs about children and learning. Apart from those who had children, the participants did not bring into their pre-service programme strong beliefs about children and learning. Contrary to their beliefs about teachers and teaching which were influenced by biographical factors, participants' beliefs about learning appeared to develop through the coursework and practicum experiences of their teacher preparation programme. These beliefs were reinforced and extended by their experiences as first-year teachers, particularly in terms of the importance of gaining a deep understanding of each child in terms of their backgrounds and learning strengths and needs to enable them to effectively provide for the 'huge range' of children in their class.
- This study identifies the role that relationships play in identity development. The data show that the beginning teachers went through two broad phases in terms of developing their identities as teachers and that each phase was characterized by affiliation factors, particularly in how they perceived and were perceived by significant others in these relationships.
- The first phase in the beginning teachers' construction of their identities occurred in the first half of the year. This phase was characterized by a sense of uncertainty and insecurity and was most evident in the first six weeks of teaching. While the beginning teachers acknowledged the importance of having a support network of family and friends, it was their relationships with colleagues, particularly their tutor teachers, which provided the critical emotional and practical support that impacted on how they viewed themselves as teachers. These relationships helped them to navigate the tension of having to appear confident in front of their class, parents, and colleagues, while at the same time being keenly aware of their beginning teacher status. Relationships with first- and second-year teachers also played an important part in this phase. Interacting with others who were at the same stage and going through similar experiences provided a source of reassurance for these beginning teachers.

- The second phase in the beginning teachers' construction of their identities occurred around the middle of the year and was characterized by a perceived shift in status. This was when they felt that they moved from being a novice teacher to becoming a colleague and a member of the team. Key to this shift was the expansion of their collegial relationships. In this phase, members of their syndicate or teaching teams were added to tutor teachers and other beginning teachers as significant others in contributing to the development of their teacher identities.
- The professional culture of the school in terms of the extent to which it facilitated the development of positive, reciprocal relationships between colleagues played a major role in their professional and identity development as teachers. The importance of working in a positive environment, which provided access to emotional as well as practical support, was something every participant identified as being critical to their survival prior to taking up their positions, a belief they maintained throughout their first year of teaching. Such conditions helped them to address their need for affiliation, expressed as their desire to become, and be recognized as, part of the team.
- The children whom they taught also played a significant role in their perception of themselves as teachers as opposed to beginning teachers. While the children were consistently viewed as the highlight, from around the middle of the year the participants' relationships with the children changed. This change was related to how they viewed themselves and acted as teachers. As they became more confident and comfortable in their role, they shifted focus from 'keeping control' and became more relaxed and open as teachers, which helped them to "really be able to enjoy the children."
- The professional identities of the beginning teachers were bound up with their beliefs about learning and teaching, which bore a strong relationship to their reasons for becoming teachers, namely the desire to make a difference. This is exemplified by how they judged their own development as teachers, which was in terms of their impact on the children. By the end of the year, they held positive views of themselves as effective teachers because the children that

they taught enjoyed school and because of the academic progress reflected in assessment results, that their children had made over the year. The beginning teachers' greatest satisfaction was seeing what the children had achieved and the role that they had played as teachers in this process.

- Identity was linked to the development of positive collegial and pupil relationships and was important for maintaining motivation, self-esteem, and job satisfaction. This is perhaps not surprising given the beginning teachers' strong beliefs about teaching, about wanting to make a positive difference to children and their lives, and given the amount of time and emotional and physical energy that they invested in their teaching and relationship building with children and colleagues.
- Professional identity development was not a linear or fixed process, as demonstrated by participant reactions to employment issues. Half of the beginning teachers in this study started the year as permanent members of their schools' staff. These teachers felt confident about going into their second year of teaching because they had integrated into the professional cultures of their school and felt comfortable in their relationships with colleagues. Their feelings of security and self-confidence contrasted markedly with those who had been appointed to relieving positions. As the year progressed, these participants became more worried and stressed about their job possibilities for the following year, which impacted on their sense of self-esteem as teachers. The extra worry and pressure from having to apply for jobs also distracted them from the thing that gave them most satisfaction - teaching the children in their class to the best of their ability.
- Emotions were embedded in the way that the beginning teachers viewed their work and themselves as teachers. The first-year teachers in this study devoted a large amount of emotional energy, as well as time, to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. In the beginning, they felt that teaching had taken over their lives. They felt constantly tired, not only because of their work in and outside the classroom, but also because they could not stop thinking about teaching and their pupils, even when they were at home. The feeling that

teaching dominated their life was not only in terms of the workload and amount of learning that they were doing as teachers, but also because of their intense feelings of responsibility. This investment of emotional energy in their job may explain why job security became a flashpoint of emotions for the beginning teachers who did not have permanent jobs.

- In summary, while biography, beliefs, emotions and context influenced the way that the beginning teachers perceived and conceived themselves as teachers, it was the interplay between these factors that played the critical role in their professional development, and learning. The interrelationship between personal and contextual factors suggests that the participants' professional identities were not stable or fixed. The data indicate that how the beginning teachers viewed themselves changed in relation to context-specific circumstances, which confirms the important role that school-related factors played in the development of these beginning teachers.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this research suggest a number of implications for teacher education, and in particular, for the education of beginning teachers in New Zealand settings.

The first set of implications relates to teacher preparation programmes. While this study identified a stronger and more positive relationship than is often found in the literature between the participants' pre-service programme and their experiences as first-year teachers, the findings did suggest that the transition from student to teacher may be eased by the structuring of practicum placements and requirements to help first-year teachers make a more aware and confident start to teaching. A beginning-of-the-year practicum placement, which encompasses the first weeks of the school year (starting when teachers are required to be back at work), would not only expose students to the roles and responsibilities of being a staff member from day one, but would also enable them to comprehend the work required and the associated challenges, and would enable them to establish from scratch social and academic expectations and routines with a new class of diverse

children. This may require more than a reorganization of the practicum. Field-based experiences should be constructed as sites for inquiry into learning about teaching, as well as preparation for the transition into full-time teaching. There are questions around how practicum should be conceptualized, designed, and resourced so as to expose student teachers as realistically as possible to the full range and complexity of teachers' work and to ensure that they are not overwhelmed by the administrative, extra curricular, and relationship building demands that they will meet as first-year teachers.

It will not be sufficient for teacher education providers alone to address such practicum-related issues. The findings indicate that associate teachers can mask the realities of being a teacher by not requiring student teachers to engage in activities such as student record-keeping, playground duty, or attendance at after-school or syndicate meetings, even though engagement in such events are practicum requirements. Teacher educators and practicum schools need to work together to ensure that student teachers are provided with authentic opportunities to experience and understand the size and scope of the job of being a primary teacher. Students also should be provided with classroom and school conditions that enable them to learn about teaching and themselves as developing teachers, which imply opportunities for experimentation and risk-taking. This suggests that practicum should be conceptualized as being a site for collaborative endeavour, which prioritizes learning about teaching, as well as performance. This will require shared understandings to be developed among teacher educators, student teachers, and associate teachers, which may mean the development and resourcing of selective partnerships between a provider and a limited number of schools.

There is joint work to be done on addressing the tension that student teachers experience when asked to practice and experiment on practicum, while being regularly evaluated by school and teacher education staff. An associate teacher's prime responsibility is to the children in their class, so it is logical that student teachers are expected to copy the practices established by the classroom teacher. Similarly, a student may want to err on the side of caution in terms of experimentation and risk-taking, given that a pass in practicum is critical to their success in their teacher preparation programme. Although understandable, this

situation does not fully prepare students for their responsibilities as beginning teachers when they are required to act autonomously in setting up their own classroom norms and expectations. It may be that teacher education pre-service programmes could be reshaped and extended to include an internship phase where student teachers have, perhaps, a six-month school placement in the final year of their teacher preparation programme, with requirements more closely mirroring the expectations and responsibilities of a beginning teacher. This time frame would also provide student teachers with opportunities to engage in collaborative learning with experienced teachers across the school. Another possibility would be to redesign the induction period, so that beginning teachers do not take on the full responsibilities of a teacher from the first day of their first-year of teaching. Policy makers, teacher educators, and schools could draw on the examples of other professions which take a more scaffolded approach to the induction of novices, so that beginning teachers do not face such an abrupt conversion from student to teacher.

The second set of implications relates to the present study's findings regarding the role played by school atmosphere and dynamics in new teachers' transition from student to teacher and their professional development and learning. The study indicates that becoming a successful beginning teacher is partly dependent on the frequency and type of formal and informal interactions with colleagues and the quality of the staff's professional and social relationships. A collaborative work culture enables new teachers to learn from their more experienced colleagues and assists them to understand and perform in accordance with school specific expectations and practices, which in turn contributes to the ease and speed with which they become part of the school community. This suggests that beginning teachers would benefit greatly from working in schools that exhibit such workplace characteristics. Given the critical role that principals play in establishing the professional culture that operates in the school, it could be beneficial if professional development is provided by the Ministry of Education so that principals know what kinds of school cultures support beginning teacher learning and development, as well as the effects of not providing such conditions. Evidence-based professional development strategies that facilitate the sharing of best practice among schools that intend to or do employ beginning teachers would

be a positive approach. Perhaps there needs to be discussion about whether all schools should be able to appoint beginning teachers, or about what should happen if there is evidence identifying concerns around the professional culture or effectiveness of a school. In terms of the focus of this study, there are policy level questions about the types of interventions that should or could be made regarding beginning teachers in such schools. These are important questions given the international research which demonstrates that the quality of the professional experience when starting to teach has a crucial influence on teacher quality, as well as teacher retention.

The third set of implications arising from this study relate to beginning teacher induction. While the allocation of the 0.2 time allowance for beginning teacher induction was considered by the participants to be a critical success factor for their growth as teachers, the findings show that there was variability in the amount and quality of their induction experiences. The challenge for policy makers and principals is to ensure that all beginning teachers have the same opportunities to learn and grow in contexts that support, as well as challenge, their professional knowledge and skill development. This raises a question about whether there should be more oversight of schools that employ beginning teachers to ensure that there is capability to provide sound advice and guidance programmes. Should there be more Ministry of Education control over the appointment of beginning teachers to ensure that they start their teaching careers in situations that are conducive to their professional development? This would enable the Ministry of Education to take a more targeted approach to the allocation of resources for new teacher professional development and so reduce the patchiness of New Zealand beginning primary teachers' current induction experiences. Policy decisions and strategies are critical to ensure that all new teachers are exposed to induction practices that improve their professional thinking and practice. This will not only benefit beginning teachers, but also have a positive impact on children's learning through improving teaching quality.

The study shows that planned opportunities to work alongside and learn from expert colleagues are vital for new teacher development, with the tutor teacher playing a significant role in this process. The findings indicate, however, that

while the emotional and practical support provided by tutor teachers was an important factor in building beginning teacher self-confidence, less emphasis was given to providing strategies that developed novices' thinking and practice. Given the large financial investment made by the New Zealand Ministry of Education in beginning teacher induction, it would seem to be important for policy makers to identify effective induction approaches that address the learning, as well as affective needs, of beginning teachers, and to provide professional development for the school staff who are most closely associated with beginning teacher induction. Currently there is no requirement for tutor teachers to engage in any form of professional development to prepare themselves for this critical professional leadership role. Given the part they play in beginning teachers' transition and development, it would seem especially important that tutor teachers are provided with, and required to engage in, structured opportunities to acquire and develop knowledge and skills for effective mentoring. The principal and senior staff need to play their part in ensuring that organizational structures are put in place to allow time in the busyness of the school day for beginning teachers and their tutor teachers to meet, and to ensure that the 0.2 time allocation is used for planned and systematic beginning teacher induction throughout the year, rather than to cover staffing shortfalls through teacher sickness or course attendance. The principal has a crucial role in terms of selecting tutor teachers who have the skills, inclination and time to undertake the important and demanding work of initiating new teachers into school-specific expectations and practices, as well as mentoring their professional development.

The last set of implications relates to beginning teacher professional identity development. The findings show that the first-year teachers' professional identities were bound up in their beliefs about learning and teaching, which were strongly related to their reasons for becoming teachers. The children that they taught played an important role in how beginning teachers viewed themselves as teachers. The participants' greatest satisfaction, and major source of self-esteem, came from seeing their children learn and achieve academically and socially. It is, therefore, critical that beginning teachers are provided with the conditions and resources that enable them to work effectively with their class so that they can see themselves as being successful teachers. The teachers in this study poured a huge

amount of time, energy, and emotion into their work as they strove to be good teachers with regard to the children they taught, the parents, and their colleagues, while at the same time being acutely aware of their beginning teacher status. It is, therefore, important that schools recognize the vulnerability that surrounds being a beginning teacher, particularly when they first start to teach. First-year teachers try hard to appear and to become competent and confident in the face of their own feelings of self-doubt and anxiety about how they are performing in relation to their own and their schools' expectations. This again highlights the importance of school cultures to beginning teacher development. Schools which provide planned opportunities for social mixing and professional learning assist beginning teachers to access emotional and practical support from colleagues, which helps to counteract the negative effects which such emotions could have on their developing professional identities.

The first-year teachers in this study had a strong need for affiliation. Given the critical role that positive interactions and relationships with colleagues play in beginning teacher identity development, schools need to ensure that beginning teachers are provided with planned and structured opportunities to interact and form relationships with a wide range of colleagues. It may assist principals and senior management in taking a more considered approach to providing conditions conducive to collegial support for beginning teacher development if they are aware of the roles that colleagues play at different stages of a teacher's first year of teaching. For example, most tutor teachers are given time, especially early in the year, to work with and give emotional support to their beginning teachers with the consequent positive effect on beginning teacher self-esteem. What else could schools do to enable new teachers to access other colleagues who are significant in their professional lives? For example, given that other beginning teachers appear to play a role in new teacher identity development, could schools timetable beginning teacher release in such a way as to enable all the new teachers in the school, or a cluster of schools, to link up with each other, and so have further opportunities to access emotional, practical support and reassurance? Perhaps schools could do more to support teaching teams in working with beginning teachers given the role they seem to play in facilitating a shift in the beginning

teachers' perceptions of themselves from being a beginner to becoming a bone fide teacher and member of the team.

The findings also suggest that beginning teachers have to be active agents in the process of learning to teach. New teachers need to take advantage of every opportunity to advance their professional knowledge and skills, especially if they are not receiving a robust advice and guidance programme. For some first-year teachers this may mean that they have to be proactive in seeking out colleagues who can provide them with the support and feedback to help them develop and maintain a sense of confidence and belief in their own efficacy. Perhaps pre-service programmes need to review programme content and structure to ensure that students know and understand that becoming a teacher is as much about relationship building and becoming a member of the group as it is about classroom knowledge and skills. Could teacher preparation programmes do more to provide planned opportunities for student teachers to develop the agency and resilience that they will need as beginning teachers? The findings indicate that professional identity development is not stable and can be derailed by situations that are beyond a beginning teacher's control. A major factor that influenced the way that these first-year teachers viewed their work and themselves as teachers was related to their employment status, with those in relieving positions displaying greater stress and less self-confidence than those who had been appointed to permanent jobs. It would help beginning teachers to feel less personally and professionally vulnerable if there were policy-level decisions that addressed the apparently increasing trend in New Zealand for beginning teachers to be appointed to short-term positions.

Directions for Further Research

Using a qualitative approach, this longitudinal study investigated the first-year experiences of 12 beginning teachers in Auckland primary schools. While sufficient data were collected to be able to explore and describe the factors that enabled or limited the beginning teachers' professional development and learning over their first year of teaching, caution must be exercised in generalizing the findings to other first-year primary teachers. A possible limitation of this study

may relate to my dual role as both researcher and senior staff member in the teacher education institution in which the participants were enrolled. Although any effects of these dual roles were less likely to apply once the participants started teaching, and an independent interviewer was used as a check on possible effects, it is still possible that their responses were influenced by the differences in the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the participants. Another possible limitation may relate to the sampling strategies employed in the study. The participants were graduates of one teacher education programme, so factors unique to this programme may account for the results. The participants were also self-selected in that they chose to put their names forward to participate in the study, which may mean that they are not representative of the primary beginning teacher population in general. The sample was made up of eleven females and one male and all but one taught in urban Auckland schools.

Rather than these matters being seen as limitations of this study, they should be viewed as opening up and suggesting avenues for further research. The present study used a convenience sample drawn from student teachers who had been appointed to teaching positions before they graduated from their pre-service programme. This was because I was, in part, interested in comparing and contrasting participants' predictions of what would help or hinder them as first-year teachers with their lived experiences as beginning teachers. Further investigations, using different samples or methodologies, would add to our knowledge in the area. For example, would beginning teachers in other parts of New Zealand, or those who are not appointed to jobs immediately after they graduate, have different experiences? What would studies that sample according to gender, age, and ethnicity tell us? It would be interesting to investigate these characteristics to see if they have a significant influence on beginning teachers' experiences and the meaning they made of their experiences. Further research, incorporating qualitative approaches, to investigate a cross-sectional, random sample of beginning primary teachers nationally would test the explanations arising from the present study and yield statistical data that would increase the generalizability of the findings to all New Zealand beginning primary teachers.

Conclusion

Feiman-Nemser (2001a, p. 1026) contends that “New teachers have two jobs – they have to teach and they have to learn to teach.” This study confirms that learning to teach in context is a key task for beginning teachers, but also suggests that this statement does not do justice to the level of challenge and demands that first year teachers face when starting to teach.

This study is significant in that it provides a comprehensive and nuanced view of factors that influence beginning teachers’ transition to teaching and their learning and development as first-year teachers. The findings paint a complex picture of the relationship between biography, beliefs, preparation, and context in this process. While all 12 teachers were looking forward to their second year of teaching, how they viewed their first year was very much dependent on their in-school experiences. School culture played a key role in this. A collegial and collaborative professional culture, that focused on whole school professional development, provided the beginning teachers with the conditions to flourish as teachers. Those in less supportive environments were more likely to experience an ad hoc approach to induction, which impacted negatively on their opportunities for professional learning.

The findings also reveal that emotions and social interactions were central to becoming a teacher. Relationships with colleagues played a critical role in providing the new teachers with the support and reassurance that helped them to develop their professional expertise and identity. Those in less supportive environments found it more difficult to access the formal and informal school networks that were important in assisting the first-year teachers to feel ‘part of the team’ and become confident and contributing members of the school community. The study also shows that, while teacher confidence may grow with time and experience, it is also vulnerable to changes in circumstances.

The lived experiences of the new teachers in this study confirm that becoming a primary teacher is a complex process, involving a range of programme and in-school factors, which intersect with biography and beliefs. There appears to have

been few longitudinal international studies that have investigated beginning teachers from the end of their pre-service programme through their first year of teaching. There are even fewer that have studied the beginning teacher experience in terms of the influence of biographical, contextual, and conceptual factors on transition and development. There appears to be no New Zealand studies that have taken this focus.

The quality of beginning teachers has been a subject of much national and international debate. There are also concerns expressed about the ageing teacher workforce and the recognition that recruitment and retention of beginning teachers is an important factor in effectively managing and maintaining teacher supply. If we are serious about improving the quality of beginning teachers, as well as retaining them in the profession, we should acknowledge that it is the responsibility of all those involved in the preparation and development of teachers to work together to ensure that all beginning teachers are provided with the conditions and resources that would enable them to grow and flourish.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge about beginning teachers, particularly in terms of New Zealand where it makes an original and thus unique contribution to what is known about beginning to teach and its in-school, contextual complexities. The findings are therefore of interest to all those involved in the education of beginning teachers. They have relevance to those who work in pre-service teacher education, to school principals who employ beginning teachers, to policy-makers, and also to pre-service students and beginning teachers. The study highlights the need to develop a shared understanding among policy-makers, teacher educators, and schools regarding the multiplicity and complexity of factors that influence the transition from student teacher to teacher.

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APPENDIX ONE

New Zealand Teachers Council: Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions

Available at <http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/registration/renew/dimensions.stm>

The Council in this policy lists the 'dimensions' of teaching. Satisfactory performance in each of these dimensions (a minimum level of acceptability) is all that the Council requires for its purposes under the Education Act. However, learning centres may use these dimensions in a variety of ways to help them reflect the special character of their centre and the standards that they desire from teachers.

- professional knowledge
- professional practice
- professional relationships
- professional leadership

Introductory Statement

Any teacher must show that acceptable learning occurs for all learners under their responsibility, within an environment that affirms the bicultural and multicultural nature of New Zealand. This is most likely to happen if the teacher:

- demonstrates knowledge of teaching and learning (including Maori and tauīwi values) based on teacher education programmes and ongoing study, research, reflection, and practice; and
- promotes learning through good practice; and
- works by maintaining relationships of trust, co-operation, and respect for learners, whānau, parents, and colleagues; and
- demonstrates educational leadership relevant to the level of experience or responsibility being carried as a teacher or professional leader.

The dimensions derived from this are generic so they can be applied to teachers in a variety of teaching settings ranging from kura kaupapa schools and immersion classes to private church schools and community learning centres, and at levels in the general education system ranging from early childhood centres to universities and wananga. It is the responsibility of individual learning centres to specify skills, understandings, behaviours, and curriculum knowledge relevant to the particular teaching position.

Interwoven with the dimensions of teaching in New Zealand is a fundamental requirement for the profession to respond to the increasing drive for quality Maori education. This involves affirmation of te reo me ona tikanga Maori within a holistic learning environment; empowering Maori to participate in the education of their whānau; and providing all Maori with access to quality learning.

The Dimensions of Being a Teacher in New Zealand

Note: Normally a teacher must demonstrate satisfactory achievement of the dimensions through the medium of an official language of New Zealand (Maori or English). There will be some multicultural or language teaching situations where some of the dimensions will be demonstrated in other languages.

Professional Knowledge

This is evident in the planning and preparation that goes into the teaching/learning programme and the willingness and commitment of the teacher to extend knowledge of content and theory throughout his or her career to provide quality activities and programmes.

A satisfactory teacher demonstrates knowledge of:

- Current curricula* - the subjects being taught - and current learning theory.
- The Treaty of Waitangi, te reo, and tikanga Maori.
- The characteristics and progress of their students.
- Appropriate teaching objectives.
- Appropriate technology and resources.
- Appropriate learning activities, programmes, and assessment.

(*In state schools this will be the NZ Curriculum requirements; in early childhood centres - Te Whariki and Desirable Objectives and Practices)

Professional Practice

This is demonstrated by the environment for learning that is established and maintained by the teacher and the actual teaching processes used every day.

The Learning Environment

A satisfactory teacher in practice:

- Creates an environment of respect and understanding.
- Establishes high expectations which value and promote learning.
- Manages student learning processes.
- Manages student behaviour positively.
- Establishes a safe physical and emotional environment.

Teaching

A satisfactory teacher in practice:

- Communicates clearly and accurately in either or both of the official languages of NZ.
- Uses a range of teaching approaches.
- Engages students in learning.
- Provides feedback to students and assesses learning.
- Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness.

Professional Relationships

These are demonstrated by the positive way in which the teacher sees his or her co-operative role in the learning centre, shares information with colleagues, families, whanau, and caregivers, and respects the position of trust and confidentiality he or she has.

A satisfactory teacher in developing relationships:

- Reflects on teaching with a view to improvement.
- Maintains accurate records.
- Communicates with families, whanau, and caregivers.
- Contributes to the life of the learning centre.
- Develops professionally.
- Maintains confidentiality, trust, and respect.

Professional Leadership

All teachers display leadership in some aspects of their work. The context in which leadership is displayed will vary according to the position. A teacher with senior responsibilities will have developed all the dimensions of being a teacher to high levels and will be respected for his or her educational expertise and innovation.

A satisfactory teacher in showing leadership:

- Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability.
- Focuses on teaching and learning.
- Leads and supports other teachers.
- Displays ethical behaviour* and responsibility.
- Recognises and supports diversity among groups and individuals.
- Encourages others and participates in professional development.
- Manages resources safely and effectively.

(* Ethical behaviour may be determined by a specific code covering teachers in the learning centre).

Individual learning centres will establish their own specific standards to determine whether a teacher meets the above dimensions.

APPENDIX TWO

Key Features of Participants' Pre-Service Teacher Education Programme

The Bachelor of Education (Teaching) is a three-year pre-service teacher education programme that was developed in collaboration with communities of practice and a review of national and international models of good teaching. The programme is structured by a matrix of learning outcomes based in part on the INTASC Standards. The matrix has 17 professional dimensions, each of which is illustrated by three elements: knowledge, performance, and disposition. The outcomes of each course in the degree are directly linked with elements and levels within the matrix. The programme assumes that a teaching qualification should provide not only a specialist knowledge base, but also the intellectual structures and dispositions that enable and facilitate a critical examination of the understanding, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that underpin teaching practice.

The programme of study is organised across three strands: professional education and knowledge, curriculum knowledge and practice, and professional inquiry and practice. Although all three strands are interrelated and interdependent, each has distinctive features.

- *Professional Education and Knowledge* focuses on the development of student teachers' professional knowledge of generic nature e.g. socio-political issues, human development, and the examination of approaches to initiating and supporting learning for Maori and Pasifika (in recognition of the significant number of Maori and Pacific children in Auckland schools).
- *Curriculum Knowledge and Practice* addresses the seven essential learning areas of the New Zealand national curriculum and the pedagogies that relate to these.
- *Professional Inquiry and Practice* synthesises work in the other two strands, with student teachers reflecting on, planning, acting, and monitoring their own professional growth in college and school settings. This strand acknowledges explicitly that practice is essential for a graduate teacher who, on exit from the programme, is adequately prepared to begin the practice of teaching, albeit with suitable guidance. Critical reflection, a central notion in the Bachelor of Education (Teaching), has the highest profile in this unifying strand.

The intended overlaps and linkages between the strands ensure that practice is informed by and, in turn, informs the “knowledge, concepts, skills, and understandings” gained in generic and curriculum areas. The central strand focuses on theorising, and critically reflecting on, practice.

Practicum, supervised teaching experience, is a key component of Professional Inquiry and Practice and is perceived as having a critical place in the degree. There are five practicum placements throughout the three years of the programme: two placements totalling six weeks in the first year, two four-week placements in the second year and one seven-week placement in the third and final year. The practicum requirements for these placements emphasise a student's professional development and require both goal setting and reflective practice. Each practicum has specified minimum requirements and learning outcomes that all students must fulfil. The final seven-week placement is the critical block of supervised teaching experience. This practicum is split across the end of the penultimate term and the beginning of the final school term. This is done deliberately so that the student teacher can experience both the end and the beginning of a school programme. It is expected that the student teacher will manage the total learning over a period of three weeks. During this time they are assessed (as in all practicum) by the associate teacher in whose class they are placed and by a visiting lecturer from the College. The appraisal is primarily summative; it is at the conclusion of the three-year programme and assesses their readiness to become a competent beginning teacher.

On graduation from the college, students become provisionally registered by the New Zealand Teacher Registration Board and compete on the open market for their first teaching position. The school in which the graduate obtains a position is allocated funding by the Ministry of Education for the appointment of a senior, experienced teacher as a mentor for the beginning teacher. This mentor, named a tutor teacher, accepts responsibility for the professional development and supervision of the second year, and, providing the practice of the beginning teacher meets specified standards, the principal recommends to the New Zealand Teacher Registration Board that the provisionally registered beginning teacher be given full registration.

APPENDIX THREE

Summary of Information about the Participants

Name	Age as at November 2003	Children of own	Family associated with teaching	Friends associated with teaching	School appointed to District	School Decile	Type of appointment as at beginning 2004	Prior Practicum
Chris	20	No	Yes	Yes	South Auckland	5	Permanent	No
Frances	38	Yes	No	Yes	West Auckland	8	One Year Fixed-term	Yes
Kathy	41	Yes	No	Yes	West Auckland (rural)	9	Permanent	No
Lee	20	No	Yes	Yes	South Auckland	2	Permanent	No
Liz	20	No	No	Yes	West Auckland	5	One Year Fixed-term	No
Mel	24	No	Yes	Yes	South Auckland	1	One Year Fixed-term	No
Mary	30	Yes	Yes	No	South Auckland	7	Permanent	Yes
Nina	32	Yes	No	Yes	North Shore	9	One Year Fixed-term	No
Robin	21	No	No	Yes	North Shore	10	One Year Fixed-term	No
Sam	22	No	Yes	Yes	West Auckland	4	One Year Fixed-term	No
Sally	25	No	No	Yes	South Auckland	5	Permanent	No
Toni	21	No	Yes	Yes	South East Auckland	10	Permanent	Yes

APPENDIX FOUR

Information Sheet for Focus Group Interviews

Title of Project: Becoming a Teacher: the transition from student to teacher

My name is Lexie Grudnoff and this letter is to request your participation in a research project investigating the transition from pre-service student to teacher that beginning teachers undergo during their first year of teaching. I am particularly interested in examining the factors that enable or limit the learning and professional development of new teachers during their first year of teaching. Research indicates that the first year of employment has a critical impact on the learning and retention of beginning teachers and I hope that this study will provide insight into factors that support the socialization and professional development of beginning teachers.

As someone who has been committed to teachers, teaching and teacher education for many years this study is of particular interest to me. I am also enrolled as a PhD student at the University of Waikato and an investigation of the transition process from pre-service student to teacher that beginning teachers undergo during their first year of teaching is the subject of my thesis. I hope this study will also inform practice in terms of the linkages between pre-service teacher education and schools and identify factors that can support the learning and professional development of beginning teachers.

I would like to interview you as a member of a focus group about your beliefs about teaching; what influenced you to become a teacher; your perceptions of your college programme; what you anticipate your first year of teaching will be like; what your philosophy of teaching is and what kind of teacher you would like to be.

The interviews will take approximately one hour and, with your consent, be audi-taped. I will give you a copy of the questions we would explore in the focus group interview prior to it beginning. I will retain the audiotape and the raw data and the completed questionnaires in a secure place.

I will send you another information sheet and consent form regarding continuing participation in the study during 2004.

You are in no way obliged to participate. However if you do take part, you may withdraw up until October 2004 without prejudice and data can be returned to you or destroyed at your request. All data gathered in the research process will be confidential. Names of individuals will not used in any reports and publications. If you agree in principle to participate I would ask you to sign the attached consent form and return it to me in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Please note it is not essential for all graduating students to participate, it is a choice for you to make individually

I would like to thank you for considering my request. If you have any queries I would welcome discussing these with you. I can be contacted by phone on 09 6238890 or by email at l.grudnoff@ace.ac.nz

Yours sincerely
Lexie Grudnoff

APPENDIX FOUR

Consent Form: Graduating Students Focus Group

Focus Group Interview Consent Form for Graduating Students

November 2003

Project – Becoming a Teacher: the transition from student to teacher.

I have read an explanation of the purpose of the research project and understand the reasons for this interview. I give my permission for any information I provide during this interview to be used for the research purpose only, and this permission is contingent on my confidentiality being respected.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

This consent form will be kept in a secure location at the Auckland College of Education during the research process.

A completed copy of the thesis will be lodged in the University of Waikato Library. The research findings will be disseminated via conference papers, reports and journal articles.

If you have any concerns about the ethics of this research please phone or email Professor Clive McGee (07 838 4500, mcgee@waikato.ac.nz), Director, Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research, University of Waikato.

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from student to teacher”

Focus Group Questions

1. When did you decide to become a teacher?
2. Why did you want to become a teacher?
3. Before you started college, in what ways did you think that the programme would prepare you to become a teacher?
Did it?
If not, why not?
4. What are 3 or 4 things that you have got from the programme that you think will be **most** useful to you next year?
5. Is there anything in the programme that you think will **not** be useful next year?
6. How well prepared do you feel for teaching next year?
7. What do you think will be most difficult next year?
8. What do you think will be easy next year?
9. What kind of support do you think you will need?
10. Who, or what, do you think will be most important in terms of support next year?
11. What kind of school do you want to teach in?
12. What kind of teacher do you want to be?
Think of an image or metaphor.
13. Any further comments?

Focus Group Interview Information Form

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from student to teacher”

November 2003

Please complete the following. Please note that confidentiality will be maintained.

Name:

1. Are you intending to teach in 2004? Yes No

Where: Auckland
Northland
Other Please state where.....

2. Do you have a teaching position for next year? Yes No

If YES, please tick (✓) BT position Long Term Relieving
Other Please state what

3. If YES, Name of School:.....
Have you had a Practicum at that school? Yes No

4. Do you have any teachers in your family? Yes No

5. If YES, Who.....

6. Do you have any friends who are teachers? Yes No

7. Do you want to participate in the research project next year? Yes No

If yes, would you please provide your 2004 contact details.

Phone:
Email Address:
Postal Address:

Beginning Teacher Project

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from student to teacher”

Indicative Questions

Beliefs about teaching:

How do you think you are developing as a teacher?

How do you know?

What is your philosophy of teaching?

What kind of teacher do you think you are? Think of an image; think of a metaphor.

Context:

Describe the culture of your school.

How does it support your professional development?

How does it constrain your professional development?

What have been the main problems or issues so far?

What have been the highlights so far?

Who has been the most support - in what ways?

What has helped you in your journey as a beginning teacher?

Describe your support and guidance programme.

Describe any critical incidents that have occurred - how did you deal with the situation?

Biography:

Do you have any relatives who are teachers?

Do you talk to them about teaching? Give me some examples.

In what ways do they support your development as a beginning teacher?

Teacher preparation programme:

What aspects or experiences from your college programme have been most helpful so far?

What aspects or experiences from your college programme have been least helpful so far?

What changes would you make to the college programme to help you in your first year of teaching?

Beginning Teacher Project

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from student to teacher”

Interview Questions – TERM 1, 2004

Beliefs about teaching:

How do you think you are developing as a teacher?

How do you know?

What is your philosophy of teaching?

What kind of teacher do you think you are? – Think of an image; think of a metaphor.

Do you have an ideal image of a “teacher” in your mind? If yes, could you describe it?

- How does it match with your current reality?

Context:

Describe the professional culture of your school.

How does it support your professional development?

How does it constrain your professional development?

What have been the main problems or issues so far?

What have been the highlights so far?

Who has been the most support - in what ways?

What has helped you in your journey as a beginning teacher?

Describe your support and guidance programme.

Describe any critical incidents that have occurred - how did you deal with the situation?

Biography:

Do you have any relatives who are teachers? Any friends?

Do you talk to them about teaching? Give me some examples.

In what ways do they support your development as a beginning teacher?

Teacher preparation programme:

When you started your programme you may have had beliefs about being a teacher and about teaching:

- What were they?
- Did your programme affect those beliefs? If so, how?
- Has your first few weeks of teaching affected those beliefs? If so, how?

When you started your programme, you may have held beliefs about children and how they learn:

What were they?

Did your programme affect those beliefs? If so, how?

Have your first few weeks of teaching affected those beliefs? If so, how?

What aspects or experiences from your college programme have been **most** helpful so far?
(Disposition, subject knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, reflection)

What aspects or experiences from your college programme have been **least** helpful so far?

What changes would you make to the college programme to help you in your first year of teaching?

What are the differences from being on practicum to teaching this year?

What could college do to bridge the transition from your teacher education programme to teaching?

Beginning Teacher Project

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from student to teacher”

Interview Questions – TERM 2, 2004

Beliefs about teaching:

How do you think you are developing as a teacher?

How do you know?

What is your philosophy of teaching?

What kind of teacher do you think you are? Think of an image; think of a metaphor.

Do you have an ideal image of a “teacher” in your mind? If yes, could you describe it?

- How does it match with your current reality?

Context:

Describe the professional culture of your school.

How does it support your professional development?

How does it constrain your professional development?

What have been the main problems or issues so far?

What have been the highlights so far?

Who has been the most support - in what ways?

What has helped you in your journey as a beginning teacher?

Describe your support and guidance programme.

Describe any critical incidents that have occurred - how did you deal with the situation?

Biography:

Who do you talk to about teaching? Friends? Family?

What do you talk to them about? Give me some examples.

In what ways do your friends/family support your development as a beginning teacher?

Teacher preparation programme:

What aspects or experiences from your college programme have been most helpful so far? (Disposition, subject knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, reflection)

What aspects or experiences from your college programme have been least helpful so far?

What changes would you make to the college programme to help you in your first year of teaching?

What are the differences from being on practicum to teaching this year?

What could college do to bridge the transition from your teacher education programme to teaching?

Beginning Teacher Project

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from student to teacher”

Interview Questions - TERM 3, 2004

Now that you are into your third term of teaching:

What’s changed?

How has it changed?

Why?

Beliefs about teaching:

How do you think you are developing as a teacher?

How do you know?

What is your philosophy of teaching?

What kind of teacher do you think you are? Think of an image; think of a metaphor?

Do you have an ideal image of a “teacher” in your mind? If yes, could you describe it?

- How does it match with your current reality?

Context:

Describe the professional culture of your school.

How does it support your professional development?

How does it constrain your professional development?

What have been the main problems or issues so far?

What have been the highlights so far?

Who has been the most support - in what ways?

What has helped you in your journey as a beginning teacher?

Describe your support and guidance programme?

Describe any critical incidents that have occurred - how did you deal with the situation?

Biography:

Who do you talk to about teaching? Friends? Family?

What do you talk to them about? Give me some examples?

In what ways do your friends/family support your development as a beginning teacher?

Teacher preparation programme:

What aspects or experiences from your college programme have been most helpful so far? (Disposition, subject knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, reflection)

What aspects or experiences from your college programme have been least helpful so far?

What changes would you make to the college programme to help you in your first year of teaching?

What are the differences from being on practicum to teaching this year?

What could college do to bridge the transition from your teacher education programme to teaching?

Beginning Teacher Project
“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from student to teacher”

Interview Questions – TERM 4, 2004

- 1 Can you remember back to your first week of teaching?
 - What was it like?
 - How would you have described yourself as a teacher then?
- 2 How would you describe yourself as a teacher now?
Now think back to your first term of teaching:
 - Has your teaching changed? If yes, in what ways?
 - Has your relationship with the children, tutor teachers, syndicate, other teachers, principal or parents changed? If yes, in what ways?
- 3 When I asked you about your philosophy in Term One, this is what you said (quote from transcript):
 - Is this still true for you now?
 - Has it shifted? In what ways has it shifted?
- 4 What were the most difficult or challenging situations that you have had to confront this year?
What happened?
 - How were they resolved?
 - Could anything have been done differently?
- 5 What have been the most critical influences on your development as a teacher this year?
- 6 What are the main things you have learnt about yourself this year?
 - as a teacher
 - as a person
 - have you changed in any way? If yes, in what ways?
- 7 What were the most stressful periods for you during the year?
- 8 What has given you the most satisfaction during the year?
- 9 Think back to when you decided to apply for the BEd (Tchg) programme -
 - What were the main reasons for you wanting to become a teacher?
 - Are these reasons still as valid for you now?

Interview Questions – Term 4, 2004 (cont'd)

- 10 Do you think you are an effective teacher?
 - In what ways are you effective?
 - What do you need to work on, if anything, to be more effective?
- 11 What are you looking forward to next year?
- 12 What are you not looking forward to?
- 13 Look ahead five years – what do you hope to be doing?
 - professionally
 - personally
- 14 From your experience this year, what advice would you give someone starting teaching next year?
- 15 What advice would you give to teacher educators to ensure that initial teacher education programmes are useful or relevant to a first year teacher?
- 16 In your opinion, is the two-year induction process an effective and efficient way of managing the transition from a beginning teacher to a registered teacher?
 - In terms of your experience, is there anything that could have been done differently?
- 17 Any other comments?

Beginning Teacher Research Project

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from a student to teacher”

SURVEY, TERM 1, 2004

Name:

Date:

Email address:

Phone number (*if changed*):

- Describe how you feel at the end of your first term of teaching e.g. physically, emotionally.
- How are you feeling about the next term?
- What have you learnt about teaching in your first term?
- How has your first term of teaching impacted on your personal and social life?
- Any other comments (PTO if you wish).

Beginning Teacher Research Project

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from a student to teacher”

SURVEY, TERM 2, 2004

Name:

Date:

- Describe how you feel at the end of your first six months of teaching.
- How are you feeling about the next term?
- What have you learnt about teaching in your first six months?
- How has your first six months of teaching impacted on your personal and social life?

APPENDIX NINE

Beginning Teacher Research Project

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from a student to teacher”

SURVEY, TERM 3, 2004

Name:

Date:

- Describe how you feel at the end of your first three terms of teaching.
- How are you feeling about next term?
- What have you learnt about teaching in your first three terms?
- How has teaching impacted on your personal and social life?
- Is there anything about this term that is different from the previous two terms?

Beginning Teacher Research Project

“Becoming a Teacher: The transition from a student to teacher”

SURVEY, TERM 4, 2004

Name:

Date:

1. Describe how you feel at the end of your fourth term of teaching.
2. How are you feeling about next year?
3. What have you learnt about teaching this term?
4. Is there anything about this term that is different from last term?
5. What have you learnt about children and their learning this year?
6. What have been the most important influences on your development as a teacher this year?
7. How has teaching impacted on your personal and social life?
8. Has your involvement in this research been a positive or negative experience?
9. Any other comments.