INDUCTION INTO THE PROFESSION: FINDINGS FROM NEW
ZEALAND BEGINNING TEACHERS

Glenda Anthony (Massey University), Beverley Bell (University of Waikato),
Mavis Haigh (University of Auckland), and Ruth Kane (University of Ottawa)¹

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Introduction

The first years of teaching form a critical period in teachers’ continuum of professional
learning opportunities (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). 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 teaching profession” (OECD, 2005, p. 135), and on the sort of teacher they become
(Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Moreover, research has provided clear evidence that effective
pedagogy is founded on the support and resources provided by school systems, as well as
the collaborative efforts of teachers to make a difference for all learners. Efforts to support
the learning and development of beginning teachers, in particular, has seen a growth of
targeted support, guidance, mentoring, and orientation programs—collectively known as
induction.

Within the induction phase, the collective professional community is charged with
providing a range of intellectual, social, emotional, and material resources to support and
guide beginning teachers. There is however, an increased recognition that the effective
provision of such support and guidance is challenging, especially when combined with
assessment and accountability components (Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Integrating
an effective induction program into the complexity of the school context, and the
complexity of a teacher’s experiences, requires more than top down policy changes and
programmatic add-ons. In addition to providing the beginning teacher with the benefit of
expertise associated with experience, the professional community is charged with
providing learning spaces and opportunities for the newly qualified teacher to engage in
“serious and sustained professional learning” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1049). Formal
induction activities typically involve school orientation meetings, department meetings,
professional development opportunities, classroom observations, mentoring, and appraisal
activities (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). To be effective—in terms of retention, impact on
teacher satisfaction and confidence, or impact on teacher’ expertise (Cameron, 2007)—there is increasing evidence that induction opportunities must be responsive to the
individual needs of an increasingly diverse newly qualified teacher cohort (Bartell, 2005).

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In addition to the formal induction activities, research has also noted the significant impact of informal arrangements for the beginning teacher. These informal groupings that have personal or organizational significance are often formed around interests ancillary to teaching tasks (e.g., the smokers or the after school sport team), and routine exchanges in the staffroom (Hammersley, 1984; Little, 2003) or involve networks external to the teacher’s immediate workplace (e.g., beginning teacher networks, family supports) (Hansen, Haigh, & Ashman, 2003).

Many recent studies report on induction programs that are in their formative stage of development and/or implemented state-wide (e.g., Levine, 2006; Ontario College of Teachers, 2006). In contrast, this paper reports on an established mandated induction program in New Zealand focused on the first two years of secondary teaching. In this paper we provide a view into how a nationally required program translates to the provision of support and guidance for individual teachers, within particular schools. Based on interviews exploring 111 beginning teachers’ perceptions, expectations and experiences of induction in their first year of teaching and survey commentary from 47 of their mentor colleagues, this paper provides an insider view into the induction provisions for teachers across a range of secondary schools within New Zealand.

In examining the nature of support and professional learning opportunities that are made available within the induction arrangements in particular school settings for particular teachers, we found it useful to conceptualise an individual teacher’s experience as situated within an evolving network of systems (Ashman, 2005; Clarke & Collins, 2007). These systems might be described as an ecology in which the activities of the teacher and the students—as well as those of the mentors, school and the home/community—are mutually constituted through the course of interactions (Anthony & Walshaw, 2007). Proposing a close relationship between social process and conceptual development, this understanding is informed by Lave and Wenger’s (1991) well known social practice theory in which the notion of ‘a community of practice’ is a central feature, and in which individual and collective knowledge emerge and evolve with the dynamics of the spaces people share and within which they participate. For the beginning teacher, his or her own teaching and learning coexist in a web of economic, social, and cultural difference. Each school context—including social others and cultural practices, and tools and artifacts—plays a key role in beginning teachers’ learning and development, and their learning is constituted by changing relations in these social relationship and the social worlds (Bell, submitted; Nasir & Hand, 2006).

The context of induction in New Zealand secondary schools

To situate the findings of the study an overview of the induction program in New Zealand secondary schools follows. Teacher induction in New Zealand has been nationally funded in all secondary schools since 1989. Schools receive a grant to provide support for beginning teachers working towards full registration. The funded 0.2 time allowance must be used to facilitate beginning teachers’ professional learning, provide mentorship, and support their planning and preparation. The mandated Beginning Teacher Time Allowance is accompanied with support documentation—Towards full registration: A support kit for schools (Ministry of Education & New Zealand Teachers Council (MoE & NZTC), 2006). The resource, first published in 2004, was a response to the research recommendations (Mansell, 1996) for the provision of clear directions and guidelines for the process by which teachers move towards full registration. The documentation provides guidelines for both beginning teachers and the schools themselves on best practice of induction and gaining registration.
During the first two years (this period can be extended up to five years) of teaching the newly qualified teachers (NQT) is provisionally registered. In the secondary sector, the Ministry of Education provides a funded 0.2 of a full-time teacher salary in the first year and 0.1 of a full-time teacher salary for the second year. The time allowance goes directly to beginning teachers to ensure that their workload is reduced. A year one teacher should be timetabled for no more than 15 hours of teaching and allocated 5 hours of advice and guidance time and 5 hours of non-contact time for individual duties. This effectively reduces the teaching for beginning secondary teachers by 5 contact hours.

Schools are also required to provide a supervisory mentor teacher with responsibility for working with the NQT to provide an advice and guidance program appropriate to the beginning teacher’s needs. In schools in which there is a group of beginning teachers it is common for there to be a beginning teacher coordinator who oversees the Provisionally Registered Teachers’ (PRT) advice and guidance program and appraisals of their classroom teaching as part of the registration process.

At the end of the two year induction period, the principal attests that the PRT has met certain standards. Full registration is awarded following satisfactory participation in an advice and guidance program and attainment of the requirements set out in the Professional Standards for Beginning Teachers in School concerning the dimensions of profession knowledge, professional development, teaching techniques, students management, motivation of students, te reo me ona tikanga, effective communication, support for and co-operation with colleagues, and contribution to wider school activities. In addition, the principal attests that the PRT meets the “fit to be a teacher” criteria of the New Zealand Teachers Council related to ethical and professional behaviours.

The national guidelines (MOE & NZCT, 2006) state the advice and guidance program is to be “developed collaboratively by you [the beginning teacher] and your supervising teacher” (Section 2, p. 5). Unique to each teacher, the advice and guidance programs are required to focus on the beginning teacher’s specific abilities and ongoing learning goals. Suggested elements of the program include: regular professional discussions and activities (e.g., with mentors, beginning teacher coordinators, Specialist Classroom Teacher, subject related meetings), systematic goal setting for teaching and student learning, professional reading time, planning and resource appraisal and development, evaluating student work, professional learning and development activities (e.g., classroom observations of colleagues), and self reflection.

In 2006 the Ministry of Education piloted a new initiative for secondary schools—the Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT). The SCT has a dual role of mentoring beginning teachers across departments and subject areas, alongside mentoring experienced teachers who seek assistance. Rather than replacing a school’s existing arrangement for the induction and support for beginning teachers, it is envisaged that the SCT role complements existing support or be integrated into existing support structures. Importantly, in order to form high-trust and confidential relationships with colleagues, the SCT is charged to provide support and guidance only; that is, the role is to be kept separate from any appraisal, performance management or competency judgments.

In addition to the in-school guidance and support program, nationally provided School Support Services advisors offer support to beginning teacher on a regional basis.

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2 From 2007 (post this research) the Ministry of Education is additionally funding 1 hour time provision for one mentor associated with the principal curriculum area of each year 1 teacher in a secondary school.

3 See Appendix 3 of Towards full registration: A support kit available online at http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/pdf/trfkit.pdf
So what does all this mean in practice? Comparatively speaking, the intended induction program in New Zealand appears to be robust and well supported both at a school and national level (Cameron, 2007). Wong, Britton, and Ganser (2005), in a review of induction practices in five countries concluded:

Indeed, we were struck by a 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 in New Zealand, there is a universal commitment to support beginning teachers. (p. 381)

However, recent research within New Zealand secondary schools reveals uneven provisions of induction. As part of a wider study, Dewar, Kenney, Staig, and Cox (2003) interviewed staff in 20 schools. Beginning teachers reported that their advice and guidance programs were ad hoc in nature. Whilst teachers reported appreciation of the beginning teachers’ time allowance, shortcomings in induction programs included lack of allocation of subject specialist help, limited opportunities for professional development tailored to the needs of beginning teachers, and limited communication channels with senior staff and administrators. These findings concur with earlier national studies (see Mansell, 1996; Renwick, 2001) that found inconsistent induction practices, more so in secondary than in primary schools. These studies recommenced the need for greater understanding of the personal and professional skills required to support beginning teachers effectively in the classroom—an understanding that could usefully be developed between initial teacher education providers and schools. A part of a current study—Teachers of Promise—researchers (Cameron, Baker, & Lovett, 2006) interviewed 22 secondary teachers in their third year of teaching. These teachers recalled very different induction experiences: almost half of the teachers considered that their schools provided minimal or unsupportive induction into the teaching profession. These national studies combined with findings from school-based case studies (e.g., Goold, 2004; Hansen, Haigh, & Ashman, 2003; Pettigrew, 2004) confirm that the provision of systematic, sustained and structured induction experiences are not always evident within secondary schools in New Zealand.

The current study

The findings reported in this paper are part of a longitudinal national project—Making a difference: The role of initial teacher education and induction on the preparation of New Zealand secondary teachers—that examines beginning secondary teachers’ perceptions, expectations and experiences of initial teacher education (ITE) and induction, and the views of those responsible for their mentoring, appraisal and supervision. The project uses a mixed method design including a questionnaire administered to all student teachers at the end of their graduating year across all ITE providers in New Zealand, and in-depth case studies involving a cohort of beginning teachers. The research examines how graduating teachers’ experiences of their ITE programs and induction impact on their perceived sense of preparedness, their attitudes to, and choices about their teaching career, alongside their development of teaching capability across the first two years of classroom teaching.

This paper focuses on the induction experiences of Year 1 teachers in 2006. The data was generated from interviews with an initial cohort of 111 beginning teachers and 47 mentor surveys. The cohort [70% female, 30% male], representing ITE graduates from all national institutions, were selected from those who indicated a willingness to participate on the research survey completed at the end of their ITE course. The self-selected sample

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4 For Interview #2: One teacher had resigned from her school to pursue another career, and 6 teachers withdrew from the study.
reasonably matched the national cohort in biographic details, but the number of teachers who came from paths that included career, travel and family (~75%) was higher than the national cohort estimate of ~60%.

Semi-structured teacher interviews (see Appendix 1 for summaries of questions) were conducted at the mid- and end of year point of the beginning teachers’ first year of teaching. The first interview focused on teachers’ reasons for choosing teaching, their experiences as a beginning teacher, their views of ITE preparation, and their induction experiences. The second interview focused on their continuing experiences as a teacher, their induction and professional learning experiences, and their career plans. Each teacher will be invited to participate in a final interview mid year of their second year of teaching.

With the permission of the beginning teachers, their mentor teachers were also asked to complete a survey that related to their mentoring experiences of the year 1 teachers. Ninety-six teachers nominated mentors and 47 of these mentors completed an on-line survey. Respondents were mostly experienced teachers [2 reported 5 or fewer years of teaching, and 32 had 11 or more years of teaching], and 80% of the sample had previous mentoring experience. Notably, only 23% of the mentors reported that they had undertaken any professional development in mentoring or supervision of beginning teachers.

Whilst team members’ interpretations, based on a range of theoretical perspectives, informed ongoing research directions and successive interview protocols, the project as a whole has been driven by a sociocultural view of learning (Wertsch, Del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995)—a view which sees learning to teach as a “developing capacity to interpret and respond to the learning ecology of classrooms” (Edwards & Protheroe, 2004, p. 186)—and a view of teaching as a sociocultural practice (Bell, submitted).

With the project still proceeding, this paper represents a first iteration of analysis based on only part of the data that will eventually be available. Our findings are presented largely as descriptions of ‘what is’, according to the provisionally registered teachers’ account of induction practices within their particular schools. We have framed our findings in relation to the sociocultural literature, with its orientation toward joint enterprise, the centrality of participation and resources, and the notion of trajectories of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). From a sociocultural perspective, the specific interactions and dynamics of the professional community of the school constitutes an important contributor to a beginning teacher’s development (Wilson & Berne, 1999). We are also guided by Little’s (2003) assertion that “if we are to theorize about the significance of professional community, or make claims regarding its benefits, we must be able to demonstrate how communities achieve their effects” (p. 917). To begin this process we examined the specific interactions and dynamics by which professional communities associated with induction practices constituted a resource for teachers’ learning and the formation of teaching practice. In this first level of analysis we look at the notion of affordance (and constraints) to draw attention to those professional development activities that supported, or otherwise, teachers’ collective inquiry into their practice. We also consider the notion of systems of networks from complexity theory (Davis & Sumara, 1997, 2006) in order to view the induction process as a school wide process—a collective and relational process—and as involving the individual teacher working within their own nested system. With the data from the third interview we will be in a better position to look more closely at how the induction practices supports the continuum of teacher learning and how the practices associated with induction come to be known, shared, and changed through participation (Wenger, 1998).
Findings

From our initial analysis of the data it is clear that the provision of guidance and support within schools is influenced by a range of contextual factors. Despite national implementation guidelines (MoE & NZTC, 2006), and despite the mandated provisions of a beginning teacher time allowance, our data confirm that year one teachers experience highly variable induction experiences. Given the varied nature of the beginning teacher in terms of preparedness, ITE provider experience, and individual prior experience, one might argue that a responsive induction programs should be varied in nature—but we are not talking about fine-grained nuances in professional guidance, we are talking about variability in wholesale access to core elements of the induction program such as access to suitable mentors, professional guidance in curriculum, and appraisal reports. Not surprisingly, such variability in access to professional learning activities resulted in variable levels of satisfaction with regard to how the school induction program is meeting individual teacher’s perceived needs and expectations. Teachers’ self rating of their satisfaction with the induction program at 6 months and at the end of their first year of teaching are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Beginning Teachers’ Satisfaction with their Induction

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Interview #1</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
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<td>7.2</td>
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<td>9.6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>36</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>104</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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In addition to ascertaining the beginning teachers’ levels of satisfaction with their induction we have identified in more detail how the beginning teacher’s time allowance is used; what provisions there are for formal collegial support and guidance; the role of the Specialist Classroom Teacher; what informal support and guidance were accessed; and the mentor’s perspectives of their role and responsibilities when working with beginning teachers.

Using the beginning teachers’ time allowance

In the first year of teaching the beginning teacher\(^5\) receives an additional 5 hours of non-contact time—in effect this translates to a reduced teaching load of one class, and in some schools this may mean reduced responsibilities associated with the ‘form’ or ‘home’ class. For the most part, the beginning teachers reported high awareness of their rights to extra non-contact time and in most cases they were receiving their full allocation entitlement. Several teachers who felt they were being asked to teach over-code (usually an extra hour) had engaged teacher union support to negotiate with the school administration. Others who were over-code due to timetabling constraints had been offered compensatory support in the way of marking, shared teaching, or release from form-time responsibilities.

\(^5\) Beginning teachers in private schools (5 in our study) are not covered by the Teacher Union agreement— provision of extra time was more varied.
Part-time teachers appeared less certain as to whether they were received the correct entitlement. For them, the concept of ‘non-contact’ teaching time was less easily distinguished from their non-paid time.

The beginning teacher time allocation was highly valued. The beginning teachers recognised the dual value of extra time for completing teaching associated tasks and professional development activities, alongside the lower than full-time teaching load. The most common way that the provisionally registered teachers accounted for their extra 5 hours per week of non-contact time was completing tasks associated with day-to-day teaching: planning, resource development, marking, and administration. Whilst most of the teachers understood that some of the time should be allocated to professional development activities, at least initially, day-to-day challenges were to the fore. The extra time to do these tasks was often associated with “coping with the workload” and “managing stress”—issues that the teachers hoped would reduce in the subsequent years as they developed more experience in classroom and curriculum areas.

An awful lot of my time is used on admin and sorting out lessons and resources for other classes. I think the intention is for me to do some PD and observe some other teachers. It’s not really working out like that at this stage. I’m going to make a bigger effort with that next term but its still probably going to get lost in all the other things I have to do.... Certainly next year I’ll be able to use my space and my time a wee bit better, probably not this year though. (T390#1)

However, end of year interview responses clearly indicated that some teachers continued to regard the extra non-contact time as solely about getting on top of the teaching requirements:

I use it for resources, gathering and making. It gives you time to actually make your resources and do all those things….I think it is extremely essential but I don’t know that it teaches you about how to be a better teacher. (T706#2)

While most teachers reported that the time was spent in preparing teaching activities, some noted that this preparation also involved learning of subject content knowledge and assessment systems; learning that many hoped would ‘pay-off’ in terms of preparation for future years:

It frees me up to learn and prepare, and I find that I actually need that time to gather knowledge. I’m teaching content especially at level thirteen which I haven’t covered before. I’ve got a history politics background in teaching US history and it’s pretty in depth but yet very broad so I’m having to go get books to keep ahead of them so I need that time brutally. And then on top of it I’m also learning about NCEA marking the essays etc. (T673#1)

Professional development activities involving other colleagues (e.g., meeting with mentors, observing other teachers) were often scheduled during non-contact periods, and non-contact times also provided opportunities for informal chats:

I’ve used it to observe other teachers occasionally but primarily just to do my own planning and marking. But also to have conversations with people and we have scheduled meetings, but to spend 20 minutes talking to my HOD or a colleague or even longer about a problem I’ve having or how to approach something. So I feel that I’m getting a lot of value out of that time allocation. (T718#1)

Classroom observations of other teachers are something that must be done in school time, and non-contact times, for some, provided an ideal space for this. Interestingly, the opportunity to watch in other subject areas and interact with teachers outside of their department appeared to be a useful activity for quite a few teachers:

I use it a lot especially at the beginning of the year like with the athletics and stuff I used to use my free time to watch the other teachers teaching and using their teaching points. And I’m always just popping in and watching some of the other P.E. teachers and see how they do things. Or if I’m
having a problem with my class say with my Year 9 Health class, I’ll go and watch them in one of the other, like even in Science or like another practical subject. (T190#1)

I am going to watch one of my other teachers about how she writes on the whiteboard because I am having a bit of trouble struggling with that. It’s good because I can target it and say I want to look at white boards. (T181#1)

For some teachers, there was frustration that the classes they wanted to see did not coincide with their non-contact periods. This meant seeking relief for their own classes. For many, organisational constraints led to a decision to not observe other classes, despite a belief that this would be a very useful form of professional development:

We are told it’s a good idea but it’s up to me to organise and ask a teacher in my frees. (T86#1)

Including personal reflection time as a means of professional development was mentioned, but not frequently. As illustrated in the following response, taking time for oneself at school often went hand-in-hand with accepting that work needed to be completed at home:

I’ve been able to use my non-contact time to do my planning and to start on doing assessment and evaluating my lessons. I think most of my non-contact time is actually evaluating how I did earlier in the day or if I had an awesome class there’s always someone in the office I can tell about that, so sometimes I go oral reflection. And if something didn’t go well I use the time to think what went wrong, how can I improve it and then I talk to somebody about it right away even if they aren’t a mentor teacher. I use the time mostly for reflection and then I take almost too much work home with me. (T188#1)

It appeared that, for many beginning teachers, the extra time gave them some sense of personal space, which to a large extent they were able to control. And this freedom to control some of their time during the day was in contrast to the pressures of accountability of being in the classroom. This meant that for many the way the time was used varied—with some being able to create a balance between day-to-day preparation, professional development, and time out, for example:

I give me the chance to see other teachers at work and gives me a chance to plan, and a very good grounding. It also gives me the time if I have had a hard day and I have got the last period off I just can do nothing which is fantastic. (T181#1)

It’s a huge thing for me to have those free hours within the day. Just to keep my head above water, cool off, organise things and talk to people, can do that mentor teacher thing, chase up resources, find my way around, you know it takes longer to find things in the resource room for instance, yeah I love that. (T184#1)

For quite a few teachers being able to have the time to recharge or relax after difficult lessons was a bonus.

Relax, winding down after a class. Sometimes you might have a real stressful period, and being a science teacher you have got to get a lot of equipment out and that [non contact time] it gives you time to. Whereas if I had more classes I would just have to suck it up and go into another class and it raises the stress levels, or I can get equipment out or put it away. I do work sometimes in that time, but a lot of the times I just breathe. (T83#2)

Using the time to “debrief what is going on” with other colleagues was often reported as a useful way to spend this time. Other teachers noted that the broken blocks of work time in between teaching lessons are not always sufficient to be able to sustain productive work, and hence they often used it to “catch up on things like photocopying”.

It’s difficult to actually sit down because its not a long enough period to you know really get in the flow of work and that sort of thing, its hard too. I only sort of start getting into things… So yeah, that time that I have during the day isn’t necessarily all that productive but then in saying that I
mean you need it even if you’re not working, you need the break just to relax and have a cup of tea or whatever. (T645#1)

Some beginning teachers found themselves sole teacher in charge of a specialist area such as Japanese, Maori, or technology. This added responsibility often compromised the 0.2 allowance time as it was used by the beginning teachers to manage department resources and budgets and to work with students outside of scheduled class time:

It’s nice as long as everybody teaches in a very block format where they have to do all the same thing but as soon as kids get the choice of being able to have multiple options or multiple disciplines within technology then because I am the only teacher my 0.2 time allocation gets encroached on. (T388#1)

It’s pretty much become photography time to be honest, in the dark room with senior students doing work. (T95#2)

In a similar vein, a few teachers reported that extracurricular responsibilities or wider school expectations could ‘eat’ into time that they knew should be spent on their own professional development:

It was taken up with fundraising. It just means I’ve got to make that up. (T268#1)

I plan, do planning. I make resources cause I’m taking care of Netball I do Netball planning and administration as well. (T346#1)

Formal collegial support and guidance

As we saw from beginning teachers’ reports of how they utilized their non-contact allocation, much of the time appeared to be working solo in tasks related to planning, resourcing, and administration. The intention, however, of the Towards full registration guidelines (MoE & NZCT, 2006) is that beginning teachers have opportunities to interact in a professional way, with multiple school personnel. In particular the expectation is that the school will provide a mentor or supervisory teacher, typically aligned with the beginning teacher’s curriculum area, and provide regular observational appraisals and professional development through engagement with appropriate staff.

In outlining the formal arrangement at the mid-year interview, most beginning teachers discussed attending meetings with a school Provisional Registered Teacher (PRT) Coordinator and meetings with a mentor—typically their Head of Department, or senior teacher from their curriculum department. In schools which had a significant number of year 1 and year 2 teachers, it was common for teachers to meet together for their PRT meeting, with the Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT) sometimes in attendance. Beginning teachers reported that the collegiality of meeting with others was beneficial:

You find out you are in the same boat as the rest of the first years and that was actually really good because you have huge moral issues starting teaching. Some people feel real useless and I still have problems with that because you are getting compared to someone who has had forty years experience and the kids compare you on that basis and don’t have any sympathy from where you are coming from so it’s really hard. We had that meet and compare and talk over and pretty much just have a moan, I think it helped us all a lot. (T1#1)

And it’s also good because you have the opportunity to talk about what’s happening in your classroom, what other people are experiencing and what is working for them. Gives you more ideas. (T18#1)

Some beginning teachers formed significant relationships with the PRT coordinator in that they felt comfortable seeking one-on-one help outside of the scheduled meeting times:
It’s been invaluable just the support I’m getting from the PRT, any question no matter how stupid she will take the time. I can interrupt her in class if I need to, I can say I’m having a little trouble with this. The other staff members are fantastic I have a lot of support which is great and invaluable. (T181#1)

One of the things that have come out of those meetings has been the general support and the open door policy if we have any questions or concerns we can go to them at any time. (T182#1)

A small minority, however, felt that the group meetings were not meeting their needs, following a set agenda rather than responding to their individual requirements, for example:

I don’t find them valuable because it turns into a complaining session where all the new teachers come and complain about all the issues they’re having in their class. And I don’t get anything out of it. But I go along because I think it’s important to support these people. The DP runs that, they give you information about maybe the behaviour management system and the report writing system, things like that; information which I already have which is partly why I find it not as useful, but that is the formal official beginning teachers’ system. (T202#1)

The PRT [meetings] are pretty boring, like how your classes are going, what are you finding easy or hard, and I was having these conversations with people who I was getting on with anyway. (T95#2)

In addition to formally scheduled group PRT meetings, beginning teachers were linked individually with mentors. Meetings with subject mentors focused on planning, marking, resourcing and scheduling:

Markings comment, assessment markings, what I am going to do next, what trips are coming up and what I need to do for them. Sometimes we skip it if nothing is happening. Any general problems I am having we will talk through it. (T296#1)

Whilst a few teachers reported some planned agendas for their meetings, others were happy that meetings were largely responsive to day-to-day needs, for example:

They’ve [meetings] helped quite a lot really particularly meeting with my supervisor because that is not particularly structured. If there is nothing else going on we’ll go through each of my classes and talk about how they are going. But that is an opportunity to bring up any issues that I have been having during the week or ask questions. Some of them are quite a practical nature, do you have any good resources for this topic? And things like that. So my supervisor is quite knowledgeable in the areas that I’m teaching cause she is in the same department. (T191#1)

The meetings with mentors were for the most part scheduled, but already after six months many beginning teachers reported that the frequency of meetings had decreased, or were on a needs only basis. Reflecting a range of PRT needs, for some the informality of the arrangements was meeting their needs, whereas other teachers felt less than satisfied:

I think we’re meant to meet like every Friday but then only every second Friday it’s been happening. She just says “have we got any problems?” And I say “not really”. We don’t have any formal meetings or anything like that and no agenda or anything. (T190#1)

Yes they have been. With one of them, with the HOD of English it was at my instigation that we have regular meetings. So I had to push for that and they weren’t always stuck to. (T291#1)

Problems identified by the beginning teachers with the formal induction arrangements appeared to be more related to the assignment of a mentor and a lack of a clearly articulated role for the mentor, rather than to the school-wide PRT meetings. Some beginning teachers did not move into an environment where the guidance was clearly identified—they were unsure as to whether the mentors were suppose to be formally helping, or were just being helpful:

Not exactly [assigned formal mentor]. No—it was just more like informal discussions on certain groups and certain kids. It’s a pretty small school and everybody knows everybody. ...You
A few experienced difficulties with forming positive relationships with mentors and felt somewhat powerless to change the mentoring arrangements. For T303 the conflict of working with the mentor who was also the teacher in charge of the Y12 course that she taught proved difficult:

I have one teacher who is supposedly my supervising teacher, she’s also the teacher in charge of one of the programs that I teach in—she’s in charge of the Y12 English studies. …She tells me what I’m doing wrong and I feel really bad. We’re meant to meet once a week, it doesn’t always happen. The difficult thing because she’s in charge of one of the courses that I teach we spend most of our time on that course, and that’s the course where I feel the least supported, funny enough because there’s no one else that I can ask for help. … I feel that she resents the fact that she has to give me such specific things. (T303#1)

Whilst most of the beginning teachers found the formal school induction systems helpful for their professional growth, in some instances the formal induction support provided for these beginning teachers was perceived by the PRTs to be limited or lacking. In the worst case scenario, beginning teachers identified major shortcomings in terms of formal induction support. In the extreme, a few teachers felt that there was no support for them as a beginning teacher. Their concerns manifested in feeling inadequately prepared to face the class, deal with discipline procedures, liaise with parents, and generally let down. For example this teacher reported not being given any information regarding school systems:

Oh I had no induction. And I actually just found out about the school-wide classroom rules, I just found out about it a month ago, a teacher very nicely gave them to me. … I didn’t even know how the referral system worked even though in fact when I asked X if there was a referral system he said to me “well we don’t really like to refer” and I thought to myself there has to be some kind of system. So I didn’t know any of the systems. I even met him before school a few times and talked to him about stuff and was never given anything, nothing, so I kind of got off on a bad start with this class because the only thing that I knew that I could do was line them up outside before they entered the classroom to try and settle them down before they get in, but I had no power, no system that I was told about at all. …I’m starting to feel like they’re stringing me along and I don’t quite understand why.   (T195#1)

A few beginning teachers expressed concern that their mentors were expected to help in areas that they obviously needed help themselves:

They have been fairly informal and that’s haphazard. Not that my mentor, he is fantastic, he is a position where he doesn’t know a lot about secondary because he is primary trained and he’s sort of dumped in the deep end and doesn’t know my area either. (T345#1)

Others were concerned that their mentors were under too much pressure, with one beginning teacher reporting that both her mentors were on stress leave.

Some beginning teachers reported finding their own substitute mentor, with mixed success, to replace an assigned mentor who didn’t appear to be doing the job:

I quite literally demanded a mentor then I emailed someone that I thought would be quite good and said would you be my mentor and she said OK. So we started doing classroom observations and I ended up teaching her how to do classroom observations, and that was great for a while then it petered off, as she said things like ‘that’s great’ which wasn’t useful. I think probably another aspect is that a lot of other people don’t have a clue what I am doing in the computing college technically and don’t entirely understand the environment. (T848#2)

Yes although she hasn’t done anything. We hardly talked. I don’t think she has been aware of what she needed to do. And instead my HOD, although she wasn’t allocated to me, she’s been very one-on-one with me and helpful. So the one who should be isn’t doing a thing and I’m just lucky I’ve got a fabulous HOD. (T406#1)
Several other teachers claimed that whilst they had PRT meetings they had no assigned mentor teacher. “There are department meetings but that’s nothing really to do with induction” (T388#1). Those beginning teachers who started part-way through the school year were also more likely to strike problems associated with ‘fitting’ in or just being overlooked.

**Specialist Classroom Teacher**

The Specialist Classroom teacher (SCT) was a new position that was being trialled in most, but not all, of the secondary schools in 2006. Their roles appeared to vary from school to school, but a positive feature that was noted by many beginning teachers was that the SCT was able to provide advice and guidance independently from the formal appraisal system. Often the SCT was from outside of the department personnel and this appeared to add to the confidentially and trust that was expressed by many beginning teachers:

> The specialist classroom teacher she’s…very experienced and a wonderful guide and she mentors all of the beginning teachers in a general sense … it’s quite nice to call on people from outside of the department. (T402#1)

A teacher in the cohort who wanted to leave teaching at the mid-way point of her first year felt the SCT was the best person to talk with:

> I have a duty with her once a week, which I love. Yeah she’s, I find her really helpful, more kind of on a personal level with just trying to keep things in perspective. Like she’s the only person in my school that knows that I’m trying to look for another job. And that I don’t want to teach. (T303#1)

**Informal support and guidance**

Many teachers acknowledged informal support and guidance from colleagues, provided independently of the formal arrangements established by the school management as part of the school induction program. The reports indicate that collegial interactions were both offered and sought—and always highly valued, frequently being rated as the most important source of support. Informal support appears to be a mix of social, ethical, and professional:

> I think it is really good because teachers put things into your pigeon hole, like here’s a lesson plan and they will just pop it in. Also just talking over lunch— what they have done and how they feel and almost anytime when there is something to be learnt or something to be gained from it. And just teachers coming up, especially in our English department, and just making sure that I am all right and I know what I am doing. That’s just been invaluable. (T296#2)

For some teachers, particularly those in small departments, informal support from the wider school, served to reduce feelings of isolation:

> Once again it is different if I was part of a larger art department, there would be a lot more of that but in some ways I feel quite isolated down here where I am. It does come like when I am putting art work up in the office. (T154#2)

Often these informal contacts arose because of proximity of offices, shared duties, or carpooling:

> My car pool buddies, they are really supportive because you can just chat to them about any issues going on and you can have it all off your chest before you get home. (T94#2)

Reports on informal support particularly reinforced the role of the ‘ethic of care’—a factor that was prevalent in those teachers who rated their induction experiences most highly. Experiences of senior management, especially the principal, offering informal support appeared to be particularly affirming and reassuring for the majority of beginning teachers.
For example the following response indicates the beginning teacher’s delight when the principal informally observed her teaching:

The principal here is fantastic, he just roams and he comes in, and the first time he came in was the day I was having my first observation. So he comes in and the kids are used to it and it’s really good that the kids get to see him around the school. He is a Maths person and last time I got him to do an example on the board and the kids just thought it was fantastic, so he has seen me teaching in an informal way which I really appreciate because it makes me feel that he cares about what kind of job I am doing and he doesn’t just go on hearsay, he actually takes the time to get out of his office to come and see. (T790#1)

Equally, those who had little contact with senior management, except for scheduled PRT meetings, felt somewhat ‘let down’ and insignificant within their new role at the school.

… on the day my grandfather died I went and told the Principal and he said, “Oh and how much time do you want off?” So he’s not concerned about how I’m feeling—he’s just concerned about covering his teaching. During that day I went to him and said, “I don’t know if I can manage this afternoon,” and he said, “Well try and get through it.” I took one day and drove all night and back to school the next day as we had assessments, reports, and you know. (S707#2)

Informal contact with the principal could at times, however, be a mixed blessing:

And I was just talking at morning tea … with the Principal who said, “No just forget all that [reference to theories and concepts from ITE]”. He said, “You don’t need to know that for 3 years”. He said, “At the moment you’re actually focusing on learning how to do it and in 3 years time is when you can come in with all these theories and start to analyse what you’re doing.” (T10#1)

… the very first class that I ever taught the Principal came in but it was in a threatening sort of way and that was difficult and she does that sometimes in a classroom. (T599#1)

Significantly, many beginning teachers mentioned the importance of support from outside of the school environment, from other peer teachers and from home. This support continued to be important throughout the year:

I guess just from my family I think the support you get outside the school is crucial having people at home. I think my mum knows my students pretty well and she is pretty good to talk to and it’s often good to talk to people who don’t have a stake in your school or with your students. (T163#2)

Mentors’ perspective

Forty-seven mentor teachers completed the on-line survey. Activities that mentors reported as being effective for beginning teachers included classroom observations, either the mentor observing the beginning teacher or the beginning teacher observing teaching in colleagues’ classrooms, and the sharing of units of work, resources, curriculum and planning documents with the beginning teacher. Approximately half of the mentors made specific mention of providing support with assessment procedures, most typically in regard to familiarization with, and moderation of, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) system—a relatively new national assessment system for the senior secondary school. Providing assistance with classroom/student management concerns was also mentioned by about half of the respondents. Other specific areas of support reported less frequently included support for parent/teacher interviews and report writing, offering

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6 The mentors who completed the survey were working with beginning teachers who, with the exception of three, reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their role as a teacher. However, fifteen (32%) of the beginning teachers matched to the mentor responses reported that their school induction experience was less than satisfactory.
of professional readings, invitations to team teach, encouragement to participate in extra curricula activities, and tips for managing systems and paperwork.

In addition to reported activities that focused on specific action points such as assessment or planning, the majority of mentors reported arrangements for regular one-on-one meetings. The reported focus of meetings was to provide discussion and reflective time, and opportunities for beginning teachers to raise issues that were of concern for them. Some mentors reported the value of informal chats and on-call assistance. In a small number of cases it appeared that one-on-one support was available only when instigated by the beginning teacher.

Towards the end of the first year mentors noted the need to attend to appraisal to ensure the requirements of the provisionally registered teachers’ portfolios had been completed, and generally support the teachers to cope with the “demands of the end of year”.

When asked what areas beginning teachers might best learn in schools, the mentors affirmed the PRTs’ focus on behaviour/classroom management, assessment, and lesson and resource planning. Whilst report writing and working with parents were signposted as preferred school-based experience, many noted that learning in schools should build on foundational knowledge and skills acquired in ITE:

I would consider it important that the theory relating to planning, classroom management, the dynamics of teaching and learning, and all that encompasses, be covered and then be reflected upon once the hands-on teaching begins. (M161S#1)

With regard to their role in the mentoring relationships, the mentors were largely positive about this partnership. Many saw positive benefits in terms of reflecting on their own teaching and learning:

It gives me the opportunity to think about my own teaching, to think about what I do instinctively and continue to fine tune and improve. It forces me to continue to re-evaluate my own strategies. (M812S#1)

Being a mentor teacher keeps me honest. It keeps me in touch with the need to be deliberate about engaging students—a concern that can slip out of one’s consciousness after a few years. …There have been several times when E’s feedback about what she has tried within her class has altered the way I’ve taught my own classes. (M719S#1)

Renewal in terms of enthusiasm and the challenge of new ideas was also a feature that mentors remarked on:

The opportunity to reflect on new ideas and old to see what still works and what need to be adapted. It is interesting to see the enthusiasm and be reminded of some of the reasons why you became a teacher yourself. (M390S#1)

New teachers bring enthusiasm and new ideas. I find that they revitalize the department by sharing ideas. (M47S#1)

Other identified positives centered on the satisfaction of collegial relationships and professional capacity building:

I am very happy to share my experience with beginning teachers and I strongly believe that working with younger teachers not only contributes to their satisfaction in their chosen profession but the end effect improves the learning outcomes of our students and that is most important for us. (M533S#1)

Teaching can be an isolated activity and so it is important to meet and work with new teachers. I enjoy the energy they bring to the department. (M543#1)
Within the collegial relationship building, for some there was an acknowledgement of the ‘journey’ that they are both on, and an appreciation of the challenges that beginning teachers face:

Wonderful to see the development of a beginning teacher—to be able to share intimately on this ‘journey’. There is a duality in terms of this relationship—I learn also from their reflections and honesty and can endeavor to act on any issues they may share. (M674S#1)

Provided me with a good reminder of how difficult those first years can be. It is wonderful to watch someone’s confidence develop and see them blossom as a teacher. (M417S#1)

One mentor, however, found little to celebrate within the mentoring relationship: “To be honest the only benefit I see is in training someone to do things my way—I am quite particular about systems etc.” (M790S#1). Her response suggests that she perceived her role as supporting the beginning teacher to ‘fit’ into the school systems. This mentor listed fortnightly interviews with the beginning teacher, marking meetings to review NCEA assessments, arrangements for supervision of disruptive students (students sent to pre-assigned class when disruptive in beginning teacher’s class), and invitations to observe senior tutorials as the core support and guidance activities that she provided during the year.

Despite the largely positive benefits of being a mentor the role did not come without its challenges. Overwhelmingly, lack of ‘time’ was the most consistently reported challenge. With only 18% of their beginning teachers rated by the mentors as ‘somewhat’ or ‘not as all prepared’ in terms of their ITE experiences, reported challenges related more to mentors’ decision about how much and how best to provide on-going support and guidance, and how to provide support that is responsive to individual needs:

Being aware of their needs, knowing when to let them ‘learn’ from mistakes and knowing when to step in. Being able to offer plenty of varied support to encourage them to try different strategies. (M673S#1)

Working to a program but able to adapt according to teacher’s needs, sometimes at the drop of a hat. (M184S#1)

Mentors also expressed some frustrations when beginning teachers appeared unwilling to accept advice. These frustrations were expressed as concerns about beginning teachers who:

… have come into teaching with a specific personal agenda. When people are unwilling to accept advice on things to try when their current practices are not working. (M161S#1)

… think that they know it all. (M827S#1)

Half of the mentors acknowledged that they would benefit from professional development on mentoring. They would like “time to discuss strategies with other mentor teachers to determine the most effective strategies and identify the areas of greatest need of the beginning teacher” (M182S#1).

Discussion and Implications

How can these varied expectations and experiences of beginning teachers and their mentors inform us about induction in New Zealand secondary schools in particular, and ways to more effectively enable the professional growth of new teachers in general?
Meeting Beginning Teachers’ Expectations and Needs

We see clear evidence that the mandated beginning teacher time allowance is regarded as highly prized; prized, in that it affords the individual teacher with time that, for the large part, is theirs for managing the day-to-day requirements of teaching. It also affords time out for reflection and recovery within the teaching day. For some teachers, however, it appears that the time allocated to targeted professional development activities is sporadic and somewhat of a lesser priority during their first year of teaching.

The interviews affirm Feiman-Nemser’s (2003) conclusion that new teachers “long for opportunities to learn from their experienced colleagues and want more than social support and instructions for using the copying machine” (p. 28). All teachers sought advice on curriculum implementation, assessment, teaching strategies for specific students’ needs, behaviour management and working effectively with parents. They expected and sought to gain insight from colleagues with experience in their subject areas, through regular meetings and classroom observations.

For those beginning teachers who rated their induction experiences highly, there was clear evidence that they were involved in relationships with colleagues that both valued them and recognised their special needs as beginning teachers. The reports of their induction environment concur with Kardos and Johnson’s (2007) account of an ‘integrated professional culture’: there was “two-way interaction about teaching and learning among novices and experienced teachers … they were given assistance, encouraged to seek help, and expected to be learning and improving their teaching practice”.

The level of informal collegial support was highly valued and for the majority of teachers highly accessible. However, as the year progressed, teachers increasingly expressed concerns about overusing or expecting colleagues, who were so obviously busy, to be available for them. Further exploration of the data is needed to ascertain whether this is a function of teachers’ increasing awareness of the demands of experienced colleagues, or a function of perceived expectations that they should be withdrawing from certain forms of collegial support.

Failure to meet beginning teacher needs and expectations

Beginning teachers’ expectations concerning collegial interactions, advice, and guidance were not always met. The reasons for this appear complex, but revolve around access, expertise, and focus. First, in a minority of schools the beginning teachers report a lack of structure and clarity around what the induction program provides and what is expected of the beginning teacher. In some of their schools, the beginning teachers, sensing inappropriate structures, made their own arrangements. In other schools, the beginning teachers report a sense of powerlessness and frustration. These beginning teachers appeared to have started their teaching careers in what Bubb, Earley, & Totterdell (2005) label as ‘rogue’ schools; schools that are quite simply transgressing induction requirements.

Even with structures in place there was for some teachers a concern about the adequacy of expertise, and issues around access and relationships. From our original cohort of 111 teachers only one teacher left the profession during the first year—this teacher attributed a large part of her decision to leave to lack of appropriate support in terms of expertise and dysfunctional relationships with mentors. Another concern that arose with several teachers who were ‘older’ was the tendency for some staff to regard them as confident and competent, and hence withdraw support too early in the year.
They do make assumptions because you are older that you have been teaching for a long time and one teacher came up to me and said you would never know that you weren’t an experienced teacher. So what I need and what other people see that I need may be miles apart. (T62#2)

Concerns about mentor expertise were matched by mentor desires for more guidance as to their role in the process. For mentors to have a substantial input in guiding the beginning teachers professional learning, we need to be confident that their practices are effective, consistent and underpinned by a knowledge base that can serve as a point of reference (Jones & Straker, 2006).

**Impact on teacher quality and learning**

An induction program that meets the beginning teachers’ learning needs is one that helps new teachers reach their full potential—not only by staying in the profession but also by improving learning for all students. There was evidence at this stage of the project that not all teachers were receiving sufficient support and guidance that challenged and furthered their capacity to become more effective in their teaching. When asked at 6 months about the areas in which they needed most support, most teachers referred to school routines, classroom management and student behaviour. At the end of the year, there was a shift in emphasis with more teachers reporting the value of professional activities (e.g., classroom observations, team teaching, involvement in school-wide professional development), that provided opportunities to critically engage in professional conversations.

Whilst we know from the literature that the provision of emotional support is not as valuable as helping new teachers learn to create safe classroom environments, it was clear in the reports from their first year of teaching that emotional support and affirmation was highly valued. 

If I had to pick [what I would most value about support from other teachers] it would be other teachers being on board even as far as saying, ‘you are doing good as this class isn’t an easy class and I have been teaching for fourteen years and this is not an easy class so you are doing OK’. That support has been the most important. (T154#2)

With the third interview we will continue to explore the change of focus on teacher learning throughout the first 18 month period. In looking at ways the induction program has impacted on teachers’ expertise, we will focus on how specific induction activities have assisted them in helping their students to become interested and successful learners. In particular, how has induction fostered their disposition to look for evidence of the impact of their teaching and how has the feedback in terms of appraisal helped them to refine and develop their teaching approaches. We do have some evidence at this stage that appraisals in the form of lesson observations are making an impact for most, but not for others. We will also consider how induction has supported beginning teachers to form positive relationships with learners, parents, and caregivers.

**Further questions for the research project**

In terms of the bigger picture, our first pass through the data clearly indicates that there are many areas that we need to explore in more depth. In considering the effectiveness of induction, we will make links to data on teacher ratings of preparedness and satisfaction, and their reports on their ability to promote the learning to ‘make a difference’ in the lives and learning of their students. Data from the third interview will enable us to examine the shifts in their learning and explore how the experiences to date have challenged their initial beliefs about being a teacher and about being a professional (Flores, 2006).
We can also examine how less than satisfactory induction experiences impact on the beginning teachers’ satisfaction with teaching as a career and their long-term career plans. We have in our cohort a large group of change of career teachers. How their prior career experiences and their life experiences impact on the induction program is another fruitful area to explore.

For those teachers who perceive themselves to be in less than desirable communities of practice with regards to induction, it will be important to consider Lave and Wenger (1991) ideas of “legitimate peripheral participation” in order to suggest how participation might be differently organised to create more productive opportunities for beginning teachers’ learning. Subgroups that appear from our initial analysis to be less likely to access sound induction opportunities include those teachers who started part-way through the year, those who are teaching in isolated geographical areas, those who are the sole teacher of a curriculum subject, and those who are in part-time or contract positions. Identifying those groups of teachers likely to be at risk during the induction phase may support improvements in future programs.

Conclusion

The mandated induction program in New Zealand integrates support, development, appraisal, and accountability. In each school the enacted induction program operated as a complex system (Davies & Sumara, 2006). Despite clear guidelines about the roles and responsibilities of both the year one teacher and the school personnel, the findings of the project to date suggest that there is considerable variability in the implemented and received induction program between schools and teachers. Issues of access, focus and quality, with regard to guidance and support, resulted in differential spaces and opportunities for teacher learning.

In accord with the literature (e.g., Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005) the beginning teachers collectively reported struggles to motivate students to learn, to implement effective classroom management, to plan effectively for diverse student needs, to incorporate effective assessment strategies into planning and teaching, and to work in partnership with parents. However, how they coped with, and learnt from, these struggles differed, as did their expectations for support. When we focused more closely on the induction program embedded in a particular school setting we encountered another complex learning system that had to be negotiated by the beginning teacher. Beginning teachers were variously nested within a range of communities both within and beyond the school. Some beginning teachers battled alone against a tide of limited or ineffective support and guidance, whilst others were provided with multiple layers of support. Faced with multiple options for support and considerable freedom to plan their non-contact time, the beginning teachers exercised varied expectations of continued learning, and exhibited varied levels of agency in their participation in the induction program.

Given the apparent diversity of the beginning teachers’ learning needs and goals as professionals, the ‘fit’ of the induction was not always achieved; beginning teachers’ reported satisfaction with their induction varied widely. Beginning teachers have legitimate learning needs that cannot be properly assessed in advance or outside the contexts of their teaching and each school must take care to adapt the recommended advice and guidance guidelines (see MoE & NZTC, 2006) to suit their situationally relevant context, and to match an individual teacher’s levels of experience and preparedness. Equally, it is evident that beginning teachers need to be better equipped and prepared to take more responsibility for their own professional growth. For a few teachers in this study there was a myth that year one of teaching is all about survival (Russell, McPherson, &
Martin, 2001). On a more positive note, by far the majority of the teachers in this study are clearly showing that as beginning teachers they want to do more than survive—they are hungry for ‘making a difference’. As the mentor teachers remarked, beginning teachers bring enthusiasm and renewal to our schools—to a point where they may begin to develop a new cultural dynamic. It is clear that those schools that provide strong leadership, that build on opportunities for innovation and renewal through the provision of an “integrated professional culture” (Kardos & Johnson, 2007) will also collectively ‘make a difference’.

References


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Appendix 1: Beginning Teacher Interviews #1 & 2 Lead Questions

Interview #1

Choosing Teaching
• What were your reasons for choosing teaching?

Being a Beginning Teacher
• When you graduated last year—what did you think teaching would be like??
• What is it like being a beginning teacher in your school?
• Can you tell me about the classes you teach/extracurricular activities?
• How would you rate your level of satisfaction with your role as a teacher at time?

Thinking back over your Teacher Preparation
• Thinking back over your initial teacher education program, in what ways did it prepare you for teaching in a secondary school?
• What areas do you feel less prepared or unprepared to do well?
• What do you recall as the key strengths of your initial teacher education program?
• Are there any areas the program should have placed more emphasis on?
• Now that you are teaching, in what ways do you see the more theoretical aspects of your teacher education program informing your work?
• In what ways did your practicum experiences contribute to your professional learning as a teacher?

Making a Difference to Student Learning (rating items that match questionnaire)

Induction
• Tell me about how the 0.2 time allocation for beginning teachers is working for you.
• What formal induction activities have you participated in?
• In what ways have these induction activities helped or supported you in your role as a beginning teacher?
• Can you tell me about the ways in which you have been supported informally as a beginning teacher?
• During these first 6 months, what areas of your teaching or working in the school have your sought advice on?
• What areas would you like to have more support in?
• What would be the preferred mode of support?
• How you rate the induction in your school?

Looking Ahead
• At this stage, how do you see your future career path in teaching?
• If you were asked to describe teaching as a metaphor how would you complete this sentence: “When I am teaching at my best, I am like…”

Interview #2

Being a Beginning Teacher
• Tell me, what it’s been like for you since we last talked.
• Tell me about your best day/experience as a teacher since we last talk.
• So what about the worst day as a teacher since we last talked?
• How would you rate your level of satisfaction with your role as a teacher at time?

Teacher Learning
• Typically teachers learn a lot in their first year of teaching. Can you tell me about some of the things you have learned?
• In what ways do you see what you learned in your initial teacher education program continuing to inform your work?
• What other factors have influenced your learning this year?
• Are there any areas in particular that you still feel you need to develop over the next year?

Making a Difference to Student Learning
• Recent research points to the significant impact of teachers on the quality of students’ learning experiences. How do you see yourself making a difference for students’ learning?
• In our first interview, beginning teachers were quite varied in their thoughts about the role of theory; how do you see theory influencing your teaching practice now?

Induction and Professional Learning
• Last time we talked about the 0.2 non contact time allocation—how is that working for you since we last talked?
• How is the time allowance helping you to learn more about being a teacher?
• What formal induction and professional learning activities have you participated in since we last talked?
• What feedback about your teaching have you had in the last 6 months?
• Tell me about the ways in which you have been supported informally over the last 6 months?
• Looking back over this year, what have been the most importance sources of support for your professional learning?
• How you rate the induction in your school?

Looking Ahead
• Are you planning to stay at this school next year?
• Looking ahead, how do you see your future career path in teaching?