5th World Conference Educational Sciences WCES- 2013

Generating teacher development models from context-specific predicaments of new teachers in induction period

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Abstract

This paper presents conceptual review of literature about early experiences of teachers passing through different pathways and comprehensive model taking its root from common distresses induction period. What emerged in the review is clustered around three themes: (a) work-related problems including workload, instructional challenges, and classroom management; (b) problems related to new teacher psychology like social status and identity challenges, isolation and loneliness, and need for professional support; and (c) problems related to school context and teaching society pertaining to the relationships with students, parents, colleagues, supervisors, and administrative staff. In this regard, an inquiry-oriented teacher education program, which asserts a hand-in-hand engagement of training faculties and school settings in all procedures, can be adopted and implemented. A well-designed training put forwards an inclusive model covering both pre-service and in-service as well as novice years.

Introduction

Every teacher remember their first school day, when they enter the classroom without any supervisor, yet merely students and herself feeling compelled to become better suited to her new-fangled setting with a bunch of theoretical knowledge waving goodbye to her frantically. New teachers should expect that teaching starts as a stressful, exhausting full-time job that requires energy and commitment, and should be tolerant to experience certain amount of anxiety during the early years, due to numerous roles and responsibilities to take on (Howard, 2006). The first-year anxiety can appear in different variations in different individuals. The first year is defined as especially lonely and challenging time by many new teachers, because of "false expectations, shattered dreams, and serious attacks on one's competence and self-worth" (Rogers & Babinski, 2002, p. 1) or low starting pay, large class sizes, etc. For many others, in the beginning year at a new school can be an extremely complicated experience. As a first-

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year teacher, it is probable to make mistakes, some of which will be small ones like poorly-worded questions on a quiz or a misspelled word on a handout. They are unavoidable part of learning process, but some other mistakes could be serious and threaten their career (Thompson, 2007). Beyond question is that new teachers enter their new teaching environment with their habits and past experiences, and these habits and lifestyles can cause or ease possible adaptation difficulties. None the less, the teaching community around, the workplace, even the school is very important factors for their adaptation level. Taking reference from these, an all-inclusive program both in pre-service and in-service education as well as in novice teacher training is thought to be key to practice shock. A strong and coherent teacher education model covering all the stages from initial pre-service education to induction into fully qualified teaching should be designed and sequenced carefully.

1. Common induction distresses

After a deep survey of literature attributed to new teacher development, it is realized that the concerns novice teachers keep during their induction process, the problems they encounter frequently, and the challenges they are supposed to overcome are mostly common and organized around three themes of predicaments: (1) teaching work-related, (2) new teacher psychology-related, and (3) teaching society-related.

1.1. Teaching work-related with problems

Work-related concerns of the novice teachers are discussed as workload, instructional, and classroom management challenges. One of the biggest and even the most difficult tasks they face as new teachers generates the *workload challenges* or lacking of spare time. Novice teachers often feel inability in learning how to manage all the duties successfully and express hopelessness in carrying out all the work that is assigned. Therefore, overwhelming workload is asserted in many papers or books as the basic predicament (Britt, 1997; Uhlenbeck et al., 2002; Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002; Gilbert, 2005; McCann et al., 2005; Smith & Sela, 2005; Holmes, 2006; Thompson, 2007).

In relation to classroom practice, some *instructional challenges* that new teacher might meet can be listed as: how to diversify instruction to improve education for all students, how to create and maximize opportunities for students to learn, how to conduct the best use of personal strength, etc. (Athanases & Achinstein, 2003). Concerns consistently included among new teachers are curricular planning and instruction, students' academic and emotional growth, resources and instructional materials, student assessment and technology assistance (Lundeen, 2004). Instructional challenges compose the core of teaching profession. They across in dimensions like before-class challenges, in-class challenges, and after-class challenges (Öztürk & Yıldırım, 2012).

The literature of teacher development highlights management issue (Öztürk, 2008) as a central or major concern of new teachers. As the third domain of teaching work, classroom management pertains to everything a teacher can organize the time, the space and the students in such way that effective instructions can take place everyday (Howard, 2006). Some perceive it as "the monster in first-year teachers' nightmares" (p. 37) or as "herding mosquitoes" being "the single most difficult challenge for a beginning teacher" (p. 94). It is denoted to be a frequent source of problems and the number one or one of the top reasons for new teachers' leaving the profession (Brock & Grady, 2006). In the beginning teachers can feel that an inability to manage a class is a sign of weakness, so they are often afraid to ask for help. Diverse and hard students and the novices' lack of confidence in ability to teach different ethnic, racial, linguistic, socio-economic groups result in lowered expectations and limited practice.

1.2. New teacher psychology-related with problems

Social status and teacher identity are two important issues among the psychological concerns of beginning teachers. Teacher identity is perceived both as a social challenge and power in building social relationships. A beginning teacher's construction of a teacher identity relates both social and ethical concerns (Agee, 2004). However, it starts quite hard for many novice teachers to construct their "teacher identity" in the early years. Developing a "self" as a teacher is challenging and a variety of questions arise in the minds such as how they are supposed to act in a certain situation; how the real teachers do it; how they react to management challenges; if they are overreacting; if they are insisting on unreasonable standards; if they are being too ignorant, etc. (McCann et al.,

2005). The teaching they learned at the university is often overshadowed by feelings of isolation in terms of ideals, as they tend to sacrifice ideals for more traditional practices in the school context they are assigned to. It is believed that, over time, their focus shift significantly from "self as a teacher" to "teacher of children" (Lundeen, 2004).

Watkins (2005) states that the novices all share the need for support and to be belong, whether they come to the classroom as a second career or directly from a teacher education program. While need guidance and clear expectations, they must also find freedom and empowerment to determine how they meet these expectations. Professional support, both before and after the teaching starts, is an important phenomenon for the new teacher development, because professionally, all the novices need frequent feedback, support, guidance, and positive reinforcement in the early years.

1.3. Teaching society-related problems

Studies show that teaching society-related concerns take attention in the perceptions of novices in large scale, as well. As the induction period progresses, the number of identified classroom management or discipline problems fall sharply, problems with adult relationships out number classroom management concerns nearly three-to-one (Lundeen, 2004). This is good exemplary to show the significance of social worries of novice teacher, because "teaching is about building relationship" (Howard, 2006, p. 76) and it requires a range of skills to organize, deploy skills such as communication and negotiation, sometimes in a highly pressured environment (Holmes, 2006).

Each school and each school district has unique entity, which comes forth through members' interactions with each other and the school community (Brock & Grady, 2006). The big difference "between urban schools, rural schools, impoverished schools, well-to-do schools, small schools and overcrowded schools" (Jarvis & Algozzine, 2006, p. 3) clarifies that environment does affect them and their way of teaching. Cultural diversity they might encounter can be barrier between children, school and the new teacher, or social conflict and intolerance in the classroom. In order to "break down cultural barriers", supportive team spirit needed (McBee,1998, p. 56).

Teaching profession, problems and their solutions are often specific to particular school context or district. Therefore, beside learning the self, for the new teachers, learning the world, learning about children, understanding the students' insights, more importantly learning the school in terms of curriculum, routines, subject matter, and environments, as a teacher (Grinberg, 2002) is necessary.

2. Discussion of a comprehensive teacher education model

The literature revealed that pre-service teacher education should adequately respond to needs and concerns of novices in the early years. Covering strategies to be used in classroom without 'real-life' examples does not seem to supply a deep understanding or enactment, as the programs are usually perceived as and criticized for being too theoretical, having little connection to practice, and offering unrelated or ineffective courses for further processes. All these result from the discrepancy between the teacher's expectations out of pre-service training and the outcomes of the actual teaching experience. Teaching profession, comprehensive and well-grounded in-service education programs as a professional support to novices are a vital need. However, "induction is not an isolated program, but rather the first phase of a career-long professional development plan" (Brock & Grady, 2006, p. 113). The aim is, to address the concerns of teachers in the beginning stages of professional development. After the induction phase ends, teacher's need for professional development continues.

Strong and coherent model is displayed in Figure 1, which reflects comprehensive program adopting an interactional feature between all the stages of teacher education and emphasizing the themes emerged in the literature under novice teacher frustrations. The model is represented by certain codes and Table 1 presents what each code in the model stands for.

The model proposes an intersecting training between pre-service and in-service development. In the model, there appear two circles representing pre-service and in-service stages as unified under an inclusive globe which is supplied from both sides equally. The midpoint of the globe is named as novice teacher training, as it is supposed to have central place which is interconnected with and influenced by both pre-service and in-service training stages. Though it seems to be spherical representation, the model also reflects linear fashion which is visible like an axis of equator in the middle of the globe. The only difference is linearity starts from two ends and meets in the centre.

To start with the first stage from left to right, *P* corresponds to *pre-service* circle, during which six essential components of an efficient training are emphasized in the model: (1) decision making; (2) relationship building; (3) management; (4) effective teaching; (5) problem solving; and (6) assessment. These aspects are determined in line with the themes that emerged in novice teacher studies. When the arrows representing components in this initial training follow their path towards the other end of the globe, the second stage starts in the meantime. *A* stands for teaching internship under two segments: (1) first round practice teaching, which provides the candidate teachers with the opportunity to teach in real classroom as practice (2) preliminary mentoring program, which ensures working with a supervisor teacher under the scope of preliminary needs of beginning teachers. Both of the components in teaching internship lead, some way to fresh start to in-service training as candidate teachers start to perform teaching. That is the reason for locating *B* at the other end of the *in-service* circle.
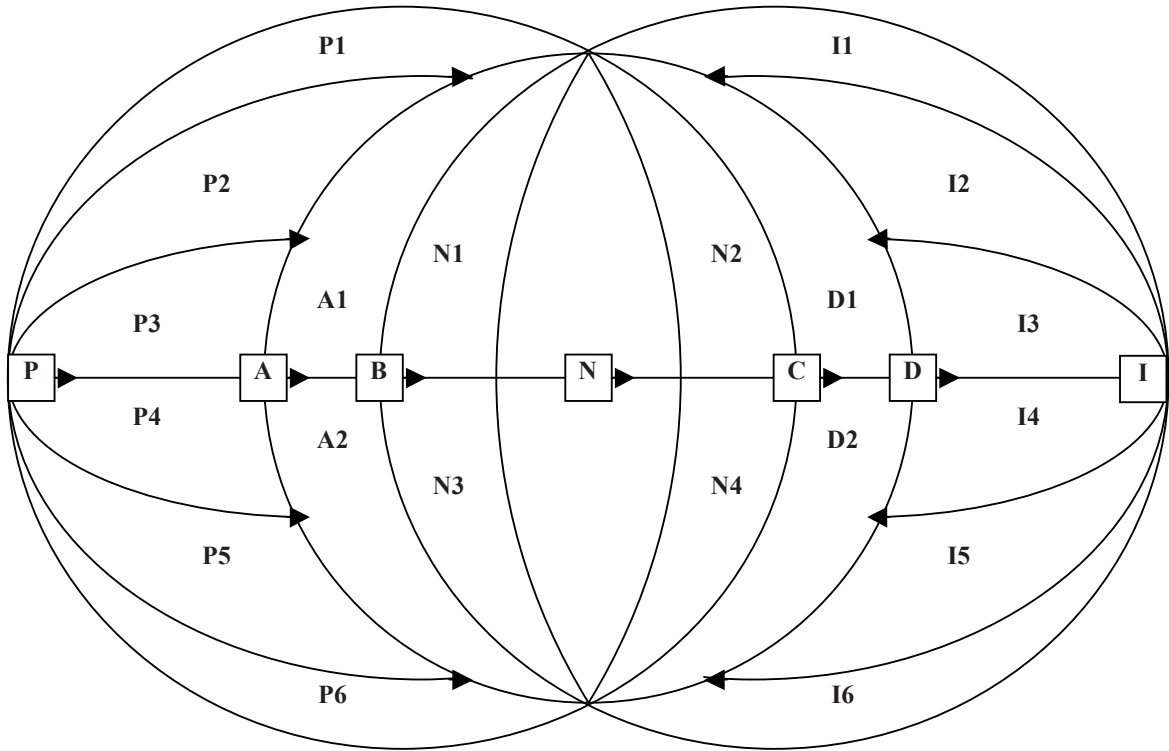

Figure 1.Teacher Education Model

Table 1.Representation Codesof Teacher Education Model

Codes	Stages	Components	
P	Initial PRESET (Pre-service Teacher Education)	P1	Decision Making
		P2	Relationship Building
		P3	Management
		P4	Effective Teaching
		P5	Problem Solving
		P6	Assessment
A	Preparatory Teaching Internship	A1	First Round Practice Teaching
		A2	Preliminary Mentoring Program
B	Fresh Start to INSET		(In-service Teacher Training)
N	NTT (Novice Teacher Training)	N1	On-site Orientation
		N2	Socialization Program

		N3	Administrative Support
		N4	Field-based Guidance
C	Closing PRESET		(Pre-service Teacher Education)
D	Induction into NQT (Newly Qualified Teaching)	D1	On-site Practice Teaching
		D2	School-based Mentoring Program
I	Induction into FQT (Fully Qualified Teaching)	I1	Negotiating a Teaching Identity
		I2	Relationship Building
		I3	Corresponding through Peer Network
		I4	*Conducting Cooperative Research*
		I5	Professional Development Links
		I6	Reflection in Action

Following the direction of **B**, next stage **N**, which means NTT (Novice Teacher Training), comes into sight. It is purposefully placed in the middle of the model as it is thought to be influenced by both sides – *pre-service* and *in-service* circles (see the arrows coming from both ends of the globe). Four essential modules are suggested during NTT program: (1) on-site orientation; (2) socialization program; (3) administrative support; (4) field-based guidance, respectively. These modules are proposed in the program as they emerged as themes among the studies related to novice teacher development. Considering the bidirectional arrows in the centre of the figure, it is visible that there is direct, mutual link between first round practice teaching, on-site orientation as well as preliminary mentoring program and socialization program. Such a link is also seen both between on-site practice teaching, field-based guidance, between school-based mentoring program and administrative support.

When NTT program comes to finale point, next stage **D** starts as the induction into newly-qualified teaching period, which is located at the other end of the *pre-service* circle. Following the direction of **D**, the stage **I** starts. Looking from the other end of the globe, **I** as the in-service years is represented by six segments: (1) negotiating a teaching identity; (2) relationship building; (3) corresponding through peer network; (4) conducting cooperative research; (5) professional development links; (6) reflection in action. All of them being among the themes reviewed in relation to common distresses of novices have a direct impact on novice teacher development and lead the way to induction into fully-qualified teaching period. The arrows coming from *in-service* circle towards **N** are supposed to be series of feedback taking its root from on-site experiences and instructional practices in-service years. They also appear to base for both novice teacher development and further development of other in-service teachers.

4. Conclusion

In accordance with the literature pointing at new teacher development, most frequently encountered concerns of novice teachers in their instructional practices and experiences outside class compiled around three themes: predicaments related to teaching work, new teacher psychology and teaching society. Emerging from all these predicaments, comprehensive teacher education model is supposed solution to common practice shock and assist three interconnected phases of teacher education: pre-service, novice and in-service teacher education. An inquiry-oriented teacher education program affirming a responsive connection of teacher training faculties at higher education institutions and workplace settings is claimed to be employed and put into action.

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