

Chapter 9

Resilience Integration and the Development of Adaptive Dispositions for Novice Teachers: A Call for a Paradigm Shift in Teacher Preparation

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ABSTRACT

The teaching profession, with all its complexities, is more challenging and filled with adversity now than ever before. This constant adversity requires teachers to be effectively trained in managing difficult situations and developing resilience. However, teacher preparation programs, which aim to produce as many teachers as possible amidst a national shortage, often miss this critical aspect. This chapter examines the complexities and challenges of the profession through the eyes of novice teachers and proposes key strategies for teacher preparation programs to enhance long-term success for new educators. The author calls for a significant shift in teacher preparation programs to cultivate resilience and adaptability in novice teachers, underscoring the crucial role these programs play in developing these essential traits.

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INTRODUCTION

The American education system is in peril as it navigates the negative impacts of the ongoing national teacher shortage. In the 2017-2018 school year, the United States faced an estimated shortage of 110,000 teachers. This crisis had been developing over the previous years, as the percentage of schools unable to fill vacancies increased from 3.1% in 2011 to 9.4% in 2016 (Garcia & Weiss, 2020). Simply put, our schools need more teachers, especially as the population of school-aged children is projected to grow by another 3 million by the end of the 2025 school year (Sutcher et al., 2016). Even with data showing that enrollment in teacher preparation programs decreased by 35% from 2016 to 2019 (Pennington & Trinidad, 2019), the shortage is largely attributed to the “revolving door” effect. This occurs when large numbers of existing teachers leave their jobs long before retirement, which, according to Ingersoll et al. (2014), may account for up to 90% of the deficit. With up to 50% of novice teachers leaving the field within their first five years (Ingersoll et al., 2014), the alarming rate of attrition prompts a thorough examination of why this phenomenon is so prevalent in our current education system.

The teaching profession, with all its complexities, is more challenging and filled with adversity now than ever before. This constant adversity requires teachers to be effectively trained in managing difficult situations and developing resilience. However, teacher preparation programs, which aim to produce as many teachers as possible amidst a national shortage, often miss this critical aspect. Whether receiving preparation through a traditional four-year degree program or a streamlined alternative pathway to certification, aspiring teachers must enter the profession feeling confident and prepared to face the challenges inherent in teaching. A 2023 study examining the perceptions of preparedness among novice alternatively certified teachers in New Jersey found that 100% of participants felt their programs did not effectively prepare them for the adversities they faced in their teaching assignments (Miranda, 2023). Furthermore, 80% of participants, all within their first or second year of teaching, reported experiencing career choice doubt due to a lack of confidence and an inability to manage early career challenges effectively (Miranda, 2023). This data highlights the issue facing our nation's teachers. The lack of a comprehensive teacher preparation experience that considers a teacher's wellbeing creates “temporary teachers” who enter the field excited but quickly become disillusioned and leave the profession. Consequently, students face negative impacts, such as larger class sizes and less qualified teachers filling positions (Marshall et al., 2022).

This chapter examines the complexities and challenges of the profession through the eyes of novice teachers. It proposes key strategies for teacher preparation programs to enhance long-term success for new educators. Emphasizing the need to move from focusing on attrition to fostering resilience and adaptability, as suggested by

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