

Chapter 56

The Role of Teacher Self-Strategies in First Year Teacher Experience and Teacher Socialisation

Ekaterina Kozina

Dublin City University, Ireland

Aidan Seery

Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland

Andrew Loxley

Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland

ABSTRACT

It is recognised that the first year of professional practice of teachers, also known as an induction year, has far reaching implications for their subsequent teaching career. This chapter discusses the findings of a large scale mixed-methods research project (2006-2010) conducted on the socialisation experiences of beginning primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland. In detail, the project was concerned with real life experiences of teachers as they progress through their first year of professional practice. The data on which the chapter reports was collected by means of a postal questionnaire to 1635 teachers and 52 in-depth qualitative interviews. The authors start the discussion by providing a rationale for this research and a broad overview of the teaching challenges faced by beginning teachers. Consideration is given to the ways in which first year teachers generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences of classroom teaching and their approaches to address challenges they encounter. More specifically, the chapter discusses teacher self-strategies to find solutions to challenges to their practice and the ways in which collaboration and interaction with colleagues promotes classroom environments conducive to more effective teaching and learning. Lastly, some insight is provided into the models of induction supports available in primary schools and their potential to transform the experience of classroom teaching for beginning primary teachers.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-2122-0.ch056

INTRODUCTION

Within the literature the first few months of teaching in a primary school classroom are sometimes referred to as a praxis shock (Gold, 1996). These months are also characterised by a great deal of stress for teachers. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002, p.105) clarified the complexity of the first year by stating that praxis shock specifically refers to the “teachers’ confrontation with the realities and responsibilities of being a classroom teacher, that puts their beliefs and ideas about teaching to the test, challenges some of them, and confirms others.” For beginning teachers from the very first day they enter the classroom, learning to teach ‘well’ appears to be the most challenging task, involving the decision on what curriculum content to cover, planning, structuring and effectively delivering lessons, assessing pupils’ understanding of the subject knowledge and appropriately adjusting to pupils’ learning styles and needs. Besides that, newly qualified teachers (NQTs)¹ also have to manage student behaviour, deal with the time overload, and plan developmentally appropriate lessons (Gold, 1996). It is not surprising that to describe their teaching early in their first year, NQTs use the words such as ‘scared,’ ‘wrong,’ and ‘awful’ (Lundeen, 2004).

The following sections of this chapter aim at identifying and exploring the experiences inherent in the process of becoming a classroom teacher and a learner in a profession. In particular, the chapter starts with a rationale for our research and an overview of teaching challenges encountered within the dimensions of classroom teaching. In order to fully explore the ways in which first year teachers generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences of classroom teaching and their ideas and approaches to address challenges which they encountered, the chapter addresses the following key themes:

1. How beginning teachers learn to manage classrooms effectively? Here, we specifi-

cally report on the most common challenging areas teachers found difficult to deal with in their first year within the areas of classroom teaching.

2. By what means do teachers develop necessary knowledge and skills to be able to teach confidently? And what are the self-strategies of teachers to find solutions to challenges of their practice?
3. What are the potential sources of support allowing teachers to gain the necessary knowledge and skills in the areas of classroom management, dealing with discipline, planning, pupils’ assessment and the use of teaching resources thus improving their expertise? In what ways do collaboration and interaction with colleagues promote classroom environments conducive for more effective teaching and learning?

In addition, we also comment on some models of induction supports available in primary schools that have the potential to transform the experience of classroom teaching for NQTs.

BACKGROUND

Rationale and the Study Sample

This study set up to explore professional socialisation of primary school teachers in Ireland with the specific emphasis on exploring their first year of professional experiences. Importantly, teachers’ experiences of classroom teaching, interpersonal relations, socio-constructivist learning about the aspects of organisational and cultural contexts of the schools and the development of professional identity were viewed as not only discrete aspects of the process of professional socialisation but as experiences co-existing in a dynamic relationship.

The discussion is based on an in-depth large scale exploratory study on early professional socialisation of first year primary school teach-

8 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/role-teacher-self-strategies-first/72107

Related Content

A Framework for Assessing Self, Peer, and Group Performance in E-Learning

Thanasis Daradoumis, Fatos Xhafaand Ángel Alejandro Juan Perez (2006). *Self, Peer and Group Assessment in E-Learning* (pp. 279-294).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/framework-assessing-self-peer-group/28807

Buddhist Detachment as a Conceptual Point of Entry into Teaching Sociopolitically-Located Multicultural Education Online

Christine Clark (2011). *Handbook of Research on Transformative Online Education and Liberation: Models for Social Equality* (pp. 108-125).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/buddhist-detachment-conceptual-point-entry/48867

Evaluation Strategies for Open and Distributed Learning Environments

Thomas C. Reevesand John G. Hedberg (2009). *E-Learning Technologies and Evidence-Based Assessment Approaches* (pp. 234-242).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/evaluation-strategies-open-distributed-learning/9156

Proverbial Storytelling and Lifelong Learning in the Home-School Dialogue

Mara Theodosopoulouand Vana Papalois (2013). *Handbook of Research on Didactic Strategies and Technologies for Education: Incorporating Advancements* (pp. 317-326).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/proverbial-storytelling-lifelong-learning-home/72078

Teachers of Young Children: Moving Students from Agents of Surveillance to Agents of Change

Susan Matoba Adlerand Jeanne Marie Iorio (2012). *Disrupting Pedagogies in the Knowledge Society: Countering Conservative Norms with Creative Approaches* (pp. 242-255).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/teachers-young-children/61793