FROM BRISBANE TO BAMAGA:

BEGINNING TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

IN QUEENSLAND

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Introduction

The transition from preservice education to classroom teaching is, for many people, a time of significant adjustment. There are professional adjustments to be made as the relatively 'safe' work life of the student is exchanged for the less certain, more vulnerable occupation of teacher. Exam pressures and assignment deadlines are replaced by new pressures of high teaching-contact hours, substantial preparation and marking loads and 'fitting in' to the school and 'the system'. There are personal adjustments to be made, too, especially for those whose first appointment takes them far from what is familiar to centres where initially they 'are unknown and know no one'. Little wonder that beginning teaching has been referred to as a 'career crisis point', approached by most with
apprehension and requiring both professional and personal help (Carruthers, 1988:42). The syndrome of 'not knowing' (Corcoran, 1981:78) in its broadest sense needs understanding and addressing.

Despite the acknowledged importance of beginning teaching in the context of the teacher's professional development, there are comparatively few studies relating to the experiences of beginning teachers in Queensland. Shaw's study relating to the adjustment of beginning teachers (Shaw, 1977) yielded a wealth of qualitative as well as quantitative data, but is now somewhat dated, particularly in view of the significant new demands being placed upon teachers as a result of school-based curriculum and assessment development.

The present study aimed to update and extend some of Shaw's research and, in particular, to examine the adjustment, satisfactions, problems and concerns of beginning teachers, and to relate these to their pre-service experiences and present teaching situation.

Methodology

Of the 265 respondents surveyed in this study 110 were males and 153 were females (2 gave no indication). All the beginning teachers had received their teacher education at the former Brisbane College of Advanced Education, now a part of Queensland University of Technology. Sixty-three of them undertook a one year Graduate Diploma of Education course after completion of a Bachelor's degree or equivalent qualification. One hundred and ninety-nine graduated with a three year Diploma in Teaching (Secondary). Three teachers gave no indication of their course. Since this cohort originally enrolled in these two courses, the three year Diploma in Teaching has been replaced by a four year Bachelor of Education degree and during 1990 the Graduate Diploma underwent a major revision.

Students at Brisbane CAE had been able to enter the diploma course immediately after completing Year 12, after a period in the workforce, or, in the case of the Graduate Diploma course, after completion of a degree. Consequently there was a breadth of ages represented. Most students in both courses were required to be prepared in two discipline areas.

The present study has both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. A questionnaire was trialled among a small group representing both of the pre-service courses and a revised version sent to the beginning teachers at their schools in mid 1990. The questionnaire was comprised mainly of closed questions, but did include a limited number of questions providing for open-ended responses from the respondents. Three hundred and forty-nine questionnaires were forwarded and 265 (76%) returned.

In order to provide richer qualitative data it had been decided to interview approximately 20% of the respondents. Thus between July and November, face-to-face interviews, using an interview schedule, were
conducted with 62 of the respondents at centres such as Townsville, Mt Isa, Charters Towers, Emerald, Mackay, Dysart, Capella, Tara, Jandowae, Maryborough, Roma, Brisbane, and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts.

Questionnaire data were analysed by means of the SPSSX computer package.

Contextual Background

The context in which pre-service teachers in Queensland completed their pre-service education, and the context into which they were placed in 1990 were characterised both by rapid change and by uncertainties which were likely to increase the demands placed upon the neophyte teacher.

Virtually all the beginning teachers in the present study had attended an institution in the process of amalgamating with a University as part of the Commonwealth Government's push to end the binary system. Inevitably, the pressures and uncertainties associated with major institutional change affected staff involved in preservice education and thus their commitment to a teacher education program in the process of being phased out. Subjects which had been an integral part of the well-established diploma of teaching course were no longer viewed as appropriate for the newly established four year degree course and both students and staff might well have felt that they were involved in a course which was devalued. These difficulties were probably exacerbated by the diversity of opinion among staff regarding an appropriate teacher preparation course for a context undergoing rapid change.

Not only had the beginning teachers emerged from a teacher preparation environment characterized by rapid externally imposed change, but they also entered a new environment similarly characterized by change, the direction of which was often difficult to predict.

The main catalyst for change in Queensland was the rapid increase in the retention rates of year 11 and 12 students, an increase more rapid than that in other Australian states. This led to significant changes in the content, range and choice of subjects available in schools. These trends culminated in attempts to establish a coherent framework for senior schooling as reflected in reports and discussion papers such as P-10 Curriculum Framework (1987) and A Framework for Senior Schooling (1990). Associated with changes in secondary schooling were such developments as the establishment of a limited number of senior high schools and the expansion of the post-compulsory TAFE sector. Each development was variously seen as a way of modifying secondary education to cater for the needs of youth entering a contemporary society. The growing diversity within the school population in the 1980's strengthened and consolidated the shift in the direction of school-based curriculum development and assessment which had occurred in Queensland after the acceptance of the Radford Report in the early 1970's.
The initial teaching phase, then, was one where neophytes were required to achieve simultaneously a variety of adjustments in a changing education system and in an unfamiliar school, perhaps teaching subjects not taught during practice teaching; adjusting to staff who often considered they should be able to demonstrate all of the skills and confidence of a competent teacher; and in addition needing to set up a new life outside of schools, often in an unfamiliar environment. In view of the complexity of the demands placed on beginning teachers, it was interesting to examine the degree to which they adjusted to their new role as teacher and the extent and nature of their satisfactions.

Perceived Adjustment to and Satisfactions from the First Year of Teaching

Both the surveys and the interviews gave respondents an opportunity to indicate their perceived adjustment to their new role and the extent and kinds of satisfaction which they had derived from it. It needs to be emphasized that neither the questionnaire nor the interview could provide any objective measure of how well the beginning teacher had adjusted to his/her role and in this regard it is worth noting that a previous Australian investigation (Tisher, Fyfield and Taylor, 1978) found significant discrepancies between how well beginning teachers believed they were coping with certain tasks and the extent to which their school principals believed they were coping with these tasks. Nevertheless, the extent to which neophyte teachers perceive themselves to have adjusted to their new role and the extent and kinds of their satisfactions have obvious implications for their feelings of efficacy and their general commitment to teaching.

Around 64% of respondents indicated their belief that they had adjusted 'well' or 'very well' to their role as teachers, with only 4.5% believing that they had not adjusted 'very well'. None of the respondents indicated that he/she had adjusted badly.

Not surprisingly, in view of the beginning teachers' generally positive responses concerning their adjustment to their new role, responses to the questionnaire also suggested that most had found their overall experiences 'satisfying' or 'very satisfying'. Around 23% of respondents rated their overall experiences as very satisfying and 55.5% as satisfying, with only 3% indicating that they had been 'not at all satisfying'.

A third indication of the perceived overall adjustment of the beginning teachers and the extent to which they had found their experiences satisfying relates to whether they considered it likely that they would be teaching in five years' time. While the perceived likelihood or otherwise of teaching in five years' time is likely to be strongly influenced by the level of satisfaction derived from the initial teaching experience and their perceived success of adjustment to the teaching role, it is also likely to be influenced by a variety of other factors such as financial considerations, possession of academic and vocational qualifications and availability of alternative careers. Be this as it may, the fact that
around 70% of the beginning teachers considered it likely or very likely that they would be teaching in 5 years' time is suggestive of general satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction with their experiences. Crosstabs were performed with the purpose of establishing whether certain sub-groups among the respondents were more or less likely to derive high satisfaction and better (perceived) adjustment to their teaching role. This yielded information which discounted the significance of a number of variables including age, gender, final practice teaching result, course undertaken, presence or absence of an induction program and the location of the school. Factors which did show a significant though modest relationship to perceived adjustment and/or level of satisfaction included Principal Teaching Area (PTA) studied in the pre-service course, size of school and a reduced teaching load for the beginning teacher.

Table 1 indicates that beginning teachers whose principal teaching area in their pre-service course had been Commercial Studies, Home Economics or Manual Arts were most likely to rate their overall adjustment to teaching positively while those whose principal teaching area had been Art, English, Mathematics or Music tended to perceive their adjustment in less positive terms.

Degree of overall satisfaction derived from the first year of teaching was also related to the PTA studied in the preservice course, with the overall pattern of responses parallelling those relating to perceived adjustment to teaching. Thus teachers whose principal/major teaching area had been Commercial Studies, Home Economics, Manual Arts and to a lesser extent, Science, tended to rate their experiences as most satisfying while English, Mathematics and to a lesser extent, Art were associated with less satisfaction.

In accounting for the relationship between satisfaction derived from teaching and the PTA included in the preservice course, three possible explanations suggest themselves.

Since the majority of the beginning teachers were teaching in their PTA, it might be the case that the teaching of some subjects provides more satisfaction than others. A second possible explanation lies in the fact that the teaching of some subjects - such as English and Art - because of their broad scope and varied teaching demands have the potential for causing greater frustration in the beginning teacher. A third possible explanation is that teachers who had studied certain PTA's in their pre-service course had found them more helpful in their teaching than students who had studied others. This explanation is given some credibility in the light of the students' perceptions of their pre-service course.
Although crosstabulations indicated that the relationship between, on the one hand, size of school, and on the other hand adjustment to the teaching role and level of satisfaction did not reach statistical significance, the data suggest a slight tendency for beginning teachers in smaller schools to find their experiences more satisfying than those located in larger schools ($r = .10, P = .056$)

A feature of the induction process which has sometimes been advocated as likely to ease the transition of beginning teachers, a reduction in teaching load was found to be related to both perceived adjustment and level of satisfaction. Although the correlation between reduction in teaching load and both perceived adjustment and level of satisfaction was low, being .12 ($P = .032$) and .13 ($P = .026$) respectively, it was statistically significant. Crosstabulations involving reduction in teaching load and time spent in lesson preparation and marking indicated that a lighter teaching load was not associated with less marking or preparation. The effects of a reduced teaching load may therefore be mediated through such mechanisms as providing more opportunities for thorough preparation, reducing feelings of being overpowered by multiple teaching demands and signalling to the beginning teacher that he/she is considered worthy of support, rather than through a reduction in the actual time spent on preparation and marking.

Sources of satisfaction

Both the questionnaire and the interviews provided our beginning teachers with opportunities to indicate the sources of their rewards and satisfaction in their first year of teaching. Around 75% of respondents to the questionnaire commented on the kinds of satisfaction which they had derived while many of the interviewees spontaneously referred to sources of satisfaction. In some cases, the beginning teachers' reported satisfaction was expressed in diffuse terms, but in general, it focussed on three major areas

1. Relationships with students

Relationships with students proved to be a potent source of satisfaction for many of the beginning teachers, as illustrated by the following small sample of the numerous comments made:-

I really enjoy the personal interaction and long-term relationships that teaching gives and that you can't establish at prac. [practice teaching].

Being appreciated by students and their enthusiasm to attend and participate in learning has been great.

2. Perceived success in teaching
A number of the beginning teachers referred enthusiastically to the pleasure which they had derived from bringing about student learning. In some cases, this was expressed in general terms or related to their students' achievement. Thus the following were among the most frequently cited sources of satisfaction:

- seeing students learn and increase their knowledge - it beats mixing concrete (Mature-aged beginning teacher)
- having the poorer students succeed at tasks and exams

3. Supportiveness of colleagues

Although a minority of respondents to the questionnaire (less than 10%) commented spontaneously on the satisfaction derived from relationships with and support from colleagues, the interviews suggested that the quality of relationships with colleagues and their perceived supportiveness were important factors in the beginning teacher's adjustment to and degree of satisfaction with his/her new role.

Several interviewees commented on their relationships with their colleagues in very positive terms:

- My greatest satisfaction has come from the support of the staff and success with some students.
- The staff here are great - very supportive. One of the teachers who has been teaching about five years has been a great help.

In keeping with findings by Lortie (1975) and Shaw (1977), psychic rewards predominated in the reported satisfaction of the beginning teachers, with student-teacher relationships and perceived success in bringing about student learning being, by far, the most frequent sources of satisfaction. Although a number of the beginning teachers experienced difficulties in adjusting to the demands of teaching, it would seem that there was a generally high level of satisfaction present.

Self-Perceived Problems

Respondents were given an opportunity to indicate their concerns and problems associated with their teaching role. Around 43% indicated that the first year of teaching had been very difficult or difficult, with only around 23% indicating that they had experienced no real difficulties.

There was a small negative correlation between the beginning teachers' age and the overall difficulty. While around 59% of beginning teachers in the 25+ age group indicated that their experiences had been difficult or very difficult, this was true of only around 37% of the beginning teachers in the younger age group. This might seem surprising given that greater
maturity is often viewed as likely to confer more self-assurance and credibility on the teacher in the eyes of both students and colleagues. On the other hand, it might be argued that older beginning teachers experience a greater degree of 'culture shock' in returning to the classroom, might be more self-critical and demanding of themselves and others, and might also experience problems in adjusting to a role which could carry considerably less prestige than that to which they were accustomed in other contexts.

Crosstabulations revealed no significant relationship between the beginning teachers' grade in practice teaching and the overall difficulty of their first year of teaching, suggesting that the demands of beginning teaching are significantly different from those of teaching practice - or alternatively, that the grade obtained for practice teaching is invalid and/or a poor predictor of future teaching adjustment. The PTA was the one aspect of the teacher's preservice course that was significantly related to the difficulty of the first year. Beginning teachers who believed that their PTA/co-major had equipped them well for their role had tended to experience a lower overall level of difficulty with their first year of teaching. Those whose principal/co-major teaching areas were Art, English and the Social Studies were most likely to have found their first year of teaching difficult, Art particularly so, with over 68% of that group viewing their experiences as having been difficult or very difficult.

Whereas the geographical area in which the school was located showed no significant relationship to the difficulty of the first year, there was a slight tendency for beginning teachers in larger schools to report a higher level of difficulty than those placed in smaller schools. The crosstabulations also revealed that providing the beginning teacher with a lighter teaching load was associated with a lower overall level of difficulty with the first year of teaching. The presence or absence of an induction program was not associated with a significantly lower level of experienced difficulty.

Taken as a whole, the data suggest that induction programs in their present form do not necessarily ease the transition process from student to teacher. It is important that attention be given to the careful planning of induction procedures in collaboration with the beginning teachers themselves, and for the continued effectiveness of these programs to be monitored.

The beginning teachers were given the opportunity to indicate the extent to which various aspects of their role had presented problems. Of those aspects relating to teaching, obtaining suitable teaching resources accounted for the highest number of problems, particularly for those located in smaller schools in relatively remote areas or in some of the newer schools without well established libraries. While both discipline and motivating students had caused a few problems to the majority of beginning teachers, only a minority had experienced major or very severe problems in these areas (between 20% and 25% in the case of each). This was an area where the teachers saw improvements occurring over time:
The hardest thing has been discipline but it's getting easier. You learn from your mistakes and can recover from most of them.

Once you start getting into teaching it becomes a lot easier. You start to get to know the kids and get them under control. You have to be harder on kids at the beginning.

I now feel I'm much more on top of class discipline after some problems at the beginning. You learn to anticipate situations likely to cause problems and try to avoid or change these situations. Just getting to know your class helps you in your class management.

Of the remaining types of problems, tiredness and a 'limited social life' appeared to be the most frequent source of major and very severe problems. Around 49% of respondents indicated that tiredness had caused a few problems, with some 21% indicating that it had caused major problems and around 8% indicating it had caused very severe problems.

Around 25% of the beginning teachers were teaching at least one subject for which they had received no specific preparation in their teacher education program. One unfortunate teacher who was required to teach two such subjects commented on the problems which this had presented:

I find teaching both English and Social Science quite difficult and time consuming and I don't feel comfortable in the classroom situation. I have also been expected to take sport - which involves two afternoons a week and a year 9 option class. Being a form teacher is also time consuming as we have a pastoral care program running. I find I am working a minimum of 60 hours a week. It's exhausting.

In summary, around 43% of respondents had experienced their first year teaching as difficult or very difficult. It is conceivable that beginning teachers prepared in some principal teaching areas were far better equipped for their teaching role than those who had been prepared in other teaching areas, but it is also conceivable that beginning teachers in some discipline areas have greater teaching and management demands placed upon them than those in other areas. For example, both content and teaching approaches in Commercial Studies may tend to be more prescriptive than those characterizing the teaching of English. This may create a greater potential in English for a mismatch between methodologies favoured by the school, and those favoured by the teacher education institution as compared with Commercial studies. In addition, a recurring theme is the need to access useful modern resources, and deal with large classes and limited time frames while simultaneously attempting to accomplish the curriculum objectives.

Teacher Concerns
Included as one of the questions within our overall questionnaire was what could be considered a self-contained questionnaire - the Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (TCQ) developed by Frances Fuller (1969). Fuller had hypothesised that as teachers gained experience, the issues or concerns they identified in relation to their teaching experience would change on a developmental basis, reflecting stages through which the teachers passed:

Self Concerns: In this stage the teachers' own feelings of adequacy and their concerns for their survival as teachers, worries about class control, fear of failure, and observations by superiors are considered paramount.

Task Concerns: The dominant features of this stage are mastering the tasks of teaching, such as working with many students, dealing with an inadequate supply of instructional resources, coping with time pressures, and accommodating to the demands and expectations placed on teachers.

Impact Concerns: This stage involves issues such as the teacher recognising and dealing effectively with the social, emotional and individual needs of students, essentially attempting to match the content level of the lesson to the perceived cognitive level of the individual student.

The trend which Fuller and the findings of other studies (Katz, 1972; Ryan, 1979; Marshall, et al, 1990) predicted, was that as experience is gained, beginning teachers become less concerned with their own adequacy and survival and more concerned with meeting the students' needs.

There are groups of five items in the TCQ, randomly ordered, which comprise the Self Concern, the Task Concern and the Impact Concern scales, enabling a mean and standard deviation to be calculated for each of the concern scales, and for comparisons to be made between teachers on their concern scales according to their Principal Teaching Areas (PTA's). As well, the degrees of concern expressed for each of the items can be examined independently through the percentage of teachers who expressed their concern at a particular level, e.g. "extremely concerned" or "not concerned". (Tom Cuddihy from QUT provided the analysis of the TCQ.)

There are weaknesses in such a developmental perspective, especially with the validity of an assertion that a certain item in the TCQ "belongs" solely to a particular concerns scale. And for the teacher concerns theory to be used as a research tool, its developmental nature or perspective can only be tackled if the TCQ is administered at more than one time period. However, inclusion of such an instrument within our total questionnaire does enable some continuity and comparison to be made with a body of research which has built up around the teacher concerns concept.

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations on each of the Task, Self and Impact Scales.
Analysis reveals only limited significant differences in expressed levels of concern among PTA groups, but what is striking is the consistent trend for the same groups of PTA's to display similar standing with respect to all three scales. More specifically:

1. 
   a. Graduates in Manual Arts, Mathematics and Physical Education displayed the lowest scores on both the Self and Impact scales, with Manual Arts and Mathematics graduates also displaying lowest scores on the Task Concerns scale.
   
   b. Graduates in Art, English, Music and Drama showed the highest levels of concerns on the Task and Impact scales.
   
   c. Art, Music and English graduates displayed lowest scores on the Self scales.
   
   d. While the relative standing of STA groups across the three concerns scales was relatively constant, the discrepancies were greatest for the Impact scale where, for instance, the mean score of the Drama graduates was 21.22 and that of the Manual Arts graduates was 15.59.

2. It is also worth noting that, as mentioned previously, Art, Music and English graduates were more likely to consider their first year of teaching had been difficult or very difficult, while Manual Arts, Physical Education and Mathematics teachers were less likely to have considered that the first year of teaching had been difficult or very difficult. Furthermore, the groups of teachers who expressed the highest levels of concern on the Impact scale - Art, Music, English and Drama graduates - were also the groups who had a higher than average expectancy that they would not be teaching after five years had elapsed: 45.5%, 38%, 39% and 44% respectively compared to the overall mean of 30.1%.

It is thus clear that beginning teachers in certain subject areas consistently expressed stronger concerns with regard to their teaching than beginning teachers in certain other subject areas. There are several possible reasons for this:

(a) Significant amounts of time may be required by students in Art, Music, Drama and English to interact meaningfully with curriculum content, and for teachers to therefore know whether tasks are being completed satisfactorily.

(b) Teaching strategies in subjects such as Drama and English often involve discussions, group activities, analysis of issues, and forming of opinions and appreciations, which place additional demands on the teachers.
concerned. This can particularly be so where strategies endorsed in the teacher education program encourage such teaching approaches.

(c) The outcomes being aimed at in curriculum areas such as Art, Music, Drama and English are relatively difficult to identify, or to then recognize as a result of the learning process, creating potential difficulties and frustrations for the teachers. By contrast, learning outcomes in subjects such as Mathematics and Manual Arts are easier to quantify.

The highest levels of concern expressed by the total beginning teacher sample were on the Impact scale, suggesting that by the end of their first teaching semester they had moved beyond the more immediate perceived needs for survival, or worry about pressures on themselves, to the more central educational issues associated with student learning. It could also reflect emphasis given to this in their preservice course.

As perhaps could be predicted, "Maintaining the appropriate degree of class control" was the most frequently chosen item in the extremely concerned category, being selected by 19.6% of the respondents. Shaw's 1977 study had shown that for secondary first year teachers "Discipline and control" was chosen by 64% as "your biggest problem so far", and McBride, Bogess and Griffey (1986) showed that this did not diminish significantly amongst experienced teachers with years of teaching. But when the very and extremely concerned levels of responses are added together, four other items outrank the "Maintain....class control". The three highest ranking items were:

"Meeting the needs of different levels of students"
"Challenging unmotivated students"
"Whether each student is getting what he/she needs"

These are all components of the Impact scale, reinforcing the evidence that these first year teachers are concerned for the extent to which their teaching is achieving something and making a difference. On the surface, this result suggests a marked change from the 1977 finding of Shaw that only 2% of his sample of secondary beginning teachers classified "Catering to the range of abilities" as "your biggest problem so far". But it supports the findings reported in the Telfer (1982) review which placed "Creating interest in the topic being taught" at the head of the problems list. At one level, as expressed by a final year student recently, this is surprising because "we new teachers should have all the good and interesting ideas to motivate kids if anyone does". But it probably reflects the reality of the growing numbers of school students staying in the system - encouraged by governments and the economic situation - and the inadequacy that teachers can easily feel when faced by that new student diversity.

A final result relating to the TCQ of interest, though difficult to explain
at this stage, is the finding that 4.5 and 3.6 times as many females as males expressed high degrees of concern as measured by the Task and Self scales, respectively. Females also showed a higher level of concern for Impact, but the discrepancy was considerably smaller.

Perceived Relevance of Preservice Teacher Education

As has already been indicated, there are probably many ways in which the concerns being expressed by the beginning teachers may have some of their origins in the preservice program experiences of those teachers. When their own assessment of those teacher education courses is considered, there are unsurprising findings. What could be called a functionalist perspective seems to dominate, with many beginning teachers being pre-occupied with practical matters such as being given survival strategies, provided with ready-made teaching units, finding suitable resources, and being shown how to manage disruptive students. In terms of the Discipline Studies strand, the impression is given of students largely wishing to be taught content that they would teach in schools, and little more. They did not appear to place a high priority on depth of knowledge as being essential to effective curriculum planning, teaching and coping with student questions. Nor did they seem to place a high value on the role of the discipline in their own professional development.

This does not mean that appropriate and adequate reflection will not occur within such a perspective, but the assessment by these beginning teachers of how well various aspects of their teacher education had equipped them for their present role, as illustrated in Table 2 may well suggest that developing a defensible personal educational philosophy is low on their priorities. Or it may be that components of the Education Studies strand such as sociology and philosophy of education, and educational psychology, are treated in such a way that students find it very difficult to see how to "make use of" them and incorporate relevant understandings and insights from them into a philosophy that has a recognisable teaching or school orientation.

Certainly the 86.6% of beginning teachers who saw their teaching practice as having equipped them well for their present role are giving expression to a functionalist view of preservice teacher education. Although the pervasiveness of this viewpoint in beginning teachers should be taken seriously, it should not be accepted uncritically and does not necessarily imply that theory should play a minor role in preparing students for the realities of the classroom. Perhaps those sessions of teaching practice themselves need to be examined to ensure that they are not over-stressing the comparatively direct classroom or instructional focus to the detriment of what today would be seen as a more rounded portrayal of what it means to
be a teacher in secondary schools. As well, if these results are linked with what we have seen to be the expressed concerns of the first year teachers, where an understanding of how to cater for the range of students in classes ranks highest on the list of concerns, then perhaps teaching practice is still not adequately equipping them, even though it receives such high endorsement.

Student teachers often seem to appreciate what could be called their theoretical studies after returning from a session of teaching practice (Petty & Hogben, 1980), and it could be considered that such studies may be better considered as a component of in-service courses rather than at a pre-service level. Indeed Dawes & Ticehurst (1978:78) assert that

The frequent reference to 'bread and butter' items...reinforces the proposition that the "survival model" is appropriate to pre-service education of teachers and that heavy emphasis on such areas as educational philosophy, curriculum development theory and educational psychology as a discipline might be more effective in postgraduate courses.

However Dawes & Ticehurst were writing at a time when the Diploma of Teaching preservice and Bachelor of Education in-service model, in CAE's particularly, was the norm. It was assumed that all teachers would be touched by in-service as they sought to upgrade to four year trained status. But with that status being now conferred through the pre-service Bachelor of Education, teacher education institutions may not have the chance to work with large numbers of teachers in the formalised in-service way that Dawes & Ticehurst seem to advocate. In that case, it would be up to the providers of the preservice courses to genuinely tackle the issue.

Over 80% of teachers felt that studies in their PTA had equipped them well for teaching, in contrast to the 59.3% who felt that studies in their STA had equipped them well, probably reflecting the 120 as against 70 credit point allocation between PTA and STA studies. Even though respondents often commented positively on Curriculum Studies subjects, this was not invariably so, and comments on some curriculum areas paralleled the levels of concern previously referred to, for example:

Preservice music needs to encompass available programs and materials instead of presenting limited, out of date, useless material.

The English units at college have in no way prepared me for the writing of units, the preparation of daily plans or given an appropriate grounding in a content area suitable for teaching.

Conclusion

Despite its limitations, the investigation seems to have a number of implications relevant both to teacher educators and to schools. These may be summarised as follows:
(a) The predominance of psychic rewards

In line with the findings of previous investigators (e.g. Lortie, 1975; Shaw, 1977) our data revealed intrinsic (psychic) rewards as the most potent source of satisfaction for beginning teachers. In a number of cases, psychic rewards included positive interaction with colleagues as well as with students and tended to increase where classroom management problems diminished over the year.

The fact that some psychic rewards were derived from interaction with colleagues as well as with students points to the need for school administrative personnel to help establish staffrooms conducive to the beginning teachers' rapid and full incorporation into the fabric of the school. Where colleagues and administrators can reduce the neophyte teacher's management problems, psychic rewards derived from interaction with students are more likely to emerge and to counteract some of the problems associated with the first year of teaching.

(b) Problems of adjustment to the role of teacher

Despite the fact that the beginning teachers had moved from an institution undergoing significant change to an education system also characterised by change and a degree of uncertainty, the majority of the beginning teachers did not seem to have experienced severe difficulties. Instructional problems did not loom large in the consciousness of these teachers, and although classroom management posed a problem to some of the teachers it would appear to have been less dominant than Shaw reported in his 1977 study. On the other hand, tiredness and disruptions to their social life were significant problems for a number of beginning teachers.

While tiredness is probably an inevitable consequence of coping with the multiple demands of adjusting to a teaching role, the problem is likely to be exacerbated where the inexperienced teacher is required to teach one or more subjects for which he/she had not received specific pre-service preparation. It is therefore disturbing to note that around 35% of the teachers in the sample were teaching at least one class outside the subject area for which they had been prepared (Approximately 13% were actually teaching two or more such subjects). While staffing constraints may require teachers to teach outside their area(s) of expertise, it needs to be recognised that wherever possible, placing such an impost on the beginning teachers should be avoided.

The fact that beginning teachers whose principal teaching areas (PTA's) were Art, English and the Humanities/Social Sciences seemed to experience significantly more problems than graduates prepared in Home Economics, Commercial Studies and Manual Arts suggests that in some areas of students' pre-service courses there may be a degree of mismatch between the demands of teaching the subject in the school context and the pre-service preparation given. The inherent difficulty of teaching subjects as broad in scope and possible outcomes as English and the Social Sciences also
needs to be recognised. This obviously reinforces the frequent urging of many educators that there should be greater collaboration between subject departments in schools and their university counterparts.

Responses to the questionnaire revealed that there was no significant relationship between the overall difficulty of the first year of teaching and the presence or absence of an induction program. This finding was supported by the interviewees. Clearly, a number of induction programs are viewed by some beginning teachers as being of limited practical value, being conducted by remote, administrative staff out-of-touch with the kinds of difficulties facing the beginning teacher. On the other hand, a number of interviewees spoke appreciatively of the valuable help and support of colleagues, in some cases colleagues with only a few years' experience but who were viewed as closer to the problems of the neophyte than more senior staff. The data suggest that the "mentor" or "buddy" system used in some education systems to assist the neophyte teacher could have significant advantages for many beginning teachers.

The present study provides tentative support for a previous finding suggesting that mature-age teacher education students may find their initial teaching experiences more difficult than younger students (Meade and Smith, 1985). There is a need for both school personnel and teacher education institutions to recognise that older persons may experience some problems qualitatively different from those experienced by younger persons in their initial teaching appointment, such as adjusting to a relatively low status position, coping with the demands of a family as well as teaching, and meeting higher expectations placed upon them by those colleagues confounding age and competence.

(c) Concerns of beginning teachers

Use of Fuller's Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (Fuller, 1969) indicated that impact concerns tended to rate highest among beginning teachers. These impact concerns related to the effect of the teacher on students' learning and personal development.

The fact that impact concerns rated highest suggests that at least by the middle of their first year of teaching the beginning teachers were giving serious attention to their students' learning. Clearly, this pre-eminence given to impact concerns at an early stage of their career is to be viewed positively and suggests that at least some of the major objectives of their pre-service course are being met. Beginning teachers who had taken certain PTA's during their pre-service course, particularly in the humanities area, were most likely to display a high concern for learning outcomes. Identification of the particular pre-service experiences associated with such PTA's would obviously be of considerable benefit to teacher educators.

The uniqueness of the needs of pre-service students emerges in their comments about their preservice education. As Fuller and Bown (1975:27) put it:
A rose is a rose is a rose, but not so teachers. Teaching is a mixed bag, and teachers are a heterogeneous lot.

No two students seem to enjoy or find useful exactly the same set of experiences. If students are to derive maximum benefit from their teacher education course perhaps it should be designed to cater for this variety of needs. In particular, the life experiences of mature age students should be recognised and used as the basis for a more flexible, negotiated pre-service course.

While personal experiences are not necessarily a substitute for rigorous educational theory, teacher educators might nevertheless give more attention to capitalising on the life experiences of students rather than operating on the basis of a rigid deficit model. It would also seem that the needs of individuals might better be met by providing them with a greater range of elective components within core subjects.

In the light of a number of comments made by those beginning teachers in rural areas, such as reference to prematurely assuming responsibility for an entire subject area, teacher educators also need to give greater recognition to the kinds of difficulties likely to face the beginning teacher in such contexts.

Teachers can hardly be prepared for the very wide range of contexts in which they can be placed. Nevertheless a more flexible pre-service program, placing more emphasis on the practical, on simulation and problem solving, could assist in preparing teachers who are confident and resourceful. Perhaps the answer lies in more of what Maxwell (1989: 112) calls a 'transactional approach' involving negotiation of an appropriate pre-service curriculum and the development of autonomous learners.

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The tables mentioned in this paper, and any additional statistics referred to may be obtained by writing to:

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