

Australian Association for Research in Education

Annual Conference 2004

University of Melbourne

29 November- 2 December

WIL 04696: Symposium 41

The Brave and the Bold:

researching the professional lives of early career teachers

GOR04696: Paper 2

***Imagine if ... the impact of quality teaching on the
socialisation of early career teachers***

Cheryl Williams, Jennifer Gore and Sharon Cooper

The University of Newcastle

Abstract

This paper discusses theoretical and empirical foundations for a focus on pedagogy during teacher induction. Our research project for exploring this possibility, with the working title of 'the impact of quality teaching on the socialisation of early career teachers' is outlined. This study follows a group of teachers who received strong grounding in 'productive pedagogy' during their teacher education program. During this first year of employment as teachers, NSW public schools have adopted a version of productive pedagogy, 'Quality teaching', as a long term strategic priority. Through observations and semi-structured interviews, the study will explore the potential impact of Quality teaching, as a framework both in teacher education and in schools, particularly during the process of induction to professional practice. Our research reveals that while there is a neglect of pedagogy during their induction period, a substantive understanding of quality teaching has assisted a small group of early career teachers to sustain what they have learnt about 'teaching better' as they begin their teaching practice in schools.

What matters most?

Talking about pedagogy, thinking about it critically, is not the intellectual work that most folks think is hip and cool (hooks, cited in Danielewicz, 2001)

All students in all schools, regardless of who they are or where they live, have a fundamental right to quality teachers (Martinez, 1994; Wilson, Floden and Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). In Australia, much has been made of *who* teaches, *what* it is that they teach and whether they are retained in the profession. A recent call to focus on educating and employing more male teachers for example, which culminated in Federal and State government enquiries into men in teaching, created much debate about who enters and leaves the profession and what constitutes “good teaching” (Rowe and Rowe, 2002). Recent studies have also pointed to the difficulties of retaining teachers in rural and remote schools, alluding to the nature of geographical, personal and professional isolation as contextual factors which also contribute to the socialisation processes that impact on early career teachers in our schools (Yarrow et al, 1999; Lake, 1988; Williams and Wallace 2003). The structure, content and efficacy of teacher education programs has also been questioned (Ramsey, 2000 for example).

The decisions teachers make about what they teach and *how* they teach it, and then specifically how that learning is planned, programmed, assessed and tested are central to student achievement. Research has indicated that context plays an important role in the delivery of successful learning programs (Wang and Odell, 2003) as does the capacity of educational institutions and teachers to provide safe and happy environments which students can learn and achieve. Contemporary research findings, however, have importantly lead to the following conclusion: what really matters most, what makes the difference in a classroom, is the *quality* of the teacher (Rowe and Rowe, 2003, DET, 2003a, 2003b).

How can we ensure that early career teachers in NSW state schools become quality teachers? How can we support them in their journey of learning to teach and becoming competent or even accomplished teacher? If we see teacher induction as a lifelong learning process that commences on entry to a teacher education program and continues through a teacher’s career (Feiman-Nemser, 2002), a focus on pedagogy, the quality of teaching throughout this time may assist us to not only recruit and retain good teachers, but also to improve learning outcomes and school experiences for all students.

The neglect of pedagogy in induction

Induction to the teaching profession has been researched, analysed and discussed over several decades and could simply be defined as the process of entry to the profession and of 'becoming a teacher'. Successful induction into teaching is seen as critical if early career teachers are to be retained by schools (Hatton and Harmon, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Ewing and Smith, 2002; Williams 2002a). The development of a teacher identity, often described as a process of becoming a teacher is not something that happens as graduate teachers walk through the gates of their schools. Britzman (1991) reminds us that the development of the teacher's identity always involved competing processes of becoming:

Each sense of place and time presents different sets of demands and assumptions and makes available a different range of voices and discursive practices. Students who enter teacher education bring with them their first chronology ... their classroom lives. Their student experiences in the university and teacher education constitute the second chronology. Student teaching furnishes the third chronology ... constructing relationships that were unavailable during their student lives. A fourth chronology begins once the student teacher becomes a newly arrived teacher. (p56)

Hand in hand with their development of a teacher self, a capacity to provide a repertoire of teaching and social welfare skills, whilst being able to adapt and 'fit in' to individual school context and culture, are sometimes viewed as successful indicators of new teacher success. However, it could be argued that induction is often more about 'survival' through a difficult first year of practice than the attainment of quality pedagogical practice (Feiman-Nemser in McCormack, Gore and Thomas, 2004, p.2). Metaphors such as 'sink or swim' and 'in at the deep end' (see Martinez ,1994; Williams and Prestage, 2001) are employed to describe the experiences of early career teachers as they negotiate the bumpy terrain of school context and culture.

Very rarely, if at all, do we read about a focus on pedagogy as contributing to the success of early career teachers, as being central to induction and mentoring programs or as being at all relevant to their recruitment, support or retention. This apparent neglect of pedagogy, and focus instead on personal and professional needs, gives us a different way to conceptualise the process of teacher induction. We argue that a focus on pedagogy will better support and encourage the quality and retention of early career teachers. If student learning is at the core of classroom practice and if producing high-quality learning outcomes is the key aim of teacher education programs and good classroom practice (Gore, 2001) then assisting early career teachers to deliver good pedagogy should be central to teacher induction strategies.

Reconceptualising personal support

Decades of research into the phenomenon of beginning to teach has highlighted the importance of providing support that meets the different demands of early career teachers characterized variously as personal, professional and pedagogical support (DEST, 2000; Williams 2002) personal, institutional and socially constructed support (Martinez, 1995) or emotional, physical, social and psychological support (Rogers and Babinski, 2002). The privileging of personal support that characterizes most of these frameworks is also evident in a recent national report on effective programs for early career teachers (DEST, 2002). The report title “An Ethic of Care”, “reflects the fact that the teachers surveyed and interviewed for this project consistently attached highest priority to the need for personal support” (p.8). Furthermore, in a small research study undertaken in 2003, a group of early career teachers ($n=26$) in their first year of practice in rural areas, reported that while they moderately valued induction strategies such as kits and meetings, they highly valued the informal personal support (which can be in pedagogy) of their colleagues (Williams, 2003).

The point here is not to undervalue or trivialise the importance of personal support for new teachers as a strategy, but rather to rethink and reconceptualise the notion of personal support as being as much about the details and specifics of classroom practice as it is about the social and psychological needs of early career teachers. Many studies have investigated the ‘reality shock’ (Veenman: 1984) experienced by early career teachers in their first year of experience in schools. However few studies have developed a deep understanding of why early career teachers revert to traditional teaching approaches in the face of difficulties with student management, learning needs (Zeichner and Tabachnik: 1981) and school culture and context. Following an extensive review of literature surrounding teaching and mentoring, Wang and Odell (2002) determined that,

For novices the dominant picture of teachers’ work is either of caring and nurturing or of managing: they regard pedagogy and students’ academic learning as less important. They attribute student learning to teachers’ personalities or management, or to the individual student’s innate abilities or background, rather than to teachers choosing appropriate teaching content and strategies. (p.513)

Certainly ensuring that all children are safe and happy in an organised environment that encourages and supports learning is an essential and important role of schools and teachers. However we argue that unless early career teachers develop (or are shown) a different picture of teaching, little is likely to change. If we accept that schools are the single institution in society that focuses on learning as its core business, then a focus on quality teaching is more than desirable. It is a must.

Induction and mentoring as support strategies

In teacher induction literature (both academic and organizational) ensuring that teachers are welcomed to their new schools, have the appropriate resources, know how to carry out the many and varied administrative tasks associated with professional practice and have the capacity to manage and control their students, often takes precedence over whether early career teachers are able to practice quality teaching in their classrooms. Indeed, an environment which encourages early career teachers to interpret management and administrative tasks as sometimes more important than pedagogy and viewing their own professional learning as a lifelong process;

... [has] its roots in a construction of teaching solely as technical, knowledge and skills-based activity ... where mechanisms for teacher support are focused almost entirely upon serving the system. (Williams and Prestage, 2002, p.51)

In 2003, the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) introduced the Teacher Mentor Scheme, whereby trained mentors were employed to support and assist early career teachers. For political and strategic reasons, this formal systemic support strategy for induction and mentoring programs is currently only available in NSW state schools that experience a high turnover of staff, those being in rural, remote, isolated and 'difficult' areas. Whilst this program is to be lauded for its significance to early career teachers in terms of the provision of timely and useful support in the first years of teaching, one wonders about the many early career teachers who do not benefit from the opportunity it creates, simply because they are appointed to a school in a more favourable area or with a stable staffing profile. As Ramsey succinctly described this issue:

The entrenched practice of placing large numbers of inexperienced teachers in our most challenging schools and expecting them to cope while on the same teaching load as experienced teachers is counter productive and morally wrong (2000, p.63)

In terms of serving the system through support and retention, induction and mentoring are named as the primary strategies employed to support and retain early career teachers as they enter the profession. Most programs of teacher induction, delivered at state, area office (formerly 'districts') and school sites in the NSW state system, have been developed with a focus on supporting the personal and professional needs of early career teachers (DET, 2003d). It could be argued that current induction and mentoring practices operate within 'a regime of truth' (Foucault in Gore, 1993), with a systemic view of novice and expert relationships bound by experience, power and knowledge constituting a context specific program of support aimed at survival and retention rather than quality teaching. Whilst not within the bounds of this paper, the idea will be explored in detail in later work, as more data is collected and analysed.

It is well-known and documented (Ramsay, 2000; Lyons, 1993; Dowding, 1998; Mahoney, 1996; Martinez, 1994) that induction is often intermittent, inconsistent and unreliable, if it does happen at all. Ramsey (2000) noted that “no other profession expects so much from their new practitioners in their early years on the job”. He also argued that:

In most professions, responsibility for preparation and induction of new members is viewed as a significant professional responsibility; such a view does not strongly characterise teaching (2000, p.?)

Mahoney (1996) goes further to say that “induction is the weakest link in the professional development of teachers” (p. 35). What is clear, after decades of research, is that while induction programs do operate in many forms and contexts, attrition rates have not improved (Darling Hammond, 1999; Williams and Prestage, 2002). In NSW alone, one in five graduate teachers leaves the profession in their first five years of professional practice (Manuel, 2002). The effects of teacher education programs are often “washed out” (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1981; Gore, 2002) in the teacher socialisation process, assumes that those programs were effective in the first place.

A focus on pedagogy- teaching better?

Formal training in pedagogy at the university is seen as playing little part in altering earlier and traditional teaching perspectives... Continuing influence of their early mentors on their current classroom practice...(and) ...Lack of use of technical language by teachers pointed to the continuing effect of lay imagery on professional practice. (Lortie, 1975, p.?)

How and why might a focus on pedagogy in teacher education programs and induction processes better prepare and support early career teachers for successful professional practice? Whilst teacher education graduates enter their first teaching appointments with high hopes and academic qualifications, “not all graduates of teacher education programs become great teachers” (Gore, Griffiths and Ladwig: 2002). A current and continuing focus on teacher quality has shifted an historical outlook that defined ‘good teaching’ as that which produced high results and compliant students (Haberman, 1991) to a more recent view of teacher quality that encompasses a strong repertoire of pedagogical knowledge and skill demonstrated by ‘better teaching’.

Our research study, “the impact of quality teaching on the socialisation of early career teachers” (Gore, Williams and Cooper, 2003) seeks to investigate pedagogy in induction in an historical moment of congruence between university teacher education and schools. A group of graduate teachers entering the profession, who have undertaken a substantive study of productive and quality pedagogy during their teacher education program,

entered schools in 2004 in the context of state-wide renewed interest in pedagogy as manifest in the *Quality teaching* initiative. This initiative, a long term strategic priority of the NSW Department of Education and Training, invites all teachers in public schools across NSW to engage in discussion and activity related to the precise kind of pedagogy in which these early career teachers were trained. Moreover, we hypothesise that in this context, the early career teachers might even be encouraged to provide leadership in relation to pedagogy, specifically the Quality teaching framework, in the schools to which they are appointed.

Exploring pedagogy and induction: an outline of the study

Our study builds on a body of prior research into teaching and learning practices associated with the Productive Pedagogy model and a larger body of primarily US-based research on its predecessor, Authentic Pedagogy. Since its development for the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study, the productive pedagogy model has become widely adopted in Australian schools in some states. More recently the development of the Quality teaching model by Ladwig & Gore (2003) for NSW public schools provides a context in which early career teachers should be able to sustain a focus on pedagogy and strengthen their capacity to deliver good pedagogy.

A previous study (Gore, Griffiths and Ladwig: 2002) provided evidence that the productive pedagogy model has proven to be useful to both preservice and inservice teachers. It is widely acknowledged that the knowledge base for teacher education is weak and fragmented (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Gore 2001) Hence, these models of pedagogy are both important and timely in supporting early career teachers. This project also investigates whether the Quality teaching framework helps early career teachers to construct meaningful teaching practices with the aim of improving student learning opportunities. Other support mechanisms previously discussed in this paper and elsewhere, such as induction and mentoring may also be found to contribute to the sustainability of improved pedagogy. A plethora of studies spread over more than thirty years (Eddy, 1969; Lortie, 1975; Veenman, 1984; Feiman-Nemser,1990; Martinez,1994; Darling-Hammond, 1999) provides commentary on the effects of mentoring and induction processes but the silence that accompanies studies on early career teacher pedagogy is deafening (Martinez ,1998, 2002).

The aim of this ongoing project is to investigate the professional practice of a group of early career teachers who have been 'trained' in the Productive Pedagogy and Quality teaching models through the elective course 'Teaching Better'. Data is being gathered through lesson observations (using 'a guide to classroom practice' DET 2003c) and semi-structured interviews. In particular, the project aims to determine whether a focus on

pedagogy can be sustained in their first year of teaching given the educational/situational context and workplace socialisation processes operating in the school site. To support this concern, Zeichner and Tabachnick point out that,

... studies seem to provide overwhelming evidence for the position that the impact of the college is “washed out” by school experience. The only debate seems to be over which socialising agents or mechanisms play the greatest role in reversing the impact of [university] (1981, p.7)

This project is significant because of the interest and importance surrounding the potential of a model for better teaching to provide a pedagogical framework for early career teachers to enhance their professional practice. The project is also timely considering the current development of a focus on Quality teaching in NSW public schools, and the shift towards professional teaching standards with the establishment of a NSW Institute of Teachers. Whilst curriculum and assessment practices have undergone significant reform in the past decade, a similar focus on enhancing and improving pedagogy has only emerged in recent times, particularly through professional development in the Productive Pedagogy and Quality teaching models.

Learning to teach without a focus on pedagogy

Policies, traditions, power and personalities work to construct a school culture that provides further challenges to the beginning teacher. (Zeichner and Gore, 1990, p.?)

For the purposes of this paper, we continue to explore the notion of the neglect of pedagogy in induction, as revealed and reinforced by some of the participants in our study. Our participants are all in their first year of appointment. In this instance we focus on three of our early career teachers: Cody, a PE teacher at Centralwest High School; Karen, a music teacher at Southwest High School and Will, a PE teacher at Northwestern High School.

As previously discussed in this paper and elsewhere, the transition from university preservice teacher education programs to teaching in schools is strongly influenced by early career teachers' development of a teacher identity, conception of their work as a teacher, capacity to organise and manage the teaching and learning in their classroom and their ability to survive or thrive in the prevailing school culture. Early career teachers' expectations of what their work will be, and what it actually is, are often very different.

The following discussion is based on and informed by participants' responses to semi-structured interview questions. For this paper, their experiences are organised around three themes concerning the neglect of pedagogy in teacher induction. The participants' responses are discussed in terms of the neglect of pedagogy on their entry into the school context, the neglect of pedagogy in support strategies and the neglect of pedagogy in professional culture.

The neglect of pedagogy on entry

For Cody, it was very tough at the beginning of the year but he expected teaching to be a lot harder than it actually is. His father (who is a principal) advised "don't smile for the first year, relax and be yourself". However Cody goes on to point out that "you can't do that out here-I've noticed that if you don't treat them (the students) as equal and try to relate to them, they just don't respond". Although it is known and acknowledged that Cody is in his first year of teaching, he is basically left alone to go on with the business of teaching:

I've been dealt with as if everyone sees me as competent, you know "he's alright, he doesn't need any help". If you do your job they (the other teachers) respect you and if you don't do your job they don't talk to you.

Cody has begun to address the socio-emotional needs of his students, as well as finding ways to "fit in at the deep end" of school culture, as described by Martinez (1994), with no specific guidance or direction given about pedagogy on his entry to the school context.

In regard to formal induction processes, Will has had perhaps more organised entry to his professional situation than other participants in the study. A special staff development day was organised for the early career teachers "that was actually quite helpful because they got community members to come in and introduce themselves to us. But we didn't get paid for it!" Will also remembered a meeting held at a nearby town by the NSW Teachers' federation, which was 'all right' but he had no specific memory of any other formal induction strategies. From his interview, it is clear that there was no focus on pedagogy or quality teaching in these induction programs.

The main issue for Will on his induction to the profession, was "coping" in the classroom- coping with extreme levels of violence, bad language and behaviour, low levels of literacy and numeracy and high levels of absenteeism. For him, "it (teaching) was like starting all over again". While he admits it is an often difficult life he still manages to enjoy himself socially, Will pragmatically observes:

You do have your bad days every now and then when you just...I haven't had a bad day for a while actually. Everyone does have their bad days when they want to move quit or whatever. (laughs). A few people can't wait to get out but ... I wouldn't say there have been any major dramas.

This instance reflects Ramsey's observation, that it is morally wrong and counter productive to place our most inexperienced teachers in the most challenging of situations (2000, p.63) and also illustrates Veenman's notion of 'reality shock'. For Will, this is certainly not what he expected teaching to be.

Karen provides a different story of her first day at Southwest High School. No formal induction meeting was held; the new teachers simply gathered in a room, separate from the other teachers, and:

the orientation was not very well organised – (we were) given maps that weren't up to date, talked about climate allowances and serial numbers. We weren't shown around the school . . . just sat back in a seminar about communicating with kids . . .and how to teach Productive Pedagogy and Quality Teaching which was good but not very well informed.

So while an informal attempt was made at Karen's school to welcome the early career teachers to the school and to provide important administrative information, the lack of organization and focus somewhat diminished the effects of orientation. Though pedagogy was not completely neglected here, it was certainly addressed poorly. Karen's previous experience with productive pedagogy and Quality Teaching through her university courses also led her to conclude that the seminar, whilst perhaps a reminder of the need for good pedagogy, wasn't particularly useful because of its lack of substance.

The neglect of pedagogy in support strategies

During professional experience and internship, early career teachers are often guided and directed by the programs and planning of cooperating teachers and supervisors. In their first year of professional practice, early career teachers take on another role; being totally responsible for the teaching and learning that occurs in their classroom. For many this is a giant leap, to be balanced along with moving to another area to take up their appointment, teaching outside their subject areas with limited

resources, coping with the extremes of the school context and also with the varying levels of support provided by school personnel. All of this, combined with learning how to teach and how to be a teacher, may contribute to a neglect or under-utilisation of the important pedagogical knowledge and experience they bring with them as professional capital.

Although Ramsey (2000) commented on the high quality of induction and support programs in some NSW schools, it is also true that in some schools professional support for early career teachers is intermittent, disorganised or even nonexistent.

‘Observations were made in advice about the sometimes poor quality of induction programs in which new teachers received inadequate support by way of supervision and mentoring. Cases were cited of teachers in

their first appointment being escorted to their classrooms and largely left to make their own way, without guidance encouragement, counselling or active supervision.’ (p64)

Cody, while he is accepted into the school community and finds it easy to socialise with the other staff, is finding it difficult to get constructive criticism and guidance about his classroom practice. He has no major management issues in class “just normal run of the mill stuff- the kids misbehave because they don’t have a clue what they are doing”. However in terms of supervision (from his head teacher) and mentoring (from a designated teacher mentor), Cody’s experience reflects Ramsey’s observations about the poor quality of induction support.

When he asked for feedback about his teaching, Cody’s Head Teacher replied “No, no, I stick my head in every now and then and I can see you are doing your job, so I don’t worry about it”. Formal support is only offered from supervisors “when the kids muck up”. Furthermore, Cody has not found support from the Teacher Mentor to be at all useful. Cody does not believe the Teacher Mentor has the credibility for the job. She gave him advice after having seen two lessons over ten weeks and he thought:

...that’s a load of crap. It was basic stuff I already knew. Like, it wasn’t very in depth or anything; she just gave me useless feedback. No help at all. When she’s in class she makes it worse. She doesn’t have a rapport with the kids, they run around the place, jumping out the windows. The other beginning teachers have agreed with me, that it doesn’t help at all’.

When asked if he would go to principal and say that the mentoring is not working, Cody commented that he would rather not ‘rock the boat’:

“I don’t think it is my place to complain about it, being a first year out teacher. I don’t think.. it’s not a good way to be respected on the staff, whinging about others when I’ve only been teaching three terms. Everyone knows about it but no one is willing to do anything about it. I’m just doing my job and if other people can’t do their job well that’s their problem. I don’t know... I think... I feel like I haven’t got much support, but I feel like I’m supported if I’ve got a problem.

So unfortunately for Cody, the impact of a strategy that could have been useful and timely in terms of sustaining the pedagogical knowledge he gained at university has been lost. While he values the informal support provided by colleagues, there is little support provided in terms of maintaining and improving his classroom practice.

Will, like Cody, has also had some interesting experiences with support for teaching practice and from the designated Teacher Mentor program. While he has often found it difficult to “do teaching and learning” because of the culture of the school, he finds it hard to reconcile that some teachers don’t really care if students are not involved in a lesson or do not learn. “It is often hard to get the kids motivated if you are the fourth lesson after they have watched three lessons of DVDs”, he wryly observes. In terms of supervision, after three terms in the school, Will’s Head Teacher has observed one lesson and written a report but Will has not seen or read it yet. The Head Teacher spoke to Will after the lesson, said it was fine but that “he needs to walk around the classroom a bit more”. This style of supervision provides very little for Will to work with if he wants to sustain and improve his classroom practice and capitalise on his grounding in productive and quality pedagogy.

Similar to Cody’s experience, Will has not found the Teacher Mentor program to be of any great assistance or support for him in developing or sustaining his professional practice;

The Teacher Mentor program has been ‘so-so’ but if we had problems we could see the Teacher Mentor. We had regular meetings in first part of year on different policies and stuff like that.

While the Teacher Mentor had offered to watch Will teach, that has not happened yet. It appeared to Will at the time of the interview that the Teacher Mentor was often occupied with other school initiatives that demanded a high level of attention and support, rather than for the purpose she was employed, namely to support the early career teachers.

Karen, on the other hand, has not had the benefit or otherwise of a formal Teacher Mentor support program like Will or Cody. She talks about “comrade support” which she receives from a colleague with whom she team teaches occasionally. She points out that “it is not like the formal support, like mentoring, you would get from a more developed teacher”. While Head Teachers are mostly supportive, “good to bounce ideas off”, she finds support meetings are more about administrative tasks. Perhaps due to her grounding in productive and quality pedagogy in her university courses, Karen felt she was much more informed and knowledgeable about Quality teaching. From what she saw and experienced of support strategies offered;

..there was no depth, if you didn't get anything, that was all right. The school staff were doing the training..It was pretty bad I thought.. The presenter passed a (Jenny Gore) powerpoint presentation off as his own, there was no narrative, or stories relevant to the teachers ..so in terms of support for pedagogy it is not informed enough, they have all the information, they haven't read it right, interpreted it right or something. However they are very serious about it. The DP has a glass cabinet with all the resources, but I don't think they are prepared enough.

Karen's perceptions here are illuminating. Her expectations about “getting it right” are high, and she readily calls into question the organisation and substance of pedagogical support strategies. She is insistent throughout her interview that having a firm understanding of quality pedagogy is “what it is all about”. She regularly refers to the Quality teaching resources in her lesson planning and classroom practice, and states that “it does have an impact” when she consciously includes elements of the framework in her lessons. So while much appears to be problematic or absent in school level support for pedagogy, her strong grounding in productive and quality pedagogy in her teacher education program is being sustained.

The neglect of pedagogy in school culture

As previously outlined, Zeichner and Gore (1990) point out that policies, traditions, power and personalities work to construct a school culture that provides further challenges to the early career teacher. In many instances these factors can make or break an early career teacher. This crucial element, the construction of a school culture and its effect on the early career teacher, has also been investigated in depth by Johnson *et al* (2001a). Their research suggests that

'the key to addressing teacher shortages lies not in recruitment policies but in support and training at the school site. For it is in schools and classrooms where teachers must find success and satisfaction. It is there they will decide whether or not to continue to teach' (p1).

The teachers in this study, in the same ways as many other early career teachers, struggled to put together their daily teaching plans with no long term guidance or planning. While mentors had been provided by the school district in two cases, there was little or no time for meetings or discussion. There were very few visits by colleagues and administrators to the new teachers' classes or staff rooms and limited opportunities to observe or team teach with experienced colleagues. The schools were not organized to help the new teachers cope with the demands of beginning to teach. In short "neither the cultures nor the organisational structures of the schools were geared towards their need as novice teachers" (Johnson et al, 2001a, p2).

We have already reported that Will has received little specific pedagogical support as part of an early career teacher support strategy. On the positive side, Will intimates that there is plenty of informal support through social occasions and "pedagogy corner". During staff meetings, his Head Teacher and others will refer to "that book" (the classroom practice guide) and code lessons. He also acknowledged that :because of knowing about Quality teaching from uni they expect me to get it right". However the impact of daily school life and the difficult circumstances in his school affects teacher attitudes to learning about Quality teaching, "sometimes it's hard to focus at the end of a long day when you just want to go home- people groan about it and a lot of staff members just don't want to change". One could safely assume that for Will, and others like him who find themselves in difficult contexts, teaching is very much about 'survival of the fittest'.

In relation to professional learning about Quality teaching, Cody talked about his experience in a Staff Development Day workshop at his school:

It was a half hour session where a coding sheet was handed out but nothing explicit or specific was addressed about quality pedagogy. It's hard to digest in half an hour. I mean, I struggled with and I did a semester of it at uni.

Whilst acknowledging the complexities of teachers' work and the lack of support at Cody's school, it would appear that a focus on pedagogy in the development of teacher quality for both experienced and early career teachers is not really a priority in professional learning programs here. Cody is left to decide whether he attends any professional development

workshops. However the nearest area office is three hours away and he rarely attends because of the distance and isolation. Cody has now volunteered to learn how to do timetabling as “it will look good on his CV”, and he is also on the technology committee and organising the Crossroads program. Whilst it is important to get involved with extracurricular activities and the corporate life of the school, none of these activities further develop or sustain the quality of teaching and learning that goes on in Cody’s classroom.

Cody’s developing perceptions of teachers’ work suggest that it is more about getting on with the students and administrative tasks, as discussed previously and supported by Wang and Odell’s research. Added to this view of teachers’ work are the tensions with a colleague teacher who does the minimum and has said to Cody “I am happy with being a shit teacher. I just want my money”. Cody’s focus is again shifted from the central task of good classroom practice and quality pedagogy to having to do parts of the other teacher’s job:

We get along well, but he’s kind of slack and lazy, and whenever stuff comes around that has to be done it gets left on my desk because he doesn’t want to do it, like organizing sport and crossroads and all the stuff I’m doing. He’s just keen to get out of here. He doesn’t like the job, he hates being here, the kids don’t like him. It’s pretty disheartening when you are a first year out teacher and you come to a school and work with a guy who is not motivated. If there was someone there that was keen to help me out and discuss things I think I would have come a lot further than what I have. Like, I’ve just stagnated a bit.

So like Will, Cody is simply surviving in his school context, with little support or focus on quality pedagogy and having to manage the cynical comments and lazy work habits of his colleague.

In terms of support for Quality teaching in her professional culture, Karen is able to identify and be critical about the level and substance of teacher learning in Quality teaching. Throughout her interview Karen consistently explained and described how she delivers Quality teaching in her planning and programs for learning experiences, regularly referring to the Quality teaching resources and the language of the framework in her daily professional practice. Whilst she acknowledges her school leaders’ attempts to provide professional learning experiences in Quality teaching, she has learnt more than enough in her teacher education courses to be able to recognise errors in the process – “I just don’t like things being presented wrongly and people going away saying ‘Yes I do productive pedagogy’ or ‘yes I do Quality teaching’ and not having any firm understanding of it”. Karen is an early career teacher with a very clear idea

of what Quality teaching is and with a very clear view that most of her colleagues have a very superficial understanding of Quality teaching.

Furthermore, Karen had the confidence to go to her principal and offer to share her knowledge of pedagogy and the Quality teaching model with other staff. His reply was “that’s excellent Karen- I’ll use you sometime” but she has heard no more from him. So while making every effort to enact her strong grounding and knowledge of quality teaching in her everyday practice, it is mostly carried out in professional isolation, with little formal support or encouragement from school leadership through supervision or mentoring. Without the “comrade support” of her young colleague, Karen would be on her own, in surviving the professional culture of the school.

Preliminary conclusions

Whilst the above discussion represents the experiences and perceptions of only a small number of participants in the early stage of our study, their responses tell us that there has been only a minimal amount of attention given to pedagogy, to professional learning about Quality teaching or to the specific pedagogical growth of early career teachers. Indeed professional learning about Quality teaching has not been directed at the early career teachers; if it has happened at all, it has been part of a whole school staff development strategy and has consisted of components of the Quality teaching initiative that have been studied in courses in their teacher education program. So in fact, the experienced teachers have been learning about what the early career teachers already know, and often attempt to practice in their classrooms.

Although Cody, Will and Karen can all attest to high amounts of social and personal support from their colleagues, the same cannot be said for mentoring and pedagogical support. Cody and Will have not gained any real benefit from the Teacher Mentor program and Karen has relied on “comrade support” to discuss and reflect on her professional practice. Their supervisors have not provided them with any substantive appraisal of their work, only offering advice when it concerns student management or the implementation of new ideas.

Furthermore, the challenges and difficulties of individual school contexts and cultures described by our participants- violence, isolation and uncertainty- combine to present situations that would hinder even the most experienced and competent teacher. To their credit, Cody, Will and Karen are more than surviving their first year of professional practice. Even though there has been a neglect of pedagogy as a focus during their induction to the teaching profession, initial findings from classroom observations using the Quality teaching classroom practice guide (DET 2003c) indicate that the early career teachers are able to incorporate dimensions and elements of the Quality

teaching model in their classroom practice to varying degrees. Scores are consistent with those of experienced teachers in other studies of pedagogy using the same instruments. They can also describe their practice by using the language and philosophy of quality teaching as they reflect on their teaching experiences during the interviews.

Imagine if pedagogy was a focus of their induction for these early career teachers. Imagine if Cody had experienced an organised induction program and the support of an accomplished, positive colleague. Imagine if Karen's strong grounding in quality teaching was supported by knowledgeable, like-minded colleagues through substantive professional learning strategies. Imagine if Will had been placed in a school culture that was more conducive to quality teaching and learning, where colleagues were excited and enthusiastic about "pedagogy corner". This preliminary set of data adds support to our view that pedagogy has consistently been inadequately addressed in the induction of early career teachers.

References

- Britzman, D. (1991) *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach* Albany SUNY Press
- Darling-Hammond, L (1999). Teacher recruitment, induction and selection policy influences on the supply and quality of teachers'. In Darling-Hammond, L and Sykes, G . (Ed). *Teaching as the learning profession: Handbook of policy and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Department of Education, Science and Training (2002) *An Ethic of Care Quality Teacher Program- Teachers for the 21st century* Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.

- Eddy, E. (1969) *Becoming a Teacher* Columbia University Teachers College Press
- Ewing, R and Smith, D. (2002). *Retaining beginning teachers in the profession*. Paper presented at European Education Conference, Lisbon
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (1990) Teacher Preparation: Structural and conceptual alternatives. In W.R.Houston (Ed.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* pp 212-233 New York: Macmillan
- Gore, J.M. (1993) *The Struggle for Pedagogies* New York: Routledge
- Gore, J.M. (2001). *Beyond our differences: a reassembling of what matters in teacher education* Journal of Teacher Education, Vol. 52, No. 2 March/April pp124-135
- Gore, J., Griffith, T. and Ladwig, J (2002) *Towards Better Teaching: Productive Pedagogy as a Framework for Teacher Education* Teaching and Teacher Education *in press*
- Haberman, M. (1991) The Pedagogy of Poverty versus Good Teaching *Phi Delta Kappan*, 73(4), 290-294
- Hatton, N and Harman, K.(1997). Internships within teacher education programs in NSW. University of Sydney : NSW DET
- hooks, b. (1994) Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom In Danielewicz, J (2001) *Teaching Selves: Identity, Pedagogy and Teacher Education* Albany: State University of New York Press
- Johnson, S.M. (2001b) Retaining the Next Generation of Teachers: The Importance of School-Based Support Harvard Education Newsletter Retrieved September 2001 <http://www.edweek.org/ewstory.cfm?slug=39>
- Kardos, S.M., Johnson, S.M., Peske, G., Kauffman, D. and Liu, E. (2001) Counting on Colleagues: New Teachers Encounter Professional Cultures of their Schools Harvard Education Letter *Research Online* Retrieved December 2001 from <http://www.edletter.org/past/issues/2001-ja/support.shtml>
- Lortie, D. (1975) *School Teacher: A Sociological Study* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Manuel, J. (2003) 'Such are the ambitions of youth': exploring issues of retention and attrition of early career teachers in NSW. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Education* 31(2), 139-151
- Martinez, K. (1994) *Teacher induction revisited* Australian Journal of Education 38(2)
(1998) *Preservice Teachers Adrift on a Sea of Knowledges* Asia-Pacific Journal of Education, Vol 26, No2
(2002) *Mentor Mania: the new wave* unpublished paper 2002

- McCormack, A. Gore, J. and Thomas, K. (2004) *Learning to teach: Narratives from early career teachers* Paper presented at AARE Conference, Melbourne
- NSW Department of Education and Training (DET 2003a) *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: Discussion paper* Sydney: Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate
- NSW Department of Education and Training (DET 2003b) *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: Annotated bibliography* Sydney: Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate
- NSW Department of Education and Training (DET 2003c) *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: A guide to classroom practice* Sydney: Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate
- NSW Department of Education and Training (DET 2003d) *Induction of New Teachers* Sydney: Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate
- Page, M., Marlowe, B. and Molloy, P. (2000) *The Power of a Poem to Teach Us* Phi Delta Kappan November pp.28-232
- Ramsey, G. (2000) *Quality Matters. Revitalising Teaching: Critical times, critical choices* Report of the Review of Teacher Education, New South Wales. Sydney: NSW Department of Education and Training
- Rogers,D. and Babinski, L. (2002) *from isolation to conversation* Albany: State University of New York Press
- Rowe, K.J. and Rowe, K.S (2002) *What matters most: Evidence-based findings of the key factors affecting the educational experiences and outcomes for girls and boys throughout their primary and secondary schooling.* ACER, Melbourne (downloaded from [http:// www.acer.edu.au](http://www.acer.edu.au))
- Veenman, S. (1984) *Perceived problems of beginning teachers* Review of Educational Research 52 (2)
- Wang,J and Odell,S. (2003) *Mentored Learning to Teach According to Standards-based Reform: A Critical review* Review of Educational Research Fall 2002 72, 3, 481-546
- Williams, A. and Prestage, S (2002) *Still in at the deep end? Developing strategies for the induction of new teachers* UK: Association of Teachers and Lecturers
- Williams, C. (2002a) *Feet on the Ground and Running* Paper presented at Challenging Futures Conference UNE, Armidale, February
- Williams, C. (2002b) *Telling Tales: Stories from New Teachers in NSW Country Schools* Paper presented at AARE Annual Conference: Brisbane

Williams, C. (2003) *Where did they go? What did they do? A Pilot Study on the preparation, recruitment and retention of preservice and newly appointed teachers* Unpublished paper

Williams, C and Wallace, A. (2003b) *Supporting new teachers in rural schools*
Paper presented at SPERA Conference, Canberra, October

Zeichner, K.E. and Gore, J.M. (1990) *Teacher Socialisation* in W.R.Houston (Ed.)
Handbook of Research on Teacher Education pp 329-348 New York:
Macmillan

Zeichner, K. and Tabachnick, R. (1981) *Are the effects of University Teacher Education 'Washed Out' by School Experience?* Phi Delta Kappan 32, 3, 7-11