

**Some proposals for a Programme of Renewal
of Induction for VET and CVET Teachers/Trainers
in Montenegro**

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INTRODUCTION

[Note: Perhaps someone could write something about the present situation of induction in Montenegro as a short introduction.]

The difficulties associated with the first years of teaching point to the need of a specialized form of in-service training for beginning teachers. In several countries, resources have been made available to improve the mode of new teachers' entry to teaching. The term 'teacher induction' generally is used to refer to this entry and to the planned support the new teachers receive as it occurs. Though the need for help is recognized, formal programmes for the induction of teachers are not implemented on a large scale. Researchers have presented several impediments to induction programme development: (a) lack of institutional responsibility for such programmes; (b) the public response to improving teaching appears to be embedded in competency tests rather than in training programmes; (c) political power struggle in teacher education precludes the luxury of induction programme development; (d) logistical considerations; and (e) a lack of financial support.

Information on programmes that have been established comes from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Some countries, like Germany, have a prolonged internship of 18 to 24 months duration that is related to the process of full licensing of teachers. The nature of many induction activities has been fully documented. Common induction practices are: provision of printed materials about employment conditions and school regulations, orientation visits to the school before the start of the first year, released time, group meetings between beginning teachers for emotional support, consultations with experienced teachers, the assignment of an experienced teacher as a helping teacher (mentor), conferences/workshops on specific topics, reductions in teaching load, conferences with supervisors, opportunities to observe and team teaching.

Even where induction programmes have already been established, there is widespread dissatisfaction with their results. This paper analyses some of the factors that stand in the way of induction programmes being successful but mainly contains detailed suggestions and proposals as to how the overall structure and functioning of the present system of in-service training for VET and CVET teachers/trainers in Montenegro might be transformed even under quite difficult circumstances, with the aim of establishing a more realistic, more responsive and more effective system of induction and staff development.

The proposals which are offered below for particular aspects of reforming the induction programme for teachers/trainers in VET and CVET in Montenegro will refer basically to two groups of persons:

- a) the teachers in the area of VET and CVET, mostly doing service in the context of schools,
- b) the trainers in VET and CVET functions, mostly operating in the context of companies.

Most of the suggestions made in this paper would be applicable to other categories of teachers as well. It is generally thought to be plausible for practical, theoretical and political reasons to regard the teaching profession (general education teachers, special needs education teachers, vocational education and training teachers) as a comprehensive unit, having largely similar needs and problems. However, specific needs of teachers and trainers in VET and CVET are addressed, wherever necessary.

Although it could be assumed that trainers operating at company level would not as easily be given an opportunity for going through an induction period of some length (one or two years), proposals insist on such a programme for trainers as well, believing in the usefulness of such an induction programme.

PROPOSALS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Principles and key features of an alternative model of induction for teachers/trainers in VET and CVET institutions

The alternative model of a renewed induction programme for beginning teachers and trainers which is proposed here could be described as having the following fundamental characteristics and key features:

(1) *Induction focusing on professional education.* Considering the professional activity which teachers/trainers are expected to develop, induction – which is proposed to have a duration of two years – ought to have a clear emphasis on professional education. It should be regarded as a first phase in the continuing professional development of teachers/trainers.

(2) *Induction being based on written policy.* Induction ought to be aimed at providing systematic learning experiences on the job to beginning teachers/trainers which would be based on written documents defining a policy of induction which ought to contain information on how

- problems and perceived needs of beginning teachers will be identified;
- expectations and requirements concerning the work of beginning teachers will be communicated;
- planned and systematic learning experiences for beginning teachers will be provided;
- adequate feedback and support to beginning teachers will be offered;
- appropriate procedures of assessment and self-evaluation of beginning teachers will be established.

(3) *Induction as providing systematic learning experiences.* The induction programme ought to provide beginning teachers/trainers with opportunities for systematic learning experiences. That would include at least occasions for experiential learning through carefully chosen contextual modules, the taking into account of motivation and interests of beginning teachers in the learning process, an orientation on action research as a means of improving learning, a focus not only on formal but also on informal learning processes, collaborative networks of (beginning) teachers and if possible a wider context of the school/the company as a learning organisation in which induction would take place.

(4) *Induction as offering feedback and support to beginning teachers/trainers.* Beginning teachers need a great deal of feedback and support throughout the induction period. In this respect the role of the mentor is crucial but other beginning and experienced teachers and the headteacher have a role to play as well.

(5) *Induction as consciously dealing with the role of the hidden curriculum and teacher thinking.* One of the basic problems of induction in any kind of system is the co-existence of an official and a hidden curriculum, of organised learning and student thinking/teacher educator thinking, of formal and informal learning processes. The particular role and effects of the hidden curriculum as well as teacher/trainer thinking should be made the object of joint reflection of beginning teachers/trainers and mentors and awareness of relations with the formal curriculum should be raised. Parallels with the existence of a hidden curriculum and teacher thinking in the context of induction programmes and school teaching/in-company training should be expressly drawn.

(6) *Induction as promoting reflection on moral, political and social aspects of theories and practice.* Curricula and theoretical conceptions in TE and induction and in schools/companies, under whatever system and in whichever country, are moral in principle, political in their functions and social in origin. This applies also to principles and conceptions of teaching

practice. One of the major tasks of induction lies in promoting reflection of beginning teachers and mentors on these aspects, in the subjects no less than in the educational field.

(7) *Induction as applying alternative methods of evaluation and assessment.* Pre-service TE should abandon the traditional „testing culture“ in favour of an assessment culture that is characterized as follows: an occasion for learning rather than testing; formative and ongoing; based on a criterion-referenced philosophy of evaluation that focuses on accomplishment rather than rank; based on what prospective teachers are expected to know rather than on what is easy to score; and entailing the use of multiple performance assessments, teaching portfolios, verbal assessments and feedback, and assessment centres. Parallels with evaluation and assessment procedures and problems at school level should be permanently kept in mind and discussed.

(8) *Induction as requiring workplace experience and regular workplace contact of beginning teachers and trainers.* In teacher/trainer education there is a lack of focus on knowledge of work processes, on job configuration in companies, on job analysis, and on how learning takes place on the job in companies. This situation could only be remedied if workplace experience is required of students before they enter teacher/trainer education and if regular contact with different workplaces is organised for beginning teachers/trainers and their mentors during participation in an induction programme.

(9) *Induction as emphasising adult learning principles.* The adult learner is generally perceived to have characteristics that are unique. The unique qualities of the adult learner must be recognised and special teaching and learning responses must be developed to meet their needs. It appears to be important to conceive pre-service TE for young adults as a process which involves the whole person as an intelligent agent in the process.

2. Erratic on-the-job learning of teachers/trainers in VET and CVET institutions – an undesirable state of affairs

The process in which teachers/trainers actually learn to teach, in which teachers/trainers acquire some basic competence of teaching young people, largely takes place beyond the confines of higher education institutions. Whether teacher educators and TE institutions like this or not, for practising teachers/trainers themselves there is little doubt that in spite of other influences on-the-job learning does indeed play a central and dominant role in their development as teachers/trainers. This implies that experience (and under favourable circumstances maybe also reflection on that experience) will be the main method of acquiring pedagogical competencies. On the other hand problems arising on the job will never lend themselves to treatment on the basis of the generalised knowledge and competence independent of contexts which represents the core of teacher/trainer education ideology. Seen in this particular perspective, the process of teachers/trainers learning to teach has always been an informal life-long learning process, and nothing else. Within this process catalogues of competencies as prescribed by governments for teacher/trainer education are just irrelevant.

With these general remarks in mind - how do teachers actually learn to teach (if this is not achieved in TE institutions/TE courses) and what are the fundamental characteristics of the actual process of developing teaching/training competence? While no attempt is made here at presenting a complete list, at least the following elements will have to be mentioned as being of central importance:

Process and phases of life-long learning

Teachers/trainers tend to change, sometimes even improve, their professional behaviour in the course of their careers and this change may be interpreted as a learning process, termed „teacher/trainer development“ or in a more narrow sense „professional development“ by some researchers. Undoubtedly teacher/trainer development could not be seen as a simple process of continuous improvement, ending only with retirement. Learning from experience does not take place automatically, and we do not even have proper theories explaining why experiential learning of teachers/trainers does or does not occur under certain circumstances. The possibility of a teacher/trainer failing to change and not coping with his teaching situation is not just a hypothetical question. Matters are complicated by the fact that the possibility of a teacher/trainer misinterpreting his own experience, and not understanding himself the complexities of his development could never be excluded. Some researchers have noted that teacher/trainer development is not a linear process but a process with characteristic „turning points“ or „critical incidents“. Such incidents could be linked directly to the job and the experience as a teacher/trainer but also to the private sphere (experience of parenthood, school experience of own children, etc.). Teachers/trainers themselves seem to think of their professional biographies as a process divided up into „phases“, with relevant research being quick to isolate a limited number of phase patterns.

Experiential on-the-job learning

In spite of other influences, it could be assumed that life-long learning does mean above all learning on-the-job and that this learning on-the-job plays a central and fundamental role in teachers' and trainers' careers. This implies an interpretation regarding experience (and reflection on that experience) as the main method of acquiring pedagogical knowledge and competence. Changes, even from the same sort of experience, will not occur in a uniform manner but depending on personal qualities, intentions, prior experiences, social origin, etc. of teachers/trainers. It is, however, important to stress that on-the-job learning presupposes specific school and classroom contexts and specific impacts of such contexts. The kind of

generalised knowledge and competence independent of contexts, as the one initial TE usually focuses upon, will never be achieved through experiential on-the-job learning. Any change of context will inevitably implicate the teacher in new learning processes.

If experience is to be associated with learning that is significant, then clearly it would have to be carefully managed in provocative ways. Learning cannot be simply equated with experience nor can it be expected to flow readily from it. If so, the impact of various measures to promote qualities and dispositions for life-long learning in the face of new experiences will be severely attenuated if they conflict with teachers' basic ontological categories, that is, their beliefs about the nature of teaching or of children's and adults' learning. Teachers/trainers are not, in general, given to questioning practices. They tend to behave in such a way as to maximise predictability in classrooms. Teachers/trainers appear to be blind to data inconsistent with their beliefs and practices. Some studies showed how confronting data that is inconsistent with teachers' or trainers' initial schema are likely to be minimised. Teachers/trainers have ways of ignoring or absorbing them without recourse to restructuring their conceptions of teaching.

□ *Importance and implications of teacher-pupil relationships or trainer/trainee relationships*

All problems connected to experiential learning processes of teachers/trainers are focused in the relations between teachers/trainers and pupils, apprentices, etc., although they definitely do not all originate in that relationship. Pressures, conflicts, and antagonisms generated and operating in the society at large are present in the classroom and in the training centre courses, whether the teacher/trainer and the pupils/trainees know this or not. Typically teachers/trainers are working under circumstances and conditions which are far beyond their influence and the existing social division of labour has a tendency to prevent them from gaining insights into this situation. Here then lies a major difficulty for teachers' and trainers' professional activity. They have to make an effort to solve problems as they arise in the classroom/in the training centre although this is very often absolutely impossible. Simple shifts of endeavour to being satisfied with maintaining order and discipline in the classroom/the training centre easily result from this dilemma.

Under present conditions teaching and learning processes are indeed characterised by

- a lack of relevance of schooling for pupils;
- by its separation from working life and life in general;
- by social selectivity and inequality;
- by the annihilation of the official formal curriculum through the hidden curriculum;
- by a hopeless competition or interference between knowledge acquired in school and knowledge acquired outside school, etc.

None of these problems could ever be successfully dealt with by a teacher in the context of compulsory schooling because they are not generated in the classroom. The order of school life, the meaninglessness of the curriculum for life and the efforts of persons working in this context only make sense on the basis of the stability of the instrumental value attached to specific school careers and diplomas. Everyone knows that this is no longer the case, and this does create a vicious circle of resistance and refusal of education on the side of pupils and lack of motivation and effort on the side of teachers. The problems trainers face in training courses are of similar nature.

□ *Impact of institutional framework*

Certainly the central role of teacher-pupil or the trainer/trainee relations in the process of developing teaching competence should not be underestimated. On the other hand

teachers/trainers find themselves working under specific workplace conditions, and these conditions might either impede or promote autonomy, reflection, learning, creativity, critical self-evaluation and self-representation, etc. It has often been noted that teachers as civil servants working in the public education system are part of a bureaucratic and hierarchical set-up, and trainers in companies could be regarded as facing the same sort of situation in companies. Nowhere does this become clearer than in the evaluation and assessment of student/trainee achievement. But the the role and position, the rights and duties of the teacher/trainer himself are defined in strictly bureaucratic ways, complete with bureaucratic control mechanisms. This is not to say that the control mechanisms are working smoothly, and the efficiency of superiros and inspectors e.g. does have its limits.

□ *Nature of pedagogical knowledge*

Teachers/trainers being questioned about their personal system of pedagogical knowledge and beliefs will certainly produce more or less complete theories, for which experience with pupils in the classroom or trainees in courses, apart from that with headteachers, colleagues, parents, inspectors, superiors and beyond this with family, friends, etc. might be relevant sources. Available research results indicate that these theories tend to be legitimated on the basis of the so-called practicality ethic. Instructional techniques, curriculum, practical suggestions, pedagogical principles, innovations, etc. are judged on the basis of their value for effectively managing classroom situations/training course situations. A good theory would explain why in the experience of teachers/trainers certain elements „work“ in practice. Depending on how this practice is conceived of, different kinds of theories could be imagined.

In more recent literature there is an almost general tendency to describe teachers' theories (and correspondingly, trainers' theories) as being subjective educational theories. Theories in this sense are seen as a personally ordered but changing system of knowledge and beliefs that are relevant for education and teaching. They are sometimes linked to the concept of the professional self that might also be seen as a continually active, shifting array of self-knowledge that is accessible to the teacher/trainer. Clearly this idea of subjective theories results from the fact that researchers find it difficult to include the wider social context into biographical research. If they did, theories would turn out to be rather more objective than subjective by nature.

□ *Nature of teaching competence*

With differing degrees of perfection most teachers/trainers do acquire during their career some kind of teaching competence, including subject knowledge, subject application, class management, assessment and recording of pupils'/trainees' progress, etc. At the same time it could not be denied that this kind of developing teaching competence is often limited to the very narrow context of their specific professional activity in a specific school and classroom environment or training centre environment under specific workplace conditions. Some of the more serious limitations of this process of acquiring teaching competence are becoming more and more evident with the social crisis gaining momentum, and they are not directly and not exclusively linked to inherent limitations of teaching and learning through teaching itself but to limitations of compulsory schooling as a social institution.

Summarising the argument on the actual process of teachers/trainers developing teaching competence, it could be concluded that we are certainly very far from understanding this process. One of the basic reasons for that lies in the ill-informed assumption of at least teachers (although not trainers) being educated for their professional tasks in TE institutions. Looking into teachers' careers, we find that the vast majority does somehow manage to cope with classroom situations, although this does not necessarily include the ability to organise pupils' learning processes effectively. A certain level of 'coping' does result from teaching

experience, even if there is a lack of good solid theories explaining how and why this happens.

On the other hand there is certainly no reason for glorifying the results of experiential learning- on-the-job by teachers and trainers. The severe limitations of on-the-job learning derive not only from its being context-bound but even more so from changes in the social function and role of professionals and professionalism in general. In the face of increasing social problems all professions, not only that of teachers/trainers and teacher educators/trainers of trainers, nowadays tend to end up in dead-end streets where their professional competence and service turns out to be nothing but a vague, empty and helpless gesture.

3. Systematic on-the-job learning – Outlines of a coherent induction strategy for beginning teachers/trainers in VET and CVET institutions

The first years of teaching/probation should be understood as a period of continuing learning and professional development (in this part of proposals no separate account will be taken of the situation of beginning trainers in a company context, assuming that their problems will be largely similar to those of beginning teachers). Initial TE can be only the starting point for career-long change and development. However, too often probation is experienced as a time of trial, or a test of stamina, or a test to see if teachers possess some undefined quality. If probation is truly to be regarded as a period of continuing education and training and professional learning, all of the good experiences which accompany effective learning ought to be in place.

Responsibility for beginning teachers/probationers is shared by many different groups and institutions: employers (regions, Ministry ...), those who manage beginning teachers/probationers on a day to day basis (school promoted staff), those who support them (a range of people both in and out of school), those who initially trained them (TE institution and placement school staffs), and those who oversee probation (the Ministry, inspectors, the teaching profession, ...).

It is vital for the success of induction programmes that schools should dispose of written documents defining a policy of induction for beginning teachers. Written policy of induction should contain, as minimum, information on how

- problems and perceived needs of beginning teachers will be identified;
- expectations and requirements concerning the work of beginning teachers will be communicated;
- planned and systematic learning experiences for beginning teachers will be provided;
- adequate feedback and support to beginning teachers will be offered;
- appropriate procedures of assessment and self-evaluation of beginning teachers will be established.

3.1. Identify problems and perceived needs of beginning teachers

It is clear that what probationers seek in support is often not really different from what is needed by any new teacher in a school:

- enough information on policies and procedures to avoid serious mistakes;
- help to become acquainted with staff and the community context;
- basic provision of resources;
- opportunities for feedback and for staff development; and
- support from staff who are briefed in the likely needs of probationers.

Do probationers have needs beyond those of the experienced new teacher? The findings of research suggest that they do. In their first post teachers have no past experience on which to draw, to know what questions to ask and of whom, and to identify what help to seek and from whom. The probationer teacher has no personal bank of resources from previous work, is less likely to have a clear sense of the impact of being solely responsible for the learning of a group of pupils and has initially little grasp of the reality of coping with the job in the long term.

It can be argued that those in the profession who have a responsibility for probationers have to be sensitive for the significance of individual probationer needs. The difficulty faced by such staff is that they have no starting point to begin to assess individual needs. The division of training between college and school and the lack of any documentation which a probationer could bring to a first job indicating aspects of need and areas for professional development

lead to unnecessary information gaps. In addition, pre-service TE has a responsibility to help a student to be professionally reflective and develop the skills necessary to begin to identify their own needs. At any rate, steps should be taken in the very early phase to find out about the personal and professional needs of beginning teachers and then make an attempt to meet them.

Although beginning teachers' needs vary, there is an identifiable general pattern which is largely predictable and indicates a change in the kind of problems experienced as the probationary period/the first teaching years progress but not a corresponding need for reduction in the amount of support required. Among new secondary teachers concerns would focus in an early phase on control and discipline and on subject aspects. While developing as a teacher, there would be a shift towards curriculum development, assessment and the question of how to meet individual needs of students. These results of research studies provide a 'rule-of-thumb' starting point for a planned programme of assessment, feedback and support over the first teaching years. Such anticipation means that resources for support can be more efficiently and effectively deployed. It should be remembered, however, that beginning teachers/probationers differ so that self-evaluation and other forms of assessment of needs are therefore crucial.

Some managers of probationers could be seen to be extremely sensitive to individual need of beginning teachers and be able to build appropriate support programmes. In other cases the research data would indicate whole school climates which do not reflect a positive environment and have inhibited the beginning teacher/probationer from identifying and satisfying professional needs. The implications of such work environments can result in early career dissatisfaction with probationers developing cynical attitudes towards their job which can have serious consequences for themselves and the future of the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

3.2. Communicate expectations and requirements concerning the work of beginning teachers

→ *Expectations of the employer (Ministry, region, etc.).*

Mostly expectations of the employer are rather general and in practice it would be left to individual schools and general administrative regulations to define requirements concerning the work of beginning teachers. However, there are cases (e.g. Great Britain – see Appendix) where standards to be met by beginning teachers at the end of the induction period have been laid down. It should be noted that standards are not accompanied by criteria for judging whether they have in fact been met or not and it is left to individual assessors/evaluators to come to conclusions about the qualifications of beginning teachers. In practice all sorts of judgemental errors would occur in this procedure.

This is in fact an area of many tensions and conflicts in policy and practice which directly concern beginning teachers. The general trend in teacher education including probation could be described as a conflict between two competing epistemologies: the technicist, instrumental approach and an alternative approach developing teachers' capacities of critical reflection, clarification of purposes and the meaning of practices, working and not dispensing with situations that create tensions, power struggles and ideological conflict with a view to becoming different people with different sorts of social arrangements. Depending on these tensions and conflicts in policy expectations and requirements from the side of the employer would be either very bureaucratic, narrow and strict or more open to experimentation and interpretation at local level.

→ *Expectations of the school.*

There is a need for well prepared and thoughtfully delivered information – and not only at the point of recruitment and selection or in the first few days of teaching and the induction period. A key factor in achieving early success – success which is crucial to the confidence necessary for effective teaching – is knowing how a particular school works in terms of its policies and, even more importantly, its procedures. If new teachers (whether experienced or not) do not know enough about how the schools works and what precedents have been set in the past, then they learn by making mistakes, often very public ones.

From the first day and the first lesson on beginners are responsible for the classes they teach. These responsibilities are exactly the same as those of teachers who have been teaching for ten, twenty or thirty years. Many new teachers are unclear about what they had to do to be seen to do well. Not only do they need to know about their jobs and how they are progressing, they also need to know how the teaching system develops and justifies its procedures, and how it provides for the future development and career prospects of its new members.

→ *Expectations of the mentor.*

As the mentor has a particular responsibility for the beginning teacher he could be assumed to have particular expectations as well. These expectations might refer to all specific activities devised for helping the beginning teacher in his learning process (e.g. the number, timing and duration of observation sessions) but they could also refer to the progress the beginning teacher is expected to make in classroom teaching, in maintaining discipline and order, in assessing students, in relationships with students, etc., and they could refer to the general abilities of beginning teachers in establishing relationships with colleagues. The beginning teacher needs to know exactly what these expectations are if they are required to meet them. The problem, however, is that these expectations are often not communicated and that the beginning teacher has to find out in other ways about them.

→ *Expectations of students and parents.*

Clearly students and parents have expectations as well and it could be assumed that parents would suspiciously watch a beginning teacher doing his work. They would perhaps be the first to let a beginning teacher know if they are dissatisfied with his work, possibly already in the first week of his teaching career. Beginning teachers on the other hand would not hesitate (and would do well) to confront students with their own expectations concerning teaching and learning processes, discipline and order, etc., in the first week of their teaching. This is one of the conflict situations even beginning teachers will have to learn to deal and cope with.

Obviously there will be some pressure on beginning teachers, particularly in the early phase of their career, to adapt to norms and standards of the respective school culture. The reaction of beginning teachers to such pressures might be very different. A research study in the Netherlands found three major adaptation strategies. First, those teachers who felt familiar with the existing school/departmental culture simply adopted that culture. A second group of teachers adapted strategically to the culture of the school/department, because they felt they first had to show their colleagues and students that they were able to function in the existing culture before changing their teaching approach. The last group did not agree with the existing culture and decided to follow its own path. The members of the last group only survived in school if they had a considerable frustration tolerance.

3.3. Provide planned and systematic learning experiences for beginning teachers

Induction programmes for teachers/trainers should concentrate on the theoretical and practical development of a new pedagogical scenario: from an emphasis on the permanent assessment of skills and competencies to deliberately constructing a setting where the focus is on the

beginning teacher as a learner, on the forms of organisation and experience which provoke high quality learning, on the beginning teacher's learning processes and on the social and political processes influencing and conditioning it.

→ *Start-up procedures (introduction to induction period).*

For both the beginning teacher and the employer/the school any activity which helps to smoothe the transition from pre-service TE to the actual start of teaching will be of enormous benefit. Induction to induction activities before starting to teach can take a variety of forms: having early contact with school and colleagues; specific links with particular colleagues; early notice of classes and timetables; written materials on curriculum and other policies such as those on discipline matters, and access to school policies on, and programmes for, beginning teacher/probationer support.

→ *Experiential learning through contextual modules.*

It is generally assumed that in one way or another experience is the main avenue to producing relevant teacher knowledge. Whatever the external significance of changes in teacher knowledge correlated with experience there is almost a complete lack of account of how the changes come about. This is a significant deficit for those interested in life-long learning in teacher education that follow through from pre-service to induction and in-service education, because such programmes need to be based on an understanding of the mechanism of change rather than arbitrarily located milestones. Those advising on more dynamic conception of teacher preparation need to rest their advice on a strong theoretical understanding of the process of change: an understanding of how teachers learn from experience in terms of a general model of cognitive restructuring. One corollary of developing a more theoretical understanding of the process of change is that there is plenty of evidence to suggest that classroom experiences are not treated by (beginning) teachers as critical stimulus and material for either the sustained pursuit of effectiveness and efficacy in promoting children's learning or for their own professional development. Teachers (and particularly beginning teachers) may be seen as at least as willing to close down as to open up in the face of experience.

It is too easy to take learning from experience for granted and to begin by ignoring the limits of such learning. We still do not know what the learner takes away from such experiences: some experience will travel from setting to setting as it does with many basic skills, such as conversation, but if experience is stored and subsequently used in new settings and clearly it is, an account of knowledge acquisition and storage is essential to understand knowledge application just as an account of knowledge application is essential to understand knowledge acquisition. What is the relationship between knowledge and expertise? In examining the nature of professional knowledge we need to ask what travels, what does the situation dictate and what must be created on the spot? As yet, studies attempting to represent teachers' knowledge have paid insufficient attention to knowledge-in-use. Accounts of expertise and of novice-expert differences are not associated with learning theory. They lack explanations as to how knowledge is acquired, stored and expanded.

Even if we know more about how to represent changes in teachers' knowledge in its various forms, there is still a problem with representational theories of knowledge in that they give no account of how knowledge is applied in particular settings. Studies of this problem are challenging the view of knowledge as a self-sufficient substance independent of the situation in which it is used. This alternative view treats knowledge as situation-dependent and specific, an inseparable part of the activity, context and culture in which it is acquired and used. In this sense, life-long significant, learning may be discontinuous and localised in particular settings. This view of learning brings into question another prevailing assumption in most higher education and learning contexts, that is, irrespective of evidence to the contrary, learners can transfer knowledge across contexts, even though their tutors cannot. The challenge is how to

create new contexts to help learners link academic knowledge with practical experience and to link practice through reflection to theory. Whether this practice assists transfer of knowledge or simply creates yet another context to be understood must remain an empirical question.

There is another element that may conflict with assumptions about life-long learning and professional development, namely that learning is linear, continuous and cumulative. Whatever the limitations of models of teachers' development and the data on which they are based, there is an impressive consistency in what they tell us about what experienced teachers know: they know a lot about various aspects of teaching but teachers' knowledge is atheoretical, teachers' beliefs appear to be strictly contextualised, being tightly linked to specific events and pupils in particular classrooms.

It seems imperative that the notion of life-long learning and continuing professional development of (beginning) teachers does not merely extend current practices of formal schooling and institutional learning. We need an expanded theory of learning that is not located in one particular situation or driven by a single pedagogical model. Among the ideas included in Bereiter's notion of a contextual module, a kind of unit for an educational learning theory, are activity, acquired modularity, context, long-term learning or adaptation, affect and attitude in a variety of contexts. These units are acquired modules. Contextual refers to a set of conditions that give rise to development of a module and that later serve to activate or release it. Acquiring a contextual module would depend on some repeated or sustained set of conditions that involved new demands, opportunities, or constraints, so that they may be seen as providing a way of describing adaptation via learning.

As C. Bereiter (Aspects of an educational learning theory, in: *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 60, no. 4, 1990, pp. 603-624) has observed, the acquisition of expertise, possibly the hallmark of life-long learning, is its least understood aspect. It is under-theorised. We need a theoretical account of how resources for life-long learning are used in constructing new knowledge. These resources include reasoning, imitation, self-concept, investment of mental capacity, scaffolding and other social supports. Acquired modularity implies that over time these separate components come to form a more organic whole. It is in adapting to particular tasks that there is a change in all of the aspects because of their interdependence. Activating a module involves all these aspects. "A contextual module is not just related to a context. It embodies the person's whole relationship to that context." (p. 613). A kind of contextual module of particular importance in life-long learning is the topical module comprising declarative knowledge of a topic but also comprising goals, procedures for gaining knowledge in a particular domain, and an intentional learning attitude to it. A module in these terms is not a skill but "a certain way of relating to the world" (p. 612).

There is another important distinction in Bereiter's notion of contextual modules based on how we cope with difficult learning, a principle which can be applied equally well to life-long learning. In describing how a "school work" module is organised, and is characteristic of the common type of adaptation to school, Bereiter suggests that different children may evolve quite different modules just as different workers may develop different modules reflecting types of adaptation. The question then is, how does a school work module respond to difficulty in learning? He concludes that "Trying harder may also be a strategy students will use, but, as mediated by a schoolwork module, this would amount to trying harder to do the task rather than trying harder to learn what the task is intended to teach" (p. 616).

In contrast, there is the intentional learning module. It differs from the other module in fundamental and major ways: there is a crucial difference in purpose with intentional learners organising efforts around personal knowledge construction rather than performing a particular task. Procedural knowledge is used to solve problems of comprehension. Learners whose academic activities are all mediated by a school work module may never come to think of themselves as learners. The intentional learning module is not tied to a concrete context but the abstract notion of learning itself. (p. 617). However, learners are reluctant to adopt different approaches to learning, even among university students who show little idea of learning as an active, problem posing process. Similar findings can be found in adult learners, using small numbers who pursued the kinds of cognitive goals that had led them to follow a particular course.

The implication for life-long learning is that through an intellectual life at home or through fortunate school experiences, the learner begins to recognise learning goals and ways to achieve them, to develop a commitment to learning, a self-image as learner, and other

elements of an intentional learning module. The educational problem is how to foster development of an intentional learning module in learners who may not develop them spontaneously? This brings us to the problem of re-designing educational contexts and network systems that encourage intentional learning modules. If learning contexts continue to resemble school work type environments, they may prevent the activation of modules adapted to larger contexts of learning and make it likely that what is learned will be too closely tied to characteristics of the school or higher educational institution environment to transfer beyond it.

In parallel with notions of life-long learning, the distinctive requirement of an educational learning theory is how it manages to explain and elaborate on the learner as an intelligent agent in the learning process, to take account of the variety of resources that may come into use in achieving difficult learning objectives, and to embed explanations of particular learning processes within larger descriptions of the cognitive structures by which people adapt to various contexts so that they can achieve personal goals within them. The history of curriculum innovation suggests that designing settings that require teachers to learn new approaches and conceptions of teaching is an extremely difficult task. One lesson for life-long learning is that individual teachers have little prospect of operating as independent learners in schools if their learning requires any changes in the general norms of conduct, origination or provision. In induction programmes parallels should be frequently drawn between learning processes of beginning teachers and students.

→ *Interests and motivations of beginning teachers (teacher beliefs and values).*

It is a matter of experience that the best results in learning are almost always achieved if the interests, motivations and specific abilities of beginning teachers are taken into account and respected as being relevant for the learning process. This is one of the fundamental reasons why students should be given opportunities on a large scale for self-directed learning on an individual basis. Directed and self-directed learning could well be envisaged as both having a place in teacher/trainer education courses but quite clearly forms of self-directed learning on an individual basis and in teams should be predominant. Beginning teachers will have to be invited to provide evaluation and documentation of self-directed learning and they will have to be advised on proper ways of doing this if there are no suggestions of their own in the matter. An early experience of self-directed learning and self-evaluation procedures is absolutely vital in anticipation of future requirements on the work of teachers. In induction programmes parallels should be drawn again and again with the situation of students in classrooms but also with past experiences in pre-service teacher education.

→ *Action research orientation for beginning teachers.*

It has to be admitted that traditionally (educational) research does not play a significant role in the work of teachers, not only because there are few systematic attempts to mediate research for students and to induct them into the procedures and standards of educational and subject-related research during pre-service education. Against this tradition, schools and teachers should make a strong research orientation their main business in a staff development perspective, providing teachers with knowledge and feedback about the teaching and learning process in general and on their progress in professional development in particular.

→ *Focus on formal and informal learning processes.*

Action research should have a clear focus on real and fundamental problems of school education and workplace education. One of the basic problems of school education/workplace education in any kind of system is the co-existence of an official and a hidden curriculum, of organised learning processes and student thinking/teacher educator thinking, of formal and informal learning processes. The particular role and effects of the hidden curriculum and

teacher thinking in relation to the formal curriculum as well as alternative forms of organising and evaluating teaching and learning processes should be made the main and central object of joint analysis and reflection of beginning teachers and mentors/other colleagues. Parallels with the existence of a hidden curriculum and teacher thinking in the context of higher education should be expressly drawn.

➔ *Collaborative networks of (beginning) teachers.*

Learning in small and larger groups which via cooperative efforts autonomously develop strategies of analysing and reflecting on relevant themes and problems, indeed the very self-organisation of such group processes by teachers represent highly important forms of experience which should be much more heavily emphasised in induction programmes. Such forms could be expected to contribute to strengthening the responsibility for collective processes of learning, development and growth, to promoting specific skills like the ability of cooperating and working in teams, to leaving more scope for (beginning) teachers to learn and grow according to their specific abilities, needs, interests and motivations as well as to demonstrating the particular benefits but also the particular difficulties of collaborative work. According to relevant research the quality of schools appears to depend almost entirely on this ability of teachers for cooperating in teams. Opportunities for acquiring such skills must and could be given to beginning teachers at an early stage of their careers.

M. Huberman (Networks that alter teaching, in: *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1995, pp. 193-211) proposes a teacher development model in which he outlines the main features of an experimenting collaborative teacher network. In this model of collective development and experimentation groups of teachers can be organised to facilitate communication and common work, to push towards both exchange and experimentation. There is a distinctive role for university teacher-educators working alongside other professionals as 'experts' to dispense more conceptual information but only when it is requested by the teacher group. The opportunities for collaborative inquiry, especially with recent developments in interactive technology systems, is linked to predictors of professional satisfaction later on in teachers' careers. Some researchers concluded that teachers' work is likely to be more satisfying when they value what they do, when it challenges and extends them, when they do it well, and when they have ample evidence confirming their success.

Huberman distinguishes among four cycles of development within experimenting teacher networks: the 'closed' and 'open' individual and collective cycles. In the closed individual cycle teachers characteristically 'tinker' with instructional materials in response to a problem. Subsequent diagnosis and experimentation is undertaken to confirm whether something works or not. The 'open' individual cycle, follows the same course of perceived problem, diagnosis, search for solutions and application or abandonment, only in this case, teachers resort to the outside help of specialists, colleagues and documentary sources, to guide their search for a solution and testing it to see if it works or not. This does not tell us how high the quality of this easily accessible knowledge is, or how the teachers manage to turn it in to more durable modified classroom practice.

The closed collective cycle comes closer to a collective enterprise but one that does not depend on outside resources. It is a collaborative cycle in that it involves teachers from several schools who may share the same subject or interest. The cycle goes from exchange to experimentation but also includes a strong dose of more explanatory or diagnostic discussion, more reflection on one's work and discussion of seminal issues about teaching and learning a subject in different contexts. This model corresponds to what is commonly referred to as 'action research', emphasising that teachers' theories have been largely derived from practices, that their experiential base is only one of several possible and legitimate ways of construing the same events, and that the language of exchange is an imperfect and frustrating vehicle until there has been protracted interaction, mutual experiences and the gradual capacity to imagine other perspectives than one's own from the inside out.

A qualitatively decisive part of this cycle is that it involves continuous monitoring and renders more public and visible what has gone on in each teacher's class linked to the experiment. Discussion, too, is of a different order. We have already alluded to modes of discourse as ways of formulating teachers' thinking and it is this aspect that is referred to but not demonstrated or explained in Huberman's cycles of development. The shared exchanges and conversations are prominent features of the model along with the conceptual inputs but before we can evaluate the impact of these on teachers' actions and thinking, we need to distinguish between unstudied talk both with studied conversational and studied non-conversational talk. Hence the importance of modes of discourse and the crucial role of practical argument. Unstudied talk is spontaneous and unweighed. Then difference between unstudied talk and weighed discourse is not a matter of degree; it is work in that it involves

reasoning, judging and thinking something out. We are no longer in a verbal exchange mode, a discussion culture, with nothing on the line. There is an obligation to clarify and compare.

The 'open' collective cycle is the fullest form of collaborative enquiry. Its features are conceptual inputs, probably related to models and theories of children's learning, and is intended to prompt a shift from practical experience to more formalised knowledge. Experience sharing has two purposes, to make acquaintance via one's own experience with teaching a particular subject, and the accumulated experiences and pedagogical knowledge of the group. Didactic leads are provided in part by outsiders to the group. These are intended to build on the conceptual inputs and sharing of experiences by providing alternatives. Observations are conducted by the didactic specialists so that it can be established that teachers are combining conceptual inputs with didactic elements. New methods are developed and some pedagogical analysis of materials. Experimentation and exchanges still feature but on the basis of pre- and post-test data. Following on from the first experimentations, the analysis of the results in terms of pupil engagement and performance requires another conceptual input, to knit theory a bit more to the varieties of learning. These inputs lead to a revision of the same kind of experimentation or to the design of new ones.

These features of an 'open' collective cycle of development may offer appropriate criteria for life-long learning. The kind of problem-posing in the cycle assumes that the process of learning, experimentation and change will be moderately complex, novel, ambiguous, contradictory and conflicting – which are, in effect, the ideal conditions for *significant* learning, be it for adults or for children. Certain key collaborative canons could be outlined:

- a) a culture of support for teacher inquiry, norms of collegiality, openness and trust;
- b) opportunities and time for disciplined inquiry;
- c) teacher learning of content in context;
- d) reconstruction of leadership, and
- e) networks, collaborations and coalitions.

Huberman's networks to alter teaching propose the procedures for reducing enduring uncertainty or obstacles, where to call and where to visit. It is a plausible system for the professional development of teachers. However, there is a fundamental problem which remains unsolved: Although Huberman's cycle of development describe the necessary conditions for teacher's change and restructuring of experience, and emphasises the importance of cross-school experimenting, it only infers how learning takes place: it provides some reasonable explanations of how pedagogical knowledge is acquired and applied, but it is not systematically derived from a model of teacher learning. It is clear on methodology but unclear on pedagogy, and says little on how the integrity of a psychological model drives the pedagogy and methodology.

→ *Induction in the context of the school of a learning organisation.*

Learning at the level of individual (beginning) teachers is more likely if the school or learning organisation is seen as the learning unit. The concept of a learning organisation presupposes an institutional commitment to professional learning in pursuit of key objectives both within and across schools and learning organisations. Without the accompanying management structures and procedures providing usable support, an individual is unlikely to make professional progress.

Placing teachers in such settings, however, would of course, not necessarily lead them to learn anything or to procure significant learning: experience is neutral to learning. It is necessary that teachers' learning should be a requirement in these settings, to developing an intentional learning module. The concept of a learning unit or network is now eminently possible with the advent of developments in information technology.

A theory of life-long learning needs to re-examine the acquisition and application of professionally relevant knowledge, that restructuring experiences in a powerfully provocative way can procure teachers' conceptual change, and that we have to design powerful learning settings to facilitate these processes, so that teachers become intelligent agents in their own learning. One feature of how this might be achieved to promote life-long learning is to devise networks that significantly alter teaching as open collective development between schools and learning organisations to fulfil the demands of an intentional learning module. Recent developments in information systems in higher education help us to go beyond these basic requirements by enabling teacher-learners to take account of and put to work a larger range of

personal and social resources in the environment with the specific objective of learning how best to promote pupils' learning, and to become empowered to do so.

3.4. Offer adequate feedback and support to beginning teachers: the role of the mentor/the headteacher

Most of the available concepts of mentoring tend to see this activity as a method for transferring practical knowledge to the teacher trainees. Alternatively, mentoring could be defined as a dynamic reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent and a beginner aimed at promoting the career development of both. Beginning teachers' interest in the relationship lies in the help they wish to receive from an expert in acquiring a professional identity and their development from novice to self-developing professional. Mentor's interest in this relationship is that, in order to be able to help beginning teachers effectively, they have to reflect continuously on their own repertoire of actions. The latter could be expected as nearly always resulting in improvement of that repertoire. Essential in this alternative definition is the reciprocity of learning effects. The mentoring relationship contributes to the professional development of both participants by promoting the quality of their professional practice.

Apart from being a qualified teacher with excellent classroom management skills, an expert in the subject he/she teaches and in the subject methodology concerned, a good mentor has to have (or to acquire through professional development courses) the following personal qualities: open-mindedness, reflectiveness, flexibility, listening skills, empathy, creativity and a helping attitude. Those responsible for mentoring beginning teachers must meet a number of specific prerequisites for the job:

- The first is a knowledge base. Mentors need to understand the nature of the process of professional development of beginning teachers, the nature of problems beginners experience and what the causes of those problems are, and finally, they have to have insight into the essentials of the teacher's professional learning process.
- The second is an interpersonal skills base. Mentors must master a wide range of types of interpersonal behaviour and know how these types affect their protégées, and what type of behaviour is appropriate in which situation.
- Third, mentors must master a wide range of technical skills: counselling, observing, providing feedback, providing instruction, evaluating.

It will be clear that mentors have to be carefully selected: not all teachers meet the prerequisites mentioned above or have the abilities to develop them. After selection they will still need substantial training to be able to act effectively as a mentor.

The aim of mentoring is to help beginning teachers in developing their own professional identity and in mastering the necessary skills and knowledge. Apart from the counselling setting in which all activities of the mentor take place, four more sub-roles of the mentoring activity could be distinguished: observer, provider of feedback, instructor and finally evaluator (assessor). To all sub-roles a set of competencies and practical skills would be related.

→ *Mentors in their role as counsellors.*

The following aspects seem to be important under the heading of „counselling activities“:

- Creating an open and safe relationship between the beginner and himself in which experiences, feelings, concerns and problems can be openly discussed, with the mentor showing interest, listening, accepting.

- Helping beginners to gain insight into the origins of problems they experience (guided reflection) and to help them to find appropriate solutions for those problems, with the mentor clarifying, inviting exploration, stimulating problem solving.
- Encouraging beginners to develop a positive self-concept and a clear view of the profession, with the mentor offering images of a positive self-concept, helping to raise awareness of one's situation, guiding re-orientation.
- Helping beginners to develop strategies of dealing with problematic and stressful events, with the mentor providing assistance for recognising stress, coping with stress and emotions, problem solving.

→ *Mentors in their role as observers.*

One of the main functions of the mentor would be classroom observation for which he has to be able to:

- Define in negotiation with the beginning teachers what will be observed, with the mentor making a proper selection, defining the precise behaviour concerned.
- Collect and record data, with the mentor creating an observation scheme, observing in classroom, sorting out and interpreting the data.
- Analyse the data and write the report, with the mentor making a draft analysis considering alternatives, taking individual qualities of the beginner and circumstances into account, making a report for feedback.

→ *Mentors in their role as providers of feedback.*

Usually feedback would be based on observation of the beginning teacher's work by the mentor. Because not all feedback can be based on observation, other methods such as stimulated recall techniques or student questionnaires will be used to collect information. However, many discussions between the mentor and the beginning teacher will be based on the beginning teacher's own report. Therefore it is important for the mentor to develop competence and skills related to:

- Discussion on lessons, with the mentor using recall techniques, recognising problems, giving appropriate feedback.
- Helping beginners to analyse their own behaviour, with the mentor analysing teacher behaviour, processing data with respect to the teacher's acting in the classroom, stimulating reflection and self-evaluation.
- Thinking along with beginners about solutions for their problems, with the mentor analysing teacher problems, advising about solutions.

→ *Mentors in their role as instructors.*

Every beginner expects to receive that specific information from his mentor which he can use for immediately solving the problems which he encounters. The mentor should be aware, however, that beginners do not need perfect solutions (if they exist at all) but help with developing (through learning) strategies of coping with professional problems. Therefore it seems important to offer:

- Knowledge, ideas and examples that are related to the beginner's learning needs, with the mentor identifying learning needs, transforming his own ideas to the beginner's level, providing help on instruction skills.

- Help in analysing the beginner's own ideas and teaching behaviour, with the mentor questioning, prompting, confronting the beginner with the professional knowledge base he ought to have or develop.
- Encourage and support the beginner in moving towards competent ways of reflection and self-evaluation, with the mentor helping in mapping problems, analysing origins of problems, developing strategies for problem solving.

→ *Mentors in their role as evaluators/assessors.*

Every mentor has to inform the beginning teacher regularly about what he thinks of their professional abilities and perspective and the progress they have made so far. In doing that the mentor needs to demonstrate the availability of the following competencies and skills:

- Communicating with beginners, with the mentor explaining criteria and procedures of evaluation, creating a positive climate in which evaluation will be regarded as an inducement for making further progress.
- Collecting and interpreting evaluation data, with the mentor sorting out evaluation data and considering their reliability, taking into account the influence of circumstances, summarising the findings.
- Assessing and reporting, with the mentor giving an assessment based on the available data, writing the evaluation report, discussing the report with the beginning teacher concerned.

3.5. Establish appropriate procedures of assessment and self-evaluation of probationers

To provide effective staff development for probationer teachers requires information about where they are in their learning to teach (and deal with other aspects of the teacher's work) – information which is derived from assessment and self-evaluation. Those who are expected to support probationers frequently do not have this information. Therefore the basic task in any assessment procedure would consist in defining effective and acceptable ways of collecting information and evidence. The involvement of beginning teachers in the evaluation and assessment of their progress should be used in effective ways in order to provide insights about methods and problems of assessing students for their work. There are clear parallels between the two processes.

→ *Evaluation by headteacher/mentor.*

A variety of methods could and should be used (see Graph 1), including observation, inspection of forward plans, discussion of self-evaluation, inspection of pupil work, observation of pupil mood and behaviour, interaction with colleagues, interaction with senior staff, etc. Obviously these are the more traditional ways of collecting information. On the other hand there is no reason to be dismissive about these traditional ways. If they are used systematically and with the necessary care, then this would in most cases already represent a big step forward in introducing rational procedures into assessment of beginning teachers. Graph 2 indicates the stages through which any formal evaluation process ought to go and the respective responsibilities of the beginning teacher and the mentor in the process.

Graph 1. Possible schedule of assessment using a variety of methods

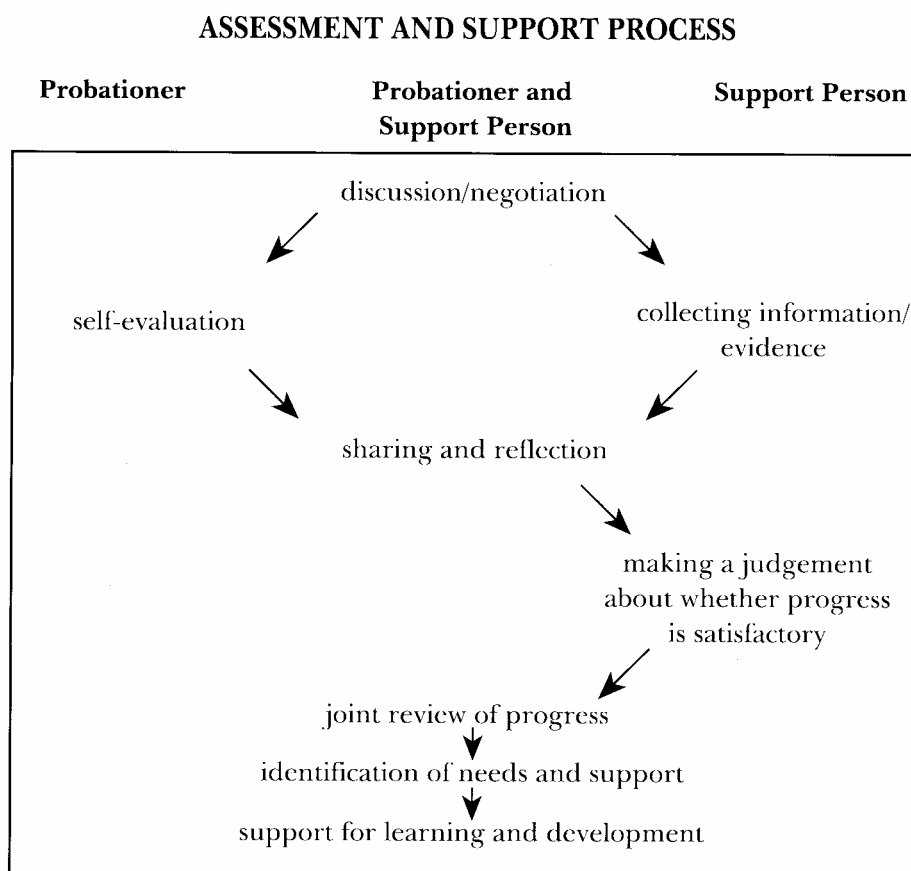
MEANS OF ASSESSMENT

	OBSERVATION Pre-arranged Regular Focused Role specified Feedback/ discussion	INSPECTING FORWARD PLANS Discussion Feedback	PROBATIONER SELF- EVALUATION Focused Shared	INSPECTING PUPIL WORK Shared	OBSERVATION OF PUPIL MOOD AND BEHAVIOUR Regular Discussed	INTERACTION WITH COLLEAGUES Day to Day	INTERACTION WITH SENIOR STAFF Formal meetings Informal contact	OTHER EVIDENCE (representative) e.g. Parents' and pupils' comments
CRITERIA TO BE ASSESSED Class Organisation and Management	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Relationships with Pupils	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Teaching Ability (including assessment)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Control and Discipline	✓		✓		✓			✓
Subject/Curriculum area competence(s)	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Conscientiousness	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Personal Characteristics	✓		✓				✓	✓
Relationships with Staff			✓			✓		✓

KEY likely source of evidence on this criterion possible source of evidence on this criterion

...

Graph 2. Stages in the assessment and support process



Assuming that information and evidence is carefully collected and that a variety of methods is used, there is still the much bigger problem of criteria for assessment. The areas in which criteria would be applied could well be class organisation and management, relationships with pupils, control and discipline in the classroom, teaching ability (including ability of assessing pupils' work), planning and preparation of lessons, subject/curriculum area competence, conscientiousness in job execution, relationships with staff, etc. But then the question remains still unsolved: what precisely are criteria e.g. for „good“ or „unsatisfactory“ relationships with pupils? This is not even a question of different mentors probably having very different opinions about the standards to be met (that is still another problem which could hardly be solved) – it is simply a question of defining generally acceptable and rational criteria for what is „good“ and what is „not so good“. Assuming we had such criteria (it is clear that at present we don't), we would still be faced with the experience that assessors would never escape the problem of errors of judgement, i.e. the fact that judgement would in each case be influenced by a number of sometimes very strange factors and prejudices which have absolutely nothing to do with the work and the achievement of a particular beginning teacher (or student).

The available knowledge accumulated in the Educational Sciences about the limits and disadvantages of the prevailing techniques of evaluation and assessment at school level is generally ignored by responsible persons (headteachers, mentors) once it comes to assessment and reporting on beginning teachers/probationers. Strategies of the evaluation and assessment of beginning teachers' learning processes thus are in most cases patently inadequate. This is an unacceptable state of affairs, irrespective of how long it has lasted.

Induction programmes should make a serious effort of applying alternative methods of evaluation and assessment, abandoning the traditional „testing culture“ in favour of an assessment culture that is characterized as follows: an occasion for learning rather than testing; formative and ongoing; based on a criterion-referenced philosophy of evaluation that focuses on accomplishment rather than rank; based on what teachers are expected to know and be able to do rather than on what is easy to score; and entailing the use of multiple performance assessments, teaching portfolios, verbal assessments and feedback, and assessment centres. Parallels with evaluation and assessment procedures and problems at classroom level as applied to students' learning should be permanently kept in mind and discussed with beginning teachers.

→ *Evaluation by other (beginning or experienced) teachers.*

Beginning teachers regularly emphasize the value of meeting other beginning teachers/probationers both at a social and a professional level. It is quite understandable that the judgements and comments of other beginning teachers – and also of colleagues who have no official and formal responsibility in the staff development process of a beginning teacher – will in general be perceived as less threatening than those of the mentor or the headteacher. Beginning teachers should therefore be given as much opportunity as possible to organise observation sessions with peers where observation would not be casual but well organised in advance and focused on specific problems or contextual modules in the learning process of the beginning teacher. Apart from that it appears to be helpful to provide regular occasions for beginning teachers meeting as a group at school level or at local/regional level in order to discuss and reflect on clearly specified common problems in the early phase of the teaching career.

→ *Evaluation through an analysis of teaching and learning processes from the perspective of pupils/students.*

Generally it seems difficult to expect students to come up with proposals for the assessment of a beginning teacher, although we have no indications that pupils' judgement would in any way be more dependent on irrational judgements and prejudices than that of mentors/headteachers. On the other hand there is now a vast literature in the Educational Sciences discussing the impact of students' belief systems, students' implicit theories, students' images of good teaching, students' involvement in lesson planning, etc. on the outcomes of teaching and learning processes. It could not be denied that students do have an experience and interpretations of teaching and learning processes and it appears to be highly important for any teacher, particularly the beginning teacher, to be aware of the character of such experience and interpretations. Against this background interesting suggestions have been made to organise student-led analysis of teaching and learning processes in the classroom and experiments have been made in this sense. Finally it would not seem very logical to demand more autonomy and self-direction of teacher students but to refuse the idea of applying the same principles to students. The conclusion is that student-led evaluation of teaching and learning processes (including evaluation of the beginning teacher's teaching activities) could be regarded as not only being feasible but as a necessary and important element in the assessment of beginning teachers.

→ *Self-evaluation of beginning teachers.*

There are several reasons for encouraging beginning teachers to use self-evaluation techniques as part of beginning teachers' assessment.

Self-evaluation provides:

- continuity from initial TE, through probation and into staff development and appraisal;
- a view of early teaching years as continuing professional development;
- opportunities for teacher-led suggestions for support, including specific observation suggestions, discussion and feedback;
- opportunities for peer group discussion with other probationers;
- a model of assessment which is formative and encourages a problem-solving approach;
- interim and final reports which reflect a shared understanding of assessment and development.

Self-evaluation is not an exercise which should be conducted in isolation. The evidence is that beginning teachers/probationers welcome encouragement and the involvement of other staff. This kind of support clarifies the purpose of the exercise and also avoids any tendency to be too self-critical.

4. Why many induction programmes for teachers/trainers fail to produce good results

There are at least four major facts illuminating the unsatisfactory conditions under which beginning teachers/probationers are very often socialized into the profession (discussion here refers to research on teacher induction but it is difficult to imagine that results would not similarly apply to the situation of beginning trainers in the company context and particularly the training centre context):

① *Drop-outs*. Despite the relevance dropping-out of beginning teachers must have for staffing schools, it appears that little attention is paid to the phenomenon of drop-out during the first years of teaching. In some countries dropping-out is a problem of considerable dimensions. A research study which was conducted in the Netherlands over a period of ten years showed that 62 per cent of Dutch secondary school teachers who started teaching in 1981 dropped out during the first seven years (C. Ooms, Dropout of beginning teachers, in: J.T. Voorbach/J.H.C. Vonk/L.G.M. Prick (eds.) Research and developments on teacher education in the Netherlands, Amsterdam 1991, pp. 131-143). There were clear differences between men and women, the drop-out rate being 54 per cent for men and as much as 72 per cent for women. This could be compared to a study undertaken in the United States and finding a drop-out rate of 56 per cent (men and women) in the first seven years of teaching as well as to another study undertaken in Switzerland which resulted in finding that 70 per cent of beginning teachers dropped in the first ten years. As far as the Dutch study is concerned, the drop-out rate in the first year was as high as 26 per cent of the total group of 2575 teachers, in the first two years it added up to over half of the total drop-out. This is to be compared with data available from the United States where a drop-out rate of 13 to 17 per cent in the first year was found. It should be noted that drop-out rates could not be explained exclusively by a high degree of dissatisfaction of beginning teachers with induction programmes and job conditions but partly also by the fact that the most recently employed teachers often are the first to be dismissed in case of the reduction of personnel and by the fact that women would swap teaching with household responsibilities and childcare after marriage. Apart from that some teachers who have dropped out will return to school within five years. It could be expected that especially women who leave teaching in order to go into childrearing will in many cases return within a few years.

It is certainly possible to list a few elements of good practice in the retention of beginning teachers, although this could not be expected to completely prevent teachers in their first years from dropping out:

Table 1. Good practice in the retention of beginning teachers

- school sees itself as a learning organisation
- positive interpersonal relationships at school
- school climate which reflects a positive and supportive environment for beginning teachers
- beginning teacher seen as a learner who needs time for learning and support from colleagues
- counselling procedures
- perceived needs of beginning teacher are known and respected
- beginning teacher is given opportunities of learning in groups
- concrete help with problems in classrooms and other relevant activities of beginning teachers
- feedback given with the aim of contributing to improvement

② *Decreasing enthusiasm and motivation.* Headteachers and experienced teachers, when asked about the effects of beginning teachers on the general climate of a school, would frequently refer to their enthusiasm, freshness, new ideas, etc. However, while many beginning teachers may indeed bring such qualities to their first posts, the percentage of beginners who describe themselves as enthusiastic drops considerably over the first two years, as was shown in a study undertaken in Scotland with roughly 130 probationers participating in the study (J. Draper et al., *A Study of Probationers*, Edinburgh: Moray House Institute of Education, 1991). At the beginning of the probationary period more than 80 per cent of secondary teachers and about 85 per cent of primary teachers described themselves as feeling enthusiastic, at the end of this period figures had dropped to around 40 per cent for secondary school teachers and to slightly more than 60 per cent for primary school teachers. When asked to explain the reasons for changes in their level enthusiasm, those who reported a drop frequently cited excessive demands of the curriculum, administration, large class size and lack of support. On the other hand, some who reported increased enthusiasm explained this in terms of increased confidence, success in teaching, having more realistic expectations and simply more experience of the job. The same study reported a less dramatic drop in the figures for beginning teachers saying school has a high morale although the level they started from was rather low – slightly more than 30 per cent of secondary teachers and about 35 per cent of primary teachers recognized high morale at the beginning of the probationary period, about 10 per cent of secondary teachers and slightly less than 25 per cent of primary teachers doing so at the end of the period. These data hardly need any comment.

Again it seems possible to list a few elements of good practice in maintaining high enthusiasm of beginning teachers:

Table 2. Good practice in maintaining high enthusiasm of beginning teachers

- clear guidance and proposals for the professional development of beginning teachers
- beginning teachers know how a particular school works in terms of its policies and procedures
- beginning teachers clear about what they have to do to be seen to do well
- regular sessions for beginning teachers where current problems could be discussed
- avoid throwing the beginning teacher in at the deep end
- leave sufficient room for beginning teachers to try out their own ideas
- provide assistance and support in solving problems
- regular feedback about progress as part of professional development
- emphasize self-evaluation

③ *Dissonant evaluation of support and feedback mechanisms.* For a high proportion of beginning teachers the emphasis is on the first years/probation as a time of trial rather than one of professional development. In the research report from Scotland mentioned above support for probationers was described as patchy: the emphasis in initial TE on reflection and self-evaluation was not generally continued into probation. Many probationers felt isolated in their schools even though the school might be caring of individual needs. In less supportive contexts and where avenues of communication beyond the school are not clear such isolation may be particularly damaging.

Concerning in-school support for probationers, beginning teachers were partly quite negative in the study undertaken at Moray House Institute of Education in Scotland:

- 50% of primary probationers reported no special arrangements made for them in starting their first job. In the secondary sector 19% mention no special arrangements.

- Extra non-teaching time was appreciated by probationers but was only experienced by 35% of secondary and 17% of primary teachers.
- Approximately a third of primary and a quarter of secondary teachers received no formal observation at all. About a half of all respondents received fewer than three formal observation sessions in two years. There was no universal feeling in favour of formal observation among probationers, but there was a general desire for adequate feedback upon performance.
- In many areas of in-school support there was a discrepancy between probationer reports and headteacher accounts of what was being provided. There appeared to be different perceptions of what is provided.
- In the primary sector the non-promoted experienced teacher was the most significant support person in the school, in the secondary school the principal teacher.
- Dissatisfaction with support over control and discipline in the classroom was mentioned by a fifth of the probationers. Such probationers sought support from a clearly articulated school policy. Satisfaction with support on control and discipline in the classroom was reported by 55% of primary and 59% of secondary probationers. Probationers welcomed a definite and accessible policy with clear lines of responsibility.
- A fifth of all probationers avoided seeking help when they needed it. On the other hand, 17% of all probationers reported unwelcome advice, especially that given in an authoritarian manner.
- 25% of primary and 21% of secondary probationers mentioned colleagues whom they felt undermine their position. Criticism in front of pupils was most resented. However, the vast majority of probationers were generally satisfied with the quality of professional relationships with colleagues.
- At the end of the two year probationary period, 50% of all probationers were satisfied with the level of support received from the school, while a fifth was dissatisfied.
- Within the school network of support, probationer teachers welcomed feedback about their work.

It is an interesting fact that in the Scottish study mentioned above there was a marked discrepancy between what headteachers reported their probationer policy to be, and what probationers reported as actually happening. In view of the size and range of discrepancies, it may be that they were due to a) headteachers and probationers having different perceptions of what actually happened, with probationers not recognizing specific provisions as support or b) the non-implementation of policy due to various constraints. Headteachers and probationers were asked among others whether a written policy on probation existed in the school. Data showed 3% of primary probationers and 27% of primary headteachers claiming that a written policy was in place. For the secondary sector 17% of probationers knew of a written policy but 34% of secondary headteachers claimed the existence of such a document. 88% of primary headteachers and 96% of secondary headteachers that at their school a support person had been allocated the responsibility for beginning teachers, but only 28% of primary school probationers and only 42% of secondary school probationers knew of the arrangement. Whatever the explanation is for the discrepancy, there is little doubt that much more needs to be made explicit about support available. Such data should raise real questions of concern about the clarity of policies and their communication to all involved but they also raise even more serious questions of concern about the actual scope of support given.

Some suggestions could certainly be made concerning good practice in providing support and feedback for beginning teachers:

Table 3. Good practice in support and feedback for beginning teachers

- clear policies on support at school level
- schools which are friendly, with open, positive interpersonal relationships
- senior staff display „people management skills“
- designated support person
- regular briefing and discussion
- regular feedback
- awareness of in-service opportunities
- observation of experienced teachers
- observations sessions with peers, mentor or other colleagues
- opportunities for team teaching
- contact and co-operation with other probationers

④ *Disagreement about standards and criteria of assessment practices.* While assessment seems to be perceived as crucial on the side of headteachers and mentors (and above all employers in general), this is not so much the case with probationers. Their focus is rather on learning and development. That is a very fundamental and open contradiction in the induction of beginning teachers. Thus, learning of beginning teachers would be less important for many schools than the question if they have acquired the necessary skills of teaching or not. On top of that beginning teachers would often complain that reports on their achievements were completed without seriously gathering the kind of evidence on classroom practice which might leave probationers satisfied that their skills have really been assessed. The research project published by Moray House Institute of Education revealed four major concerns about the assessment of probationer teachers.

(a) Large numbers of probationers were dissatisfied with the procedures used in their assessment. Particular concerns identified were:

- sources of evidence;
- unsystematic procedures;
- lack of feedback,
- surprise at the content of final reports;
- a consequent lack of confidence that they were developing expertise.

(b) There were inconsistencies between headteachers' stated criteria for judging probationer success and the methods used to collect evidence. For example:

- although teaching ability was perceived to be the most important criterion, one third of primary probationers and one quarter of secondary probationers were not observed teaching during their probationary period;
- evidence of classroom practice was generally limited, with judgements based on other evidence.
- Reports submitted to the GTC were frequently bland, and did not give a picture of a new teacher's development needs or next steps for learning.

All of the above led to newly-registered teachers feeling that their skills as teachers had not been recognised and tested. In consequence they neither valued nor respected their membership of the profession as much as they might have done.

(c) Within the project headteachers also expressed concerns:

- nearly two thirds of the sample stated they were not confident that the standards they were applying in assessing were similar to the standards applied by colleagues;
- of these one third said they did not know how other headteachers assessed their probationers;
- a further third said they believed their standards were different.

Such facts must raise many doubts about the feasibility of any summative evaluation of probationers, although the problems reported do not really come as a surprise.

Some of the major elements which constitute an absolute minimum of good practice in the (summative) assessment of beginning teachers will include:

Table 4. Good practice in assessment and reporting on beginning teachers

The school (the headteacher, the mentors) should have:

- clear, transparent, concise procedures for assessment and reporting
- clear policies on assessment and self-evaluation
- self-evaluation arrangements and usable models of self-evaluation
- understand assessment as a means of identifying needs
- have solid practices in collecting evidence for assessment and reporting.

Beginning teachers should:

- know what criteria will be used in assessment
- know what evidence will be collected
- know who will collect it
- see the assessor as credible
- be given counselling in case of problems
- receive a copy of the report.

The report should be:

- detailed
- personal
- balanced on strengths, weaknesses, achievements and progress made
- based on solid evidence and on a variety of methods used for collecting information
- generally seen and conceived as a plan for future development and added support
- be perceived by the beginning teacher as a valid and reliable statement
- done in ways that it contains no surprises for the beginning teacher.

5. Evaluation and assessment of induction programmes for beginning teachers/trainers in VET and CVET institutions

In view of the problems and low standards of induction programmes to be expected in many places it seems inevitable to establish procedures for the evaluation of induction programmes. Such procedures would require either a temporary review committee to be nominated by the Ministry of Education and Science or a permanent institution which is entrusted with the task of enhancing the quality of induction.

In order to make the process of evaluation transparent to all persons and institutions involved, standards of good policy will have to be developed. The elements of good practice mentioned above good perhaps serve as a starting point for developing such standards.

Appendix

Standards for induction

(introduced for England and Wales as compulsory standards through the Teacher Training Agency in May 1999)

Introduction

The Government has introduced a statutory induction period for all newly qualified teachers (NQTs) who qualify from 7 May 1999. The induction period will combine an individualised programme of monitoring and support, which provides opportunities for NQTs to develop further their knowledge and skills, with an assessment of their performance. The detail of the monitoring, support and assessment arrangements for the new induction period will be issued on 12 May in the form of a DfEE circular, containing the Secretary of State's Guidance on The Induction Period For Newly Qualified Teachers.

In order for the NQT to be judged to have satisfactorily completed the induction period, they must:

- (a) continue to meet the Standards for the Award of QTS in an employment context and
- (b) meet all of the Induction Standards.

The Induction Standards have been formulated in such a way as to build on the Standards for the Award of QTS by:

requiring independent performance in selected areas where the Standards for the Award of QTS assumed support from an experienced member of staff;

and to supplement the Standards for the Award of QTS by:
focusing on aspects of professional practice which can be developed during employment as a qualified teacher, and over a longer period of practice than is available to most trainees in initial teacher training.

The Induction standards

In order to meet the Induction Standards, the NQT should demonstrate that he or she:

Planning, teaching and class management

(a) sets clear targets for improvement of pupils' achievement, monitors pupils' progress towards those targets and uses appropriate teaching strategies in the light of this, including, where appropriate, in relation to literacy, numeracy and other school targets;

(b) plans effectively to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to meet their potential, notwithstanding differences of race and gender, and taking account of the needs of pupils who are:

underachieving;

very able;

not yet fluent in English;

making use of relevant information and specialist help where available;

(c) secures a good standard of pupil behaviour in the classroom through establishing appropriate rules and high expectations of discipline which pupils respect, acting to pre-empt and deal with inappropriate behaviour in the context of the behaviour policy of the school;

(d) plans effectively, where applicable, to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and, in collaboration with the SENCO, makes an appropriate contribution to the preparation, implementation, monitoring and review of Individual Education Plans;

(e) takes account of ethnic and cultural diversity to enrich the curriculum and raise achievement;

Monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability

(f) recognises the level that a pupil is achieving and makes accurate assessments, independently, against attainment targets, where applicable, and performance levels associated

with other tests or qualifications relevant to the subject(s) or phase(s) taught;

(g) liaises effectively with pupils' parents/carers through informative oral and written reports on pupils' progress and achievements, discussing appropriate targets, and encouraging them to support their children's learning, behaviour and progress;

Other professional requirements

(h) where applicable, deploys support staff and other adults effectively in the classroom, involving them, where appropriate, in the planning and management of pupils' learning;

(i) takes responsibility for implementing school policies and practices, including those dealing with bullying and racial harassment;

(j) takes responsibility for their own professional development, setting objectives for improvements, and taking action to keep up-to-date with research and developments in pedagogy and in the subject(s) they teach.