

The TEACH Model: How to Retain New Teachers Beyond The First Year In The Classroom

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ABSTRACT

There is much discussion about retaining qualified new teachers in general. The specific question becomes why do some new teachers succeed and others do not and leave the profession after the first year? How can some be so unprepared for the realities of the classroom while others are not? What kind of interventions could have assisted first year teachers to be better prepared for the reality of the classroom. The purpose of this study was to discover why one new teacher wrestled with a decision to stay in the teaching profession or leave while another felt fulfilled and competent at the end of her first school year. Though both teachers were hired to do the same job, had the same training, one was successful and one was not. The authors wanted to explore why teachers equally prepared showed such a difference in outcome. The authors sought to discover whether success in the classroom beyond the first year was innate to the teacher's ability to problem solve and adapt and the role self-efficacy played in the outcome.

Keywords: TEACH Model; New Teachers; Teaching Profession

INTRODUCTION

Often we hear new teachers say,

"I really try to be the best teacher I can be, but often I feel totally overwhelmed." "It's not the kids," they say, "it is dealing with the added expectations that my education and training did not properly prepare me for. I love the kids, but I think I am not cut out for this profession." (L. Becket, personal communication, November 2012)

New teachers approach the job market with feelings of excitement and anticipation. They look forward to having their "own classroom," and new career, yet many leave the profession after the first year. Why is it that? What would they need to succeed? And what is the difference between those that do succeed and those that do not? These seem to be the revolving questions that for many years educators, counselors and school districts have struggled to answer as they seek to hire and retain qualified teachers. Even though the new teachers have met state and federal guidelines, some appear to not have the skill set needed to effectively teach in the classroom, deal with administrators and parents. The question becomes, why do some succeed and others do not. Is the problem in teacher preparation at the university or of lacking support when actually teaching? Do some more experienced teachers purposely resist helping the new teacher because they are afraid that the new person will take over their job? In other words, what role does "turfism" play?

METHODOLOGY

A case study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of non-tenured teachers to identify themes of commonality and differences to discover what made one group successful and the other leave the profession. Participants were hired the same year, possessed the same teaching certifications and worked in the same school system dealing with the same situations on a daily basis. The research question was: Why do some new teachers succeed and other do not and leave the profession?

Lora is a new teacher and is granted an interview to become a first year science teacher at a school located in the Western part of Maryland. Lora had done all of the prerequisites needed to respond to questions during the interview relating to the curriculum matter, demographics of the school and data that supports the school's standings in the county and state. Her enthusiasm and thirst to have the eight grade science teaching position was evident. She was a perfect fit for the science department and grade level. Her first month was a challenge, and it was evident that she was overwhelmed with trying to connect all the dots with lesson preparation, becoming familiar with her students and connecting with her fellow 8th grade team of teachers. Even though Lora readily fitted in with the assigned mentor teacher and quickly adapted to her grade level team meetings, she left the profession after her first year. First year teachers are administered four observations and two evaluations until they make tenure. However, when it was time for an administrator to observe, Lora began to not show up for work. Her reasons would stem from illness, to family issues. It was noted that her absents from work occurred when she had a difficult day or the thought of having to be observed by school administration. Eventually, Lora came into speak with the principal of the school and shared that she was leaving work by end of first semester. Her reason was very vague, but obviously gave her comfort in knowing that she responded to the question her reason for leaving mid-year. The concern of the school administration was what really was the issue; however, through conversations with staff it was determined that Lora did not feel supported.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Preparedness can be viewed as a two way paradigm shift. The answer to new teacher preparedness may involve a whole new way of looking at teacher preparation and mentoring once they are hired. The TEACH model developed by Copeland and Beier, serves to add to fruitful discussion and helps address retention issues in public education.

T Tailor course work to potential field experience

E Employment opportunities should be researched before grabbing the job.

A Action plan for success (develop)

C Counsel new teachers on cultural responsiveness

H Help new teachers develop the strategies for classroom success and personal career satisfactions

T *Teachers* should become familiar with the industry that they have chosen to work in; therefore, the learner should plan coursework that is tailored specifically to the area of the student's interest to enable them to qualify with industry-acceptable certificates and credentials. They should consider job shadowing, work placements, and community-based learning programs opportunities to allow them to directly experience workplace situations.

E It is important to thoroughly research *Employment Opportunities* in the industry and understand the culture. Understand its needs, the demographics and the level of commitment prior to accepting the position. One of the big lessons a new teacher must learn is taking charge of the class. Being a transplant to a new setting, establishing respect is one of the key elements to building success.

A Develop a career *Action Plan* for developing the skills and experiences to reach your career strategy. Consider the following four strategies to help you develop an effective action plan.

1. State your goal in very specific terms that can you can achieve...
2. Plan backwards from your goal for the best results...
3. Confront your fears and expectations immediately and progressively...
4. Put your plan on paper and into action as soon as possible...

C Counsel new teachers on cultural responsiveness. In almost every profession having the appropriate tools and resources makes the difference in performance Cultural *competency* provides teachers with an awareness of white dominance and privilege in American society (Miller, 2010). However, cultural responsiveness brings about awareness. In basic terms teachers need to be able to get to know their students. As a new teacher you must understand the needs of the demographics of the community that you serve. This will help prepare you to be that effective teacher in the classroom.

H Help new teachers develop the strategies for classroom success and personal career satisfactions.

In summary it is important to note that the partnership should be two ways. Both teacher and employers must invest an interest in providing opportunities to grow. A positive action of the principal is to empower new teachers by providing ongoing opportunities for professional growth and availability of counseling (can be “peer counseling”) for new teachers. A positive action of the teacher is to be prepared to accept the challenges that wait and be willing to seek help when needed.

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