

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

4-10-2003

The professional roundtable: developing novice teachers

Tanya Clark
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Clark, Tanya, "The professional roundtable: developing novice teachers" (2003). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1272.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/1272>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact graduateresearch@rowan.edu.

**THE PROFESSIONAL ROUNDTABLE:
DEVELOPING NOVICE TEACHERS**

by
Tanya Clark

A Thesis

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
2003**

Approved by _____

Professor

Date Approved _____

April 10, 03

ABSTRACT

Tanya Clark

The Professional Roundtable
2003
Dr. Ted Johnson
Education Administration

The effects of a program developed for novice teachers are examined in this document. Data was derived from information obtained during interviews conducted by the intern, as well as entry and exit surveys. The study begins by addressing the nation's impending teacher shortage which can be linked to the retention of novice teachers. This section expounds upon the need to properly develop novice teachers in order to retain their services.

The next section is a review of the literature which explains the status of the educational system as it relates to novice teachers. Following this review, a design of the study is presented. The setting of the study was R.D. Wood School in Millville, New Jersey. Participants of the study consisted of classroom teachers with five or less years of service.

The program developed for this study was entitled, *The Professional Roundtable*. The program's development was constructed based on information gathered from interviews and surveys. The findings of this study indicate that the development of *The Professional Roundtable* was effective for developing novice teachers.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Tanya Clark

The Professional Roundtable
2003
Dr. Ted Johnson
Education Administration

The effects of a program created for novice teachers are examined in this document. The study included the development of a program entitled, The Professional Roundtable. The findings concluded that this type of program was effective for improving the knowledge-base, professionalism, self-confidence, and teaching skills of novice teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Jesus Christ for leading me down this road, and being patient and loving towards me. I would also like to thank my mother and father for their support, love and the creation referred to as Tanya Clark.

Special thanks to Mary Satterfield for her true friendship and sisterly love. Thanks to a wonderful field mentor, William Sheridan who allowed me to experience every aspect of the Principalship.

I am grateful for a great staff at R.D. Wood School, especially the Ladies of the Roundtable-Sue Irwin, Heather, Tracy, Shannon, Michelle, and Carrie.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Chapter 1	
Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Definitions.....	4
Limitations of the Study.....	5
Setting of the Study.....	5
Organization of the Study.....	6
Chapter 2	
Review of the Literature.....	7
Teacher as Learner.....	8
Collaboration versus Isolation.....	10
Teacher Efficacy and Student Achievement.....	13
Principal Involvement.....	14
Conclusion.....	15
Chapter 3	
The Design of the Study.....	16
General Description of the Research Design.....	16
Development and Design of the Research Instrumentation.....	17
Description of the Sampling and Sampling Technique.....	17
Description of the Data Collection Approach.....	17
Description of the Data Analysis Plan.....	19
Chapter 4	
Analysis of the Data.....	20
Interview Responses.....	21
Entry and Exit Surveys.....	24
Summary of the Findings.....	25
Chapter 5	
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	27
Summary.....	28
References	29
Appendix A	
Interview Questions	31
Appendix B	
Invitation	34
Appendix C	
Entry/Exit Survey	36
Biographical Data	39

LIST OF DIAGRAMS AND TABLES

DIAGRAM I

Reasons for Becoming a Teacher..... 21

TABLE I

Group Strengths and Needed Development Areas..... 22

TABLE II

Responses to Problems With a Student..... 23

TABLE III

Responses to Problems Delivering a Lesson/Classroom Management..... 23

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that in the next ten years more than two million teachers will be needed. That comes to approximately 200,000 new teachers annually over the next ten years.(Lucksinger, 2000). This crisis is especially a concern for poor urban districts who unlike their wealthy suburban counterparts face severe problems with recruitment as well as retention. These districts may need approximately 700,000 new teachers over the next ten years.

Several factors including retirement and relocation contribute to this national teacher shortage. For example, “one-fourth of all teachers are 50 years or older and are expected to retire within ten years”(Lucksinger, 2000). However, the most pervasive factor is that of a high rate of novice teacher attrition. A national report estimates a range between 30 and 50 percent of all teachers leave the teaching profession within three to five years of teaching. Furthermore, three out of every four graduates of teaching programs leave the profession before their fourth year of teaching. (Ballinger, 2000). Teachers who are most likely to leave are those who are the most talented. When comparing education to other fields such as medicine and law, education is characterized as “the profession that eats its young”(Halford, 1998).

Former teachers cite many explanations for their departure from teaching. Low salaries, lack of training, poor teaching conditions, shortage of teaching materials, and lack of administrative support are a few reasons for the dissatisfaction among novice educators. New teachers are also most often given challenging teaching assignments that they are unprepared to handle. Moreover, the teaching

position by nature lends itself to physical and social isolation. “It seems that almost without exception, teachers work in settings where the actual structure of the school building precludes much interaction among adults”(Rogers & Babinski, 1999). New teachers often suffer alone with feelings of frustration and incompetence.

Many states are mandating mentor programs to address the lack of support and feelings of inadequacy felt by many new teachers. These programs usually last from one to two years. During this time a new teacher is paired with a veteran teacher. These programs are often faulty due to lack of training for mentors, incompatibility and unfamiliarity between mentors and mentees, and lack of time for mentors and mentees to meet.

“Unfortunately, the mismatch between the needs of these new teachers and the support they received reflects the experiences of countless new teachers across the United States. The questions and uncertainty that new teachers bring to school require far more than orientation meetings, a mentor in the building, directions to the supply closet, and a written copy of the school’s discipline policy. What new teachers want in their induction is experienced colleagues who will take their daily dilemmas seriously, watch them teach and provide feedback, help them develop instructional strategies, model skilled teaching, and share insights about students’ work and lives. What new teachers need is sustained, school-based professional development-guided by expert colleagues, responsive to their teaching, and continual throughout their early years in the classroom. Principals and teacher leaders have the largest roles to play in fostering such experiences(Johnson & Kardos, 2002).

This study focused on the writer’s interest as an administrative intern in increasing the confidence, knowledge base and support felt by novice teachers. To do so, the intern initiated and developed a Professional Roundtable. The Professional Roundtable consisted of classroom teachers with up to five years of teaching experience. Novice classroom teachers in an elementary school met monthly with the administrative intern. The format was developed to offer support, open discussion,

research, and conversation among novice teachers. Input during the course of the study was used to improve upon the effectiveness of the format of the Professional Roundtable. Participants in the study were assessed throughout to determine the usefulness of the content of the Professional Roundtable and the impact of the construct of its format.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Organizing a Professional Roundtable for novice classroom teachers provided them with an opportunity to regularly meet in a collaborative, informative, and non-threatening setting. “The culture of teaching imposes unspoken rules; it is acceptable to talk about the weather, sports, and even sex or to complain in general about school and the students. Yet, it is unacceptable for teachers to talk to each other about teaching and what goes on in classrooms”(Rogers & Babinski, 1999). New teachers feel isolated and afraid to reveal their inadequacies and frustrations and ask for assistance for fear they will be deemed incompetent.

The Professional Roundtable also provided teachers with essential information and research which broadened their knowledge base initiated by college course work and student teaching. Related issues in education as well as district and school practices and procedures were included in this information. The information presented at the Professional Roundtable was centered around those topics that were considered crucial to addressing the need of the school system to providing optimal learning experiences for students and developing teachers into effective professionals. “Existing teacher preparation and professional development efforts and policies fall short of addressing these needs. New teachers are introduced into the educational

system after five years of college and less than 500 hours of actual classroom experience. Within this limited experience they are expected to accept full responsibilities of an experienced professional educator”(Cunningham, 2002).

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of a Professional Roundtable for classroom teachers with up to five years of teaching experience in an elementary school. The Professional Roundtable consisted of two major components which addressed novice teacher support and professional development.

DEFINITIONS

The reader should apply the following meanings to the words listed below for the purpose of this study:

novice teachers: teachers with up to five years of teaching experience

induction: initial teaching experiences

teacher efficacy: a teacher’s belief that he or she possesses skills that will perpetuate positive change in student learning

school culture: the social and normative glue that hold the educational aspects of the school together; the school’s personality

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The Professional Roundtable was designed for classroom teachers with up to five years of teaching experience. At the time of the study there were six teachers on-site who participated. This number was substantial for data collection purposes. The findings of this study may not extend to groups of less or more than six teachers. This study was conducted over the course of approximately seven months. However, the conclusions and findings of this project cannot be generalized to include deviations in

this time period. Moreover, the Professional Roundtable met at least once a month. The findings of this study may not extend to changes in meeting frequency.

The educational background and teaching experience of participants in this study correlate with the final outcomes. For example, if all participants were in their fifth service year, it is expected that their need for support and collaboration is not as significant as a beginning teacher.

Finally, the conclusions of this study were limited to individual schools with similar cultures as the one in the study. Findings may not be generalized to include schools with different settings.

SETTING OF THE STUDY

The setting of this study was the city of Millville located in Cumberland County New Jersey. The population of this city is approximately 25,992. Millville is a multi-faceted city as it is characterized as being both a suburban and an urban community. R.D. Wood Elementary School was the site for this study located in the urban region of the city. This part of the city houses families who are of low socio-economic status. Moreover, more than 70 percent are minority families, unlike the remaining part of the city.

The total student population in Millville is 5,957. There are six elementary schools in the city averaging 397 students. The population of R.D. Wood School was 305 students in grades Kindergarten through fifth at the time of the study. Students who attended the school were from the neighborhood. The Free Lunch count started around 75 percent and grew to 85 percent. During the school year, the mobility rate was the highest in South Jersey, between 40 and 50 percent. The minority population

at the time of this study was over 75 percent with African-American and Hispanic children. The school had the highest economically at-risk population in the district. However, the school regularly led the district in attendance with 96 percent.

The average class size of the school is 19 students per classroom. The school traditionally is challenged in meeting state assessment objectives. The 2002 Elementary School Proficiency Assessment reported 75 percent of fourth grade students as proficient in Language Arts and 55 percent in Mathematics. This was a major improvement for the school which represents a 160 percent increase from the previous year.

Finally, at the time of this study there were 16 classroom teachers assigned to R.D. Wood School. Six of those teachers were considered novice teachers. This represents 44 percent of classroom teachers with five or less years of teaching experience. The participants of the study each possess a Bachelor's Degree and an Elementary School teaching certification.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The remainder of this study will be organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 Review of the Literature
- Chapter 3 Design of the Study
- Chapter 4 Presentation of the Research Findings
- Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Although a significant number of teachers leave the teaching field as they reach retirement age, the greatest factor resulting in the current teaching shortage is teacher retention. Strategies to hire new teachers are important, but more attention must be given to keeping teachers. Ballinger(2000) states the following: “The real problem is retention. If we could deal with the problem of retention we wouldn’t have these shortages. The whole concept of shortages implies there is a lack of warm bodies. That’s a misnomer. It’s not too few candidates out there. It’s too few candidates staying”.

“If factors that constitute job satisfaction can be identified, then steps can be taken to provide supports for new and veteran teachers to ensure the personal gratification that may reduce attrition rates”(Woods & Weasmer, 2002). One important factor is that of a supportive work environment. In a study conducted by Lucksinger(2000), she found that environment is much more significant in retaining new teachers than salary or pay incentives. She concluded that the reasons a school can recruit new teachers, are also the reasons they are able to keep them if the conditions do not change. If they do, teachers are most likely to leave.

Past practices of mismanaging novice teachers must be halted. “A wise school principal will foresee and safeguard against threats to a beginning teacher’s success”(Weasmer & Woods, 2000). Research suggest that first-year teaching demands be reduced. (i.e. assigning the toughest students to the newest teachers).

New teachers should not be overtly or covertly pressured into extracurricular activities such as coaching, club advisors and activity sponsors(Weasmer & Woods, 2000). Furthermore, principals should be aware of signs of disillusionment and dissatisfaction. For example, researchers have found that “satisfaction begins to diminish sometime during the third year. After three years of teaching, positive feelings are mixed with feelings of anger, isolation, disrespect, and impotence.

Novice teachers should be empowered and protected as they are a valuable resource in the schools. During their induction period professional development should foster the attitude of “*teacher as learner*” in that they are given opportunities to obtain information that will hone in on their skills and allow them to master their craft. Next, the induction period should also break down the “invisible walls” created by the culture of teaching which promote *isolation instead of collaboration*(Rogers & Babinski, 1999). Finally, the early years of teaching are also a time of developing teachers toward feelings of self-esteem, personal fulfillment and accomplishment, professional pride, wonder at their responsibility, and personal *efficacy*(Connolly, 2000). The *role of the principal* in this process is crucial. Principals are the major catalyst in turning this crisis in education toward stability in schools as a result of teacher retention.

TEACHER AS LEARNER

Within any attempt to reform schools should be an effort to design and structure schools to be good places for veteran and novice teachers alike. Creating a positive induction period is crucial for new teachers and is also an essential component of school reform. “At the core of such support efforts is the recognition

that all teachers, particularly new teachers, are learners. In addition to learning how to effectively work with a variety of students, new teachers are in the throes of developing a professional identity and navigating a new school culture”(Rogers & Babinski).

Consequently, new teachers often feel they must possess the same knowledge as an experienced teacher. An indication of this attitude is the type of induction process which prevails in most schools. New teachers are often warmly welcomed in their schools, introduced to their colleagues, and provided information about the classes that they will teach. “Very few, however, are engaged in discussions about the pressing school-specific questions of curriculum, instruction, and classroom management that most concern new teachers. What is expected of them at this school? What teaching strategies work? Which don’t? How should they organize their classrooms or their grade books? How will they know if their students are learning what they’re trying to teach?”(Johnson & Kardos, 2002).

These and other questions alike left unanswered can have long-lasting effects which are often counterproductive and ineffective. Furthermore, new teachers learn to mimic that which is considered “acceptable” and “good” teaching practice in their school culture. They learn to make superficial changes throughout their career without applying theoretical principles. “It is possible to walk into a classroom that appears to be based on the latest theory and practice—desks grouped in clusters, small groups of students working together, learning centers and computers in place—only to discover that the change is cosmetic. The rationale for and understanding of the physical and learning configurations are missing”(Routman, 2002).

Teachers must continually assume a role as a learner in the initial phase of their career as well as throughout. School cultures that perpetuate this role may reduce the anxiety and feelings of inadequacies felt by new teachers. Novice teachers will feel more comfortable asking questions and seeking assistance. They will be less reluctant to actively participate in teacher collaboration activities which will broaden their knowledge base and strengthen collegial relationships.

COLLABORATION VERSUS ISOLATION

The historical background of education in America has designed a system of isolation for teachers. Traditionally, teachers are placed alone in a classroom full of students for approximately six hours each day. There is little opportunity to converse with other teachers for a significant amount of time. “The legacy of this system has for years viewed it as a sign of weakness for a teacher to step outside of that classroom for assistance. This system has forced a long line of teachers to face, totally alone, a swarm of perplexing classroom episodes and incidents”(Cady et al, 1998). Teacher isolation has a profound impact upon novice teachers’ professional development in that it puts continued growth and learning at risk. Those who remain isolated in their classrooms and their communications tend to lose a broader perspective of their work(Mycue, 2001).

The changing American culture is creating a different type of school. Elevating teaching to a true profession, and making teachers accountable through state and national standards and assessments has heightened expectations for teachers emphasizing teacher collaboration. Contrary to the traditional school, strong schools are now those in which teachers see themselves as part of a community of peers.

They readily turn to each other when they are in need of assistance or support without concern of criticism or ridicule. Asking a peer for help is considered a sign of strength, not weakness(Colb, 2001). Furthermore, in strong schools, collaboration occurs naturally and is seen as essential in building upon the school program. According to Colb(2001), “true colleagues openly share their best practices. When a staff member leaves a school that is strongly collegial, those who remain experience a powerful sense of loss, a sense that the professional community has been diminished”.

Collaboration efforts can have a positive impact on the school community especially for novice teachers. Recent studies indicate changes in teaching behavior through collaborative groups which also resulted in positive changes in student achievement. For example, a study in rural New England compared the outcomes of pre-post classroom teacher observations with teacher study groups as they contribute to teacher patterns of change. This study found that “teachers were able to integrate new classroom procedures for instruction and management into their daily teaching lives more effectively than they can with support from a principal or supervisor perhaps because they meet with supportive colleagues and focus on improvement of their own teaching”(Devlin et al., 1997).

One school of education set up teacher support groups based on the New Teachers Groups from Caplan and Caplan’s problem solving model for group consultation. “This model reduces isolation and provides teachers with collegial support from others who are experiencing similar difficulties. This noncoercive relationship with peers is especially important in a group setting with beginning

teachers who are in a vulnerable position and sensitive to evaluative comments by supervisors and colleagues. By establishing a nonhierarchical power relationship with peers, new teachers experience an open and honest exploration of issues”(Rogers & Babinski, 1999). The benefit of these support groups as collected from end-of-the year interviews with the new teachers indicated that two-thirds of the teachers attended the meetings regularly for personal and professional support they felt they could not obtain anywhere else. The New Teacher Groups allowed them to talk about and reflect upon their teaching experiences with other first-year teachers. “They were able to broaden their understanding of the teaching profession and learn new ideas to incorporate into their teaching repertoire, and they gained new perspectives on teaching and insights about themselves as teachers through the feedback they received during the problem-solving process”(Rogers & Babinski, 1999). New teachers placed emphasis on the importance of the communication between the participants. They felt that it was important to listen to others and have others listen attentively and carefully to them.

The value of teacher collaboration appears to supercede that of teacher inservice, attending workshops and research. Connolly(2000) emphatically states the following:

“My recommendation is that educators listen to those who are the professionals, and take action in dealing with teachers based on informed decisions. Don’t conduct any more research! It is most important to remember that teachers are professionals who can solve their own problems effectively, efficiently, and independently, when teacher dialog occurs. Their solutions are not stale or pre-packaged; they don’t come in kits. Teachers know best how to modify and tailor problem-solving to meet their needs and the needs of the students, thus eventually meeting the needs of the administration, not the other way around.”

Teacher collaboration is marked by less stress, isolation, more opportunities for self-evaluation and reflections, professional growth, a willingness to take risks without apprehension, and a more positive attitude toward the educational system and the school environment(Mycue, 2001).

TEACHER EFFICACY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Teacher efficacy is defined as a teacher's belief in their effectiveness in increasing student performance. It is a belief "that he or she has the skills necessary to effect positive changes in student learning. These skills include both maintaining a classroom climate conducive to learning and choosing the most appropriate strategies to teach the various subjects(Chase et al., 2001). Chase, Germundsen, and Brownstein(2001) explain the importance of teacher efficacy as follows:

"Teachers with a high sense of efficacy communicate high expectations for performance to students, put greater emphasis on instruction and learning with students, are aware of student accomplishments, are less likely to give up on low-achieving students, and are more likely to work harder on their behalf. Additionally, teachers with high efficacy are more open to implementing and experimenting with new teaching strategies because they do not view change as an affront to their own abilities as teachers. In contrast, teachers with low efficacy tend to doubt that any amount of effort by teachers, or schools in general, will affect achievement of low-performing students. In sum, high teacher efficacy creates direct and predictable links to increased student achievement, especially for low-performing students".

Teacher efficacy occurs when school environments commit to sincere professional development initiatives beginning with novice teachers. These teachers are more likely to stay in supportive environments that empower them to achieve high goals instead of dissuading them which results in their departure from the profession. High teacher turnover rates disrupt the educational process. New teachers must again

be assimilated into the school environment and familiarized with content and teaching process. As this occurs students suffer the consequences. Furthermore, teachers remaining in the field who do not receive adequate support and do not learn effective and appropriate methods for delivering instruction and prescribing techniques for optimal learning can provide students with little that will impact their success(Lucksinger, 2000).

PRINCIPAL INVOLVEMENT

The principal is the most important factor in assuring the success of the novice teachers. For it is the principal who is at the forefront of establishing school culture and the school program. “As the developer and nurturer of the school’s culture the principal plays an important role in communicating and sharing this culture with beginning teachers. Beginning teachers need to know the school’s history, traditions, legends, and myths. They need to hear the stories of the school’s heroes and heroines. This process helps the novice gain a sense of membership and participation in the culture”(Colley, 2002).

Principals who encourage and facilitate support for novice teachers are more likely to retain their services. This support must be purposeful in that it is a planned effort to develop new teachers into effective professionals utilizing experienced teachers as well as themselves in the process. The principal may delegate the responsibility of induction and support to capable veteran teachers. However, “ most beginning teachers report that they want the principal to provide the critical support and assistance necessary to move through the induction period. Knowing the principal’s expectations for instructional practices, grading, and student achievement

seem to be more important to novice teachers than any advice given by a mentor teacher. It is when the principal's support and affirmation is absent that beginners feel abandoned and that they lack the resources to succeed"(Colley, 2002).

CONCLUSION

Addressing the issues of teacher shortage and teacher retention requires systematic changes in the school program that will directly affect novice teachers. Dismantling invisible walls which create isolation for teachers and apprehension toward sharing and professional discourse will initiate collaborative activities among teachers. These activities will increase teacher efficacy which will result in higher student achievement and job satisfaction. Principals must acknowledge their role in creating a school culture where teachers are also treated as and view themselves as perpetual learners. Principals must view any teacher collaboration activities as essential in creating a positive school environment and enabling school reform objectives.

CHAPTER 3

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This study was designed to gather data as to the effect of providing professional development and collaboration by way of a support group facilitated by the school principal. The school site for this study is traditional in that it did not offer such a program in the past. Novice teachers attended an initial orientation, and professional development was geared toward all teachers instead of being tailored for their particular needs. With the number of novice teachers in R.D. Wood School reaching almost 50 percent, the administrative intern conducting this study was interested in developing a program that would allow novice teachers to inquire about their concerns in an open, non-threatening environment, and also presenting current issues and information to enhance their teaching experience. The name of this program, the Professional Roundtable, was titled in such a way to remind participants that its objective is to acknowledge their current standing as knowledgeable professionals and develop them in their craft. The term "Roundtable" suggest that there is no leader of the group, instead all participants must contribute to the improvement of their peers.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was conducted over the course of seven months. Prior to the first meeting novice teachers were interviewed by the administrative intern. The interview questions were the same for each participant (Appendix A). All participants were then invited to attend the first session(Appendix B). At this time, all participants

were surveyed(Appendix C). The objective of the Professional Roundtable was explained along with what their roles would be in the process.

The intern planned and facilitated each Professional Roundtable session based on the response of the participants on the survey and interview instruments, as well as any other concerns and interest verbalized throughout the course of the meetings.

At the conclusion of the seven month period, participants were given a post-survey and interview to ascertain the impact of the Professional Roundtable.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION

The instruments used for data collection purposes were designed by the administrative intern. The interview questions were developed from information obtained from literature and insight from the experiences of the administrative intern. The interview questions were open-ended. Several questions were constructed in a manner as not to directly state its objective.

The survey form, developed by the intern was used to assess the novice teachers' knowledge base on the essential elements of teaching practice. These included school law, classroom management, and instruction. Teachers responded by indicating True or False for each statement.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

This study included six participants who fit the criteria for the program. From this number, a random sample of 80 percent were chosen for data gathering purposes. A designee of the intern drew names from a receptacle to choose those whose information would be used for data collection purposes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

The study was initiated by conducting individual interviews with the subjects of the study; novice teachers. This one-on-one style interview was chosen by the intern to allow teachers to freely verbally express feelings regarding their teacher efficacy, and build trust with the administrative intern. The intent of the questions was to collect information as to the educational background, professional development and training, and work related experiences of the participants. Subjects were asked to respond to feelings and attitudes regarding administrative and peer support, and areas of strength and weakness in performance of their duties. The intern then documented the participants' response, writing major points.

Next, participants were gathered together to complete a survey, in which they were asked to identify statements of truth in areas of practice including instruction, classroom management, and legal issues. These were scored by the administrative intern.

Participants throughout the study were observed in their knowledge of teaching, and their attitude regarding their position and the decision to teach. This was done throughout the course of open discussion during Professional Roundtable meetings. The administrative intern documented major points of discussion and the participants' response, verbal and nonverbal.

At the conclusion of the seven month period, each participant was interviewed. There was no deviation from the initial interview. The administrative intern used the same questions to document changes in the participants' response.

Also, the survey was used to differentiate between initial responses collected at the onset of the study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

The data collected from the entry/exit interviews was compared to note changes in the participants' response. Any changes were correlated to the content of the Professional Roundtable. Scores compared from the pre/post surveys were also analyze and correlated to the content of the Professional Roundtable.

The response of the participants, documented by the facilitator, were used for action research purposes. The data gathered monthly from their contributions was used to improve upon the construct of the group wherever possible.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect a Professional Roundtable would have on novice teachers in an elementary school. To begin the program, each participant was given an interview (Appendix A) to obtain information regarding background, classroom practices, and professional perceptions. Following this, all participants were given an entry survey (Appendix C) which assessed their knowledge of instructional practices, classroom management, and legal issues.

Information gathered from both instruments was used to develop a Professional Roundtable which would address areas of deficiency, current issues in education, and other areas of concern using a reflective, collaborative, supportive research-based framework.

At the conclusion of the program participants completed an exit survey (Appendix C) which was used to assess their knowledge base as a result of the program. This chapter will report all information gathered from the compilation of the interviews and the analysis of the surveys.

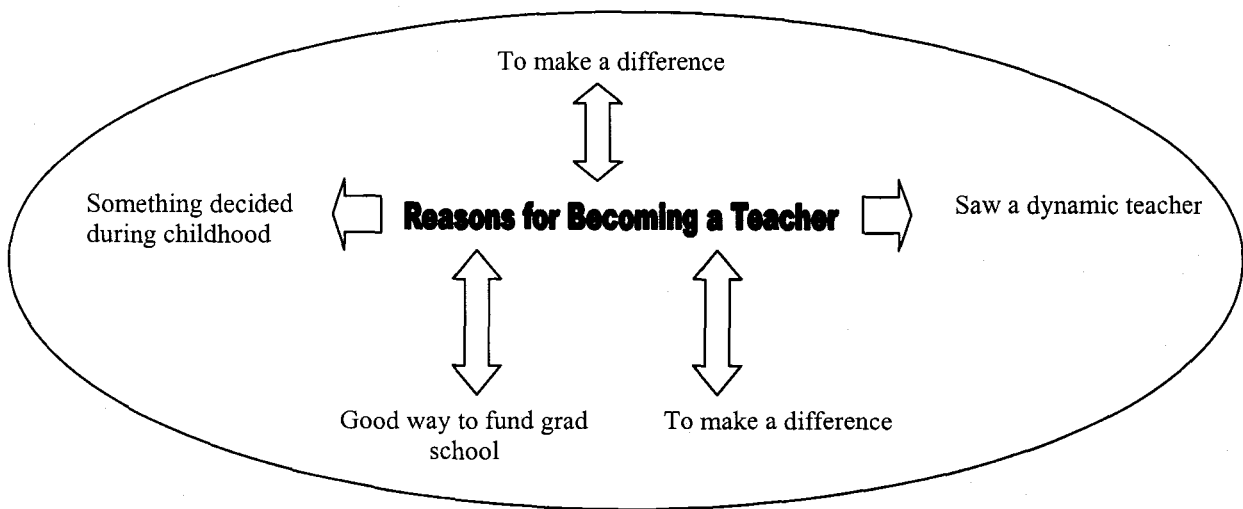
Each participant of the program was given an oral interview which was documented by the intern. There were six teachers involved in the program selected in accordance with the aforementioned criteria. A random sampling of the entire group was done for data collection purposes. The sample set was comprised of four teachers.

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

The participants in the program had an average of 2.5 years of teaching as reported in the interview. Their undergraduate major was elementary education. They all reported having previous employment, training, and experiences which they felt related to teaching. These included working in daycare facilities, substitute teaching, and being a teacher's aide. They also stated that their belief that all prior positions related in some way to teaching regardless of field.

According to **DIAGRAM I**, there were a variety of reasons why the participants chose to enter the teaching profession.

DIAGRAM I
Reasons for Becoming Teacher



Participants were also asked to list classes attended in college which best prepared them for teaching. Each of them stated that less than one percent of college coursework as having benefited them in their current position.

The participants in this study were asked to list their strengths and any areas they felt needed more development. **TABLE I** outlines the strengths of the group as well as the areas needing development.

TABLE I
Group Strengths and Needed Development Areas

Strengths	Needed Development
classroom management students with ADHD anger management learning centers meeting individual needs organizational skills adapting material	classroom management students with ADHD anger management learning centers reaching diverse students organizational skills lesson integration
helping parents dealing with at-risk students empathy flexibility consistency dealing with behavioral difficulties	Reading comprehension staff sharing

The correlation between strengths and areas needing development strongly implicates the ideas that a possible source for staff development exists within the group. Collaboration among teachers can be most valuable, as *they* are their greatest resource.

The participants in this study were also asked to explain their approach to resolving significant problems in their classrooms. As illustrated in **TABLE II** and **TABLE III** the participants have noted several methods for resolving problems.

TABLE II
Responses to Problems with a Student

Go to another teacher	66% of respondents
Go to administration	1% of respondents
Go to other in-house resource	1% of respondents
Resolve the problem on their own	100% of respondents

TABLE III
Responses to Problems Delivering a Lesson/Classroom Management

Go to another teacher	83% of respondents
Go to administration	0% of respondents
Go to other in-house resource	0% of respondents
Resolve the problem on their own	100% of respondents

However, in both situations, all participants opted to utilize their own strategies to address problems in their classrooms. This being the case, school districts as well as college programs must equip novice teachers to make sound decisions, utilizing effective strategies, as their natural inclination is toward self-reliance. Furthermore, principals should perpetuate collaboration and teamwork in their schools especially among novice teachers as isolation and self-reliance may do great harm.

Participants were asked to describe their classroom management system as this impacts greatly on instruction. Most could clearly and specifically explain their strategies and varied techniques. Moreover, inclusive in 66 percents of their models was writing disruptive students' names on the board, an approach described as Assertive Discipline. They, however, were unable to explain the theoretical basis of this method, simply having seen other teachers use it was the explanation.

This indicates a clear pattern of practices which are exclusive of proper implementation and a philosophical basis, rather are traditional, habitual and usually ineffective. Novice teachers are easily influenced and prone toward incorporating these types of practices into their classrooms. Principals must develop all staff, expecting practices that are practical, yet research-based, explainable and effective, thereby, equipping novice teachers with appropriate, highly functional skills.

Participants were also asked to describe the school climate as it related to staff and administration. The responses in this area varied. Having been in the school on average of 2.5 years may impact their perspective and judgments of individuals. It was quite clear, however, that each teacher in their own paradigm can perceive the school climate quite differently.

Finally, participants were asked if they had “arrived” or become the most proficient teacher possible. As anticipated, all respondents answered in the negative. Most defined, using their own criteria, indications of their upcoming “arrival”. The notion that teachers can “arrive” is unfounded. Moreover, this idea leads to frustration in many teachers, both novice and experienced. Eliminating this notion in the novice teacher is crucial. Teachers improve with experience and proper development and training, but never do they “arrive.

ENTRY AND EXIT SURVEYS

Participants of the study completed an Entry and Exit Survey which were both the same form (Appendix C). The time frame in between was approximately seven months. Also, within this time period were scheduled meetings of the Professional Roundtable. These meetings addressed many of the issues and topics that were

considered deficient as determined by the interview and the entry survey. **TABLE IV** indicates the areas assessed on both the entry and exit survey and the percentage of correct responses in each area by group.

TABLE IV
Entry and Exit Survey Results

EDUCATIONAL AREA	ENTRY	EXIT
Instruction	60%	90%
Legal Issues	60%	80%
Classroom Management	40%	80%

Clearly, the changes in the knowledge base of the teachers was quite significant. The increase in scores can be attributed to the Professional Roundtable. The structure encouraged inquiry, research, collaboration and practice in each area listed above. Participants increased levels of proficiency was evident on the exit survey as well as observations and interactions by the intern and the assigned building principal. By directly addressing fundamental principles, practices, and procedures in the areas listed there existed a higher probability of increased confidence, professionalism and overall competence in their position.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which a program developed for novice teachers would impact upon self-perceptions as a teacher and collaborative interactions. The instruments used for data collection were an interview, documented by the intern, and an entry and exit survey.

It was found that the strengths and areas needing development were similar. Collaborative interactions would allow for connections between both groups.

Next, it was found that novice teachers are more inclined to solve problems on their own rather than seek assistance. Therefore, college programs and school principals should deliberately ensure that all training received equips them to address problematic issues that occur.

Furthermore, it was found that novice teachers incorporate practices in their classrooms based on their observations of other teachers, regardless of their knowledge of theoretical principles or philosophical background. Consequently, principals should closely monitor all staff to ensure research-based sound practices.

It was also found that novice teachers believe there to be a point in their career in which they will “arrive”. This idea was founded on their perceptions of themselves compared to other experienced staff.

Finally, it was also found that the Professional Roundtable was effective in improving the knowledge, professionalism, classroom practices and self-confidence of novice teachers.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the purpose of this study to determine the effect a program developed for novice teachers would have on their self-perception and professional development.

After reviewing related literature concerning the issues of novice teachers, and analyzing information obtained from an interview and a survey, a program was developed entitled, The Professional Roundtable.

At the conclusion of the program, information obtained from data gathering instruments indicated increased proficiency levels in all classroom practices, as well as a higher level of competence and self-confidence. Therefore, the Professional Roundtable was deemed as effective in improving teaching skills resulting in improved academic achievement of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study indicate the effectiveness of programs developed for teachers with less than five years of teaching experience. It is recommended that building principals incorporate a program such as this which may have similar or better results. Principals should take on the role as the facilitator of the group allowing for free discourse in a non-threatening environment.

It is also recommended that principals model the positive, professional behaviors they would like to see in their novice teachers.

SUMMARY

The intern found this study to be very productive and effective. To observe the growth of the teachers in the study was fulfilling and exciting. Novice teachers should not be isolated and left to their own devices. They should be nurtured and developed in a caring, supportive, collaborative environment.

REFERENCES

- Ballinger, J. (2000). Programs aim to stop teacher washout. Journal of Staff Development, v21 p.28-33.
- Cady, J., Distad, L. & Germundsen, R.(1998). Reflective practice groups in teacher induction: building professional community via experiential knowledge. Education, v118 p.459-70.
- Chase, B., Germundsen, R., & Brownstein, J. (2001). Making the connection between increased student learning and reflective practice. Educational Horizons, v79 p.143-7.
- Colb,N. (2001). A survival guide for the teacher shortage. Independent School, v61 p.72-7.
- Colley, A. (2002). What can principals do about new teacher attrition? Principal, v81 p.22-4.
- Connolly, R. (2000). Why do good teachers leave the profession? What can be done to retain them? Momentum, v31 p.55-7.
- Cunningham, J. (2002). Building education professionals. Leadership, v31 p.34-7.
- Devlin, S., Wade,L., Devlin, R. & Wright, W. (1997). The effects of collaborative teacher study groups and principal coaching on individual teacher change. Journal of Classroom Interaction, v32 p.18-22.
- Halford, J. (1998). Easing the way for new teachers. Educational Leadership, v55 p.33-6.
- Johnson, S. & Kardos, S. (2002). Keeping new teachers in mind. Educational Leadership, v59 p.12-16.
- Jorissen, K. (2002). 10 things a principal can do to retain teachers. Principal Leadership, v3 p.48-54.
- Lick, D. (2000). Whole faculty study groups: facilitating mentoring for school-wide change. Theory-into-Practice, v39 p.43-9.
- Lieberman, A. (1999). Networks. Journal of Staff Development, v20 p.43-4.
- Lucksinger, L. (2000). Teachers: can we get them and keep them? The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, v67 p.11-15.

- Murphy, C. & Lick, Dale. (2001). The principal as study group leader. Journal of Staff Development, v22 p.37-8.
- Mycue, S. (2001). The Professional Circle. Kappa Delta Pi Record, v38 p.28-31.
- Rogers, D. & Babinski, L. (1999). Breaking through isolation with new teacher groups. Educational Leadership, v56 p.38-40.
- Routman, R. (2002). Teacher talk. Educational Leadership, v59 p.32-5.
- Weasmer, J.& Woods, A.M. (2000). Preventing baptism of fire: fostering growth in new teachers. The Clearing House, v73 p.171-3.
- Woods, A. & Weasmer, J. (2002). Maintaining job satisfaction: engaging professionals as active participants. The Clearing House, v75 p.186-9.

Appendix A
Interview Questions

Entry Interview Questions
Professional Roundtable

Participant _____
Current Position _____
Years of Teaching _____
College/University _____
Major _____

1. What other jobs, experiences, training have you had related to teaching?
2. Why did you become a teacher?
3. What class(s) did you have in college that best prepared you for teaching?
4. What do you believe are your strengths as a teacher?
5. If you had a problem with a student that you could not rectify via every obvious solution, what would you do?
6. If you had a problem delivering a lesson or classroom management what would you do?
7. Describe your classroom management system.
8. What is the classroom management system of your neighbor?
9. A parent accused you of not treating their child fairly. What will be the administration's response.

10. You do not have enough time in your schedule for Math. What will be the administration's response?

11. Ms. King has taught in your school for one year. In June, she has the following to say:

"The staff in this building. . . "

"The administration in this building..."

12. I am planning a workshop with you in mind, what topics should be included?

13. People are standing in line to attend the your workshop. What topics will you present?

14. Have you "arrived" as a teacher? How will you know when you have "arrived"?

Appendix B

Invitations

*Thy presence is requested at a
meeting of
the R.D. Wood School
Professional Roundtable.*

*The meeting will be
Tuesday, September 24 2002
at 3:00pm in Room 17.*

*Contact Lady Tanya Clark with
thy concerns.*

Appendix C
Entry/Exit Survey

Professional Roundtable

Entry/Exit Survey

INSTRUCTION

1. Teachers should assign homework to evaluate students learning of concepts.
2. Most students are auditory learners.
3. Students read better when they read often.
4. There is no correlation between reading frequency and student writing skills.
5. It is not necessary for teachers to state learning objectives at the onset of a lesson.
6. Teachers should only focus on and be aware of their own teaching style.
7. Homogeneous ability grouping is effective for improving achievement of low-performing students.
8. Retention is not an effective approach to student placement.
9. Student IEPs should be reviewed and implemented in the classroom program.
10. Teachers should have students grade each others assignments as often as possible.

LEGAL ISSUES

1. Depending on the situation, a teacher may strike a student.
2. Teachers are not responsible to gather work for students who are suspended.
3. A teacher is not held liable for any object that is lost or destroyed which has been seized from a student.
4. A teacher may send a student in the hallway for the time period of one minute times the child's age.
5. Teachers should vary their rules and benefits based on individual student needs.

- ___ 6. A student who is accused of misconduct should be removed from the group immediately without discussion.
- ___ 7. Students and parents are allowed to inspect and review records.
- ___ 8. The time span of a teacher detention is at the discretion of the teacher.
- ___ 9. Teachers should always reprimand students acts of misconduct reported by other teachers and/or students.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

- ___ 1. Teachers should plan to use a classroom management system throughout the year for consistency, regardless of effectiveness.
- ___ 2. Instruction and learning take place best in a positive social and emotional environment.
- ___ 3. Once students reach third grade, teachers are not longer obligated to post rules and discipline procedures.
- ___ 4. Every block of time in a teacher's schedule must be accounted for and documented.
- ___ 5. Teachers should follow the manual/teacher's guide to prepare for instruction.
- ___ 6. Students should be given up to one hour of homework.
- ___ 7. All work assigned by the teacher should be graded.
- ___ 8. Use of the computer as a reward for good behavior and complete work should be encouraged in all classrooms.
- ___ 9. Students who regularly misbehave may be removed from the class activities i.e. parties, field trips, assemblies, etc.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Name	Tanya Clark
High School	Willingboro High School Willingboro, NJ
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Arts Elementary Education Rowan University Glassboro, NJ
Graduate	Master of Arts Elementary Education Rowan University Glassboro, NJ Master of Arts Education Administration Rowan University Glassboro, NJ
Present Occupation	WSR Facilitator R.D. Wood School Millville, NJ