

A Building-Level Program for First-Year Teachers

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If there exists a prime time for staff development, it could very well be during the teacher's first year of service. A way to capitalize on this possibility is noted by Burlingame (1978) in his call for building a variety of information sources into staff development programs for new teachers.

The model presented here focuses on sources that can provide teachers with information about their performance in the classroom and on methods of enhancing their effectiveness by drawing from the success of others. It was implemented in a suburban high school district during the 1981-82 academic year and served to help the new teachers establish habits early in their careers that can keep them growing throughout their professional lives.

Source #1—*Teacher Effectiveness Re-*

search. At the beginning of the school year, teachers were given an overview of the literature on classroom management and organization and its relationship to student achievement and academic engaged time. They were introduced to results from research that contained reasonable and useful suggestions that have emerged from recent teacher effectiveness studies. As reinforcement, teachers met monthly to discuss what they had learned from the materials, how they had used the information in their own teaching, and problems or approaches that were affecting them.

Source #2—*Colleagues.* Each first-year teacher was assigned a "teacher-coach" from his or her department, a person familiar with the new teacher's subject matter and classroom activities.

Teacher-coaches served several purposes: sounding board and empathizer, source of information about school and classroom procedures, back-patter when praise or encouragement was due, and knowledgeable problem solver.

Source #3—*The Teachers Themselves.* The following ways were used to focus new teachers' attention on their own experiences:

—Teachers kept a journal of successful teaching strategies they had used and speculated about how to improve the strategy or apply it in different situations.

—Teachers shared with each other at least one "success story" from their journals every month. By swapping episodes, they broadened their repertoire of instructional behaviors.

—Teachers were videotaped during some of their classes. In analyzing their performance with their teacher-coaches, they looked for elements of the instructional design, classroom management techniques, measures of student time-on-task, and teacher-student academic interaction.

During each phase of the program new teachers were essentially cast in the role of learner—learning from the current teacher effectiveness base, learning from master teachers within the school, and learning from themselves. This program's learner-orientation and emphasis on development of professional habits enables new teachers to discover and deliver an optimal teaching performance as they begin their careers. **EL**

Reference

Burlingame, Martin. "Their Hearts Were Young and Gay: The In-Service Needs of an Experienced Teaching Force." In *The In-Service Education of Teachers*. Edited by Louis Rubin. Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 1978.



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