

## THE POTENTIAL OF TEACHER TRANSFER IN FOSTERING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LYNNE HANNAY, *The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*

NANCY CHISM, *The Ohio State University*

Teacher transfer has long been a Janus-like phenomenon in education. One face is threatening—transfer is a cold, impersonal mechanism for resolving problems, such as enrollment decline, poor performance, budget cuts, and staffing problems, often with little regard for the needs of the teachers involved in the transfers. The other face of teacher transfer is attractive—it is one of the few potential sources for renewal or the pursuit of better working environments available to teachers. Administrators and teachers often refer to transfer as a panacea for stagnation, especially when aging staff and low mobility preclude a natural inflow of new staff. Yet they also realize that transfers can be painful and, at times, disastrous.

The mix of attitude toward transfers raises intriguing questions about the relationship between transfer and teacher development—questions that are seldom explicit even though they are at the heart of the effectiveness of ongoing personnel decisions made by school districts. This paper describes an empirical study that explored the relationship between transfer and professional growth.

Historically, involuntary transfer has been associated with disciplinary action: Teachers who were not performing adequately were often transferred to another school or situation in the hopes that improvement might occur. Voluntary transfer has often been associated with upward mobility: After having served in a less "desirable" situation, teachers "earned" over time the privilege of moving into classrooms populated by students perceived to be bright or cooperative. During the period of enrollment decline, however, opportunities for transfer declined considerably. Few new teachers entered, and experienced teachers did not usually have the option of changing within or between schools. A natural impetus to change and teacher renewal was thus impaired. Mann has observed:

As long as teaching mobility remained high, a principal could count on replacing perhaps as much as one-fifth of his staff in a year. But now and for the foreseeable future . . . school reform must be accomplished through existing personnel.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dale Mann, "The Politics of In-Service," *Theory into Practice* 17 (June 1978) 212

The principal of one of the high schools portrayed in Lightfoot's *The Good High School* describes static conditions within his teaching staff as "the single most difficult dilemma that will be faced by his system in the 1980s."<sup>2</sup>

The literature on teacher transfer is thin, especially on how transfer affects teacher development. Teacher mobility studies, which account for most of the literature, chart teacher-initiated moves over the course of teaching careers. Many of these studies focus on the movement of experienced teachers from inner city to suburban school settings. The intent is to chart movement rather than to explore the influence that transfer has had on teachers' professional development.

Few empirical studies have examined the effects of transfer on teaching careers. A notable exception is a field study by Reed and Paznokas<sup>3</sup> of teacher transfer and job satisfaction. These authors found that teacher willingness to transfer was a key factor in subsequent job satisfaction. Also, transfers were most successful when teachers were assigned positions for which they had some previous experience. Although most of the teachers in the study experienced a drop in satisfaction at the time of the transfer, the level rose again with time, as their familiarity with the new situation increased. The level of satisfaction remained low only for teachers who were unwilling to transfer. The study, however, did not go beyond measures of satisfaction to assess the actual developmental impact of the changes.

Accounts by educators with experiences in teacher transfer support Reed and Paznokas. A key theme in reports by Hollingsworth,<sup>4</sup> Ricken,<sup>5</sup> and Weller<sup>6</sup> is the emotional aspect of many transfers. They suggest that appropriate preparation and adjustment time is a key facilitating condition in involuntary transfers. All three conclude that with proper support, transfers can be an effective source of teacher renewal.

The literature on teacher development gives theoretical grounds for the potential of teacher transfer as a source of professional growth. Sykes addresses teachers' need to increase their experience and to relieve the "unvarying prospects [that] often lead to a predictable response: routinization of instruction and the progressive disengagement from work and career."<sup>7</sup> Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall stress the value that a role change offers, at the same time

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<sup>2</sup>Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, *The Good High School* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), p. 335.

<sup>3</sup>Donald B. Reed and Mary A. Paznokas, "Teacher Transfer and Job Satisfaction. An Exploratory Field Study" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, April 1983). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 233 438.)

<sup>4</sup>Julia Hollingsworth, "Helping Teachers to Help Themselves: A Program for Reassigned Personnel," *Pbi Delta Kappan* 63 (October 1983), 138.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Ricken, "Transfer: One Method of Teacher Revitalization," *NASSP Bulletin* 67 (November 1983), 117-118.

<sup>6</sup>L. David Weller, "Reducing the Stress Related to Teacher Reassignments," *NASSP Bulletin* 68 (March 1984): 67-69.

<sup>7</sup>Gary Sykes, "Public Policy and the Problem of Teacher Quality," in *Handbook of Teaching and Policy*, ed. Lee S. Shulman and Gary Sykes (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 121.

noting that "significant professional development is often painful."<sup>8</sup> Other key writers on teacher development such as Harris<sup>9</sup> and Howey<sup>10</sup> emphasize that teachers need regular opportunities to experience novel situations, gain perspective, and rethink present assumptions.

Despite the positive possibilities of transfer noted by some educators and developmentalists, however, most of the literature on transfer offers coping advice to teachers and tips to administrators, indicating that transfers are not routinely well planned and that transferred teachers do not often receive the support they need. This inference is supported by the findings of a 1980 survey by Collins and Masley<sup>11</sup> in which teachers rated involuntary transfer higher than any other factor as a cause of stress. Burden,<sup>12</sup> Chism,<sup>13</sup> and Davison<sup>14</sup> document the preference of most teachers to remain in a given situation except in cases of extreme duress or circumstantial changes, such as family relocations or maternity leaves. In the Chism study, which explored transfer as one option for growth available to teachers, the teachers cited two main reasons for avoiding transfer: fear of the unknown and lack of teacher participation in transfer decisions.

Theoretical grounds for the potential of teacher transfer as a source of professional growth can be found in the constructs of challenge and support described by Sanders.<sup>15</sup> Drawing on a model of experiential learning conceived by Dewey,<sup>16</sup> Sanders asserts that instances of growth arise when the familiar becomes problematic in the sense that it is seen in a new light or as a challenge to taken-for-granted practice. Concerned individuals can recognize these "hitches" independently, but challenge from an external agent or change in environmental circumstances can also stimulate recognition and engagement of problematic situations. Challenge must be balanced by appropriate psychological and technical support.

<sup>8</sup>Norman Sprinthall and Lois Thies Sprinthall, "The Teacher as an Adult Learner," in *Staff Development*, 82nd Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, ed Gary Griffin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 30

<sup>9</sup>Ben M. Harris, *Improving Staff Performance Through In-Service Education* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1980)

<sup>10</sup>Kenneth R. Howey, "The Concept of School-Focused In-Service," in *School-Focused In-Service*, ed Kenneth R. Howey, Richard Bents, and Dean Corrigan (Reston, Va: Association of Teacher Educators, 1981) pp 5-23.

<sup>11</sup>J. Collins and B. Masley, *Stress/Burnout Report* (Worcester, Mass: Worcester Public Schools, 1980) (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 199 187)

<sup>12</sup>Paul R. Burden, "Mobility of Elementary Teachers," *College Student Journal* 17 (Summer 1983): 183-189

<sup>13</sup>Nancy Chism, "Conditions Influencing Teacher Development in an Elementary School Setting" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1984)

<sup>14</sup>Ronald G. Davison, "Work Satisfaction and Teacher Mobility," *Clearing House* 45 (January 1971): 265-268

<sup>15</sup>Donald S. Sanders, "A Theory of Educational Program Development" (Unpublished manuscript, The Ohio State University, 1978).

<sup>16</sup>John Dewey, *How We Learn* (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1910)

To explore the effect of transfer on teacher development, we undertook a case study of a Canadian school district that was the site of a planned transfer intervention.<sup>17</sup> The transfers involved 14 of the 37 teachers and principals in the 4 elementary schools that serve the 3 small communities in the district. Teachers were transferred to new schools and grade levels, some voluntarily and others involuntarily. Teachers who requested transfers were considered voluntary transfers, and teachers transferred through administrative decision were classified as involuntary transfers.

We examined the effect of transfer on teaching, specifically

- How does transfer affect the development of teachers?
- Does transfer offer a viable alternative to the problem of teacher immobility?
- What effects does a teacher's transfer have on that teacher's colleagues and on the school environment in general?
- Under what circumstances is transfer likely to be effective?
- What would an effective transfer policy encompass?

#### METHODOLOGY

The case study involved the elementary schools of an Ontario school district that was the site of a planned transfer intervention. The intervention began with the reassignment of the principals in three of the schools serving the three communities in the district. Also, ten teachers were transferred to new schools and grade levels, some voluntarily and others involuntarily. In all, about 30 percent of the elementary teaching staff were transferred.

In gathering the information to answer the research questions, we made every effort to represent as many perspectives as possible. Specific interview schedules were developed for transferred teachers, transferred principals, non-transferred teachers, parents, and trustees. Each transferred teacher and principal was interviewed. In two schools, randomly selected non-transferred teachers were asked how the transfers affected their schools. Also, all elected school trustees were interviewed, and a purposeful sample of parents was included in the study. This sample was derived from a list provided by the elementary principals. Each principal suggested two parents whom they considered supportive of the school and two parents not as supportive. A sample of three supportive and three not-as-supportive parents, representing all three communities, was selected and interviewed.

All but one interview was taped. In the one exception, the individual felt uncomfortable being taped and requested that a tape recorder not be used. The taped interviews were transcribed verbatim onto computer diskette. The

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<sup>17</sup>Lynne Hannay and Nancy Chism, *Involuntary Teacher Transfer: An Intervention Strategy for Professional Development* (Thunder Bay, Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Northwestern Centre, 1985). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 262 470)

interview transcripts were used to develop the categories and then used to analyze the data. A coding scheme was developed and administered by two researchers working independently. The coding was then compared and reconciled. Coding notations were transferred to computer diskette. Data were reorganized into categories and subcategories. The resulting data displays provided the empirical basis of this report.

Unfortunately, we could not collect baseline information on the teachers, since the study was requested by the school system one year after the transfers had occurred. At this point, we were able to identify the teachers' growth over the year that the participants attributed to the transfers. However, the evidence gathered through retrospective interviewing—assessed according to the strength, frequency, and specificity of key statements corroborated by others—was sufficiently strong to support the identification of several patterns in the professional growth that occurred. The technical report provides an in-depth analysis of the perceived reasons for the transfers, the experience of being transferred, the effects of the transfers, and implications for policy.<sup>18</sup>

In summary, the study found that the transfers had overall positive effects on the development of both transferred and non-transferred teachers. Teachers developed a broadened perspective of their school system, the continuum of students' chronological development, and the cultural differences among children from different socioeconomic groups. The introduction of the transferred teachers into a school encouraged both the transferred teachers and their non-transferred colleagues to question their previous teaching practices, to entertain new ideas, and to try new practices. The study documented a sense of renewal across the teaching staffs, administrators, and community. The study also found that these positive gains were offset by such negative side effects as distrust and low morale on the part of the teachers, community dissatisfaction with the interrupted continuity of staffing, hasty on-the-job learning in novel surroundings, and rampant confusion over the reasons for the transfers and board policy on teacher transfer.

This paper further examines the findings for implications of the potential of transfers to promote teacher development. Through an analysis of how the transfers occurred and the effects that resulted, we focus on understanding whether transfers can be developmentally effective and on isolating key factors that influence the results brought about by transfers.

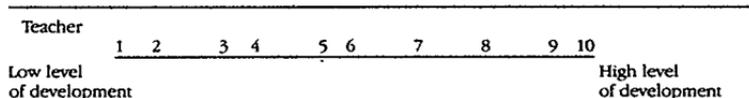
#### THE EFFECTS OF THE TRANSFERS ON THE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

##### *The Continuum of Development*

Evidence gathered from triangulating the teachers' comments on their perceived growth, the comments of other teachers and administrators, and

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid

**Figure 1. The Continuum of Development Following the Transfers**

an analysis of the teachers' practices were used to assess the varying levels of growth that occurred in individual teachers following the transfers. The transfers fostered professional growth to varying degrees. The perceived pattern can best be described through the use of a continuum (Figure 1), teachers who experienced only low degrees of professional growth cluster toward the lower end, and teachers who experienced significant professional growth fall toward the upper end.

For example, the teacher who occupies the lowest place on the continuum (Teacher 1) was adamant in testifying that his transfer resulted in no professional growth. When he was asked to describe any growth that occurred as a result of his transfer, he replied, "None." Another teacher (Teacher 2) also claimed that the transfer had little effect on his practice.

I can't say that coming here [to the new school] has made me a better teacher. I don't think that just the fact that I have moved here has made me any better. I couldn't say that it has.

Although both these teachers maintained that personally no professional growth occurred, evidence from other sources suggests that these teachers did demonstrate some growth. For example, the principal who worked with Teacher 2 both before and after the transfers noted small changes.

He has improved himself as a teacher and as a person through being here two years . . . He has taken on more responsibility. He is better organized. He is better planned. He is more involved, I think, in the school with the children than he was before.

These gains, however, were modest and did not carry over into broad areas of practice

Teachers placed at the high-growth end of the continuum claimed that they had grown professionally and could also cite specific changes in their teaching practice, changes often corroborated by others. Teacher 9 said:

I really feel that I have gotten out of a rut. I find that my ideas are becoming more creative rather than simple book-type instruction. I'm doing all kinds of things in the classroom that I probably wouldn't have thought of doing if I had been at [the old school] I would have been trying the old tried and true things whether they worked or not I think that [the transfer] has kind of revitalized me. I find we [the class] are doing things this year that I had never dreamed of doing.

A second teacher (Teacher 10), who had a major grade change from an upper to a lower elementary level, also attributed significant professional growth to his transfer:

As a teacher, I think I have grown tremendously. It has always intrigued me as a teacher . . . you have a child who cannot read; how do you teach him to read? I found it hard, just watching children learn. Someone that cannot read, and suddenly something dawns or clicks and they see the symbol. Then they start putting sounds together. I've learned the importance of things like the shape of my lips and where my tongue is in relation to my teeth when I speak. Things like that are involved in teaching sound and in reading. Things I have never thought of before, and I am starting to find out. That means a lot. It sounds like something small, but it is unbelievable. I don't look down on primary teachers [anymore]. It is not just cutting and pasting. It is work.

Teachers who demonstrated more moderate levels of growth were distributed between the two poles of the continuum according to the intensity and specificity of their comments and evidence from other sources that testified to the extent of the actual change. Teacher 8 said:

You get new ideas from the other teachers. Even art ideas. Just different ways of doing things. We had a special education teacher last year. I learned a lot about how they are individualized and how to program.

Teacher 7 said:

I have learned to be a little bit more flexible. I think I escaped the turtle syndrome. I learned it is not the school but what you do in it. In the year, you learn more about things, about your job and about different ways of doing things.

Principals, non-transferred teachers, parents, and trustees supported the teachers' testimony about their growth. For example, one principal affirmed that professional development occurred following the transfers:

There are people on my staff that I have worked with during the past 20 years in another situation, at another time, and I see over the last year a growth. They are more willing to adapt. They are trying new things. Almost like a renewed interest in their lessons. Of course, the people who were transferred here, all have different grade levels. So they all had to start learning again. Some of them had been in the same grade level for, say, 15 years and had never moved. So, of course, in order to cope with a new situation, you have to learn new things. You can't just fake it. So I have seen professional growth.

### *Contributing Factors Toward Professional Growth*

*Situational and attitudinal factors.* The varying degrees of growth documented in the study raise the question of what situational factors or individual attributes might have contributed to the differences in growth following the transfers. Such situational factors as the gender of the transferred teacher, the years of teaching experience, the severity of the grade-level change involved, and the involuntary or voluntary nature of the transfer were first examined for possible relationships to resulting growth. As Table 1 indicates, these factors did not appear to be related to the gains in growth. The attitudinal characteristics evident in the interviews were more useful in understanding the relationship between the transfers and the varying degrees of professional

**Table 1. Situational Characteristics of Transferred Teachers**

Characteristic	Teacher									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sex	M	M	F	M	F	F	M	F	M	M
Years' experience	20	19	19.3	25	8	12.5	16	9	9	20
Severity of grade-level change (in years)	0	3	2	2	0	5	0	2	1	3
Involuntary (I) or voluntary (V) change	I	I	I	I	V	V	I	I	V	I

growth. Explanatory characteristics clustered around several dimensions, as illustrated in Table 2.

The aggregated comments from teachers at the lower end of the continuum indicated that they perceived teaching as a job. They reported that teaching had little focus in their lives, and their testimony indicated that they invested major effort into other interests such as sports, families, or business ventures. During the interviews, engaging these teachers in sustained discussion of their teaching was difficult. Their comments did not demonstrate introspection or reflection about their practice. Usual routines continued to be taken for granted, since the teachers did not recognize or were not helped to recognize any problems with their previous practices. For example, Teacher 2, who was specifically identified by administrators as needing improvement, said, "I don't like to toot my own horn, but I think I am doing a pretty good job." In discussing their practice, these teachers tended to use generalizations instead of alluding to particular situations, and they did not reveal problems or emotional responses, such as discouragement or exhilaration. Generally, they had routinized their teaching and did not appear to differentiate between different learning situations, different grade levels, or different school settings. Further, they evidenced a closed attitude toward change and sought the kind

**Table 2. Significant Attitudinal Factors Related to Growth**

Lower levels of growth	Higher levels of growth
Teaching considered a job	Teaching considered a vocation
Non-reflective about practice	Reflective about practice
Preference for stability, order	Desire for change, experimentation, challenge
Preference for routine	Preference for flexibility

of stability at work that would permit them to continue their routine. A principal described these teachers:

They don't think of boredom. They just think of the comfort and their fears. . . . I think they just decided to put the brakes on. [The attitude is] "Oh, well, I'll do my time"

In contrast, teachers who experienced higher levels of growth shared an excitement, almost a sense of wonderment, about the teaching and learning process. Their comments indicated that teaching is a major focus in their lives. They discussed their practice in detail, often using examples of specific classroom instances or practices to illustrate their remarks. These teachers perceived the teaching and learning process as problematic and investigated their self-defined problems reflectively. These teachers thought of the new teaching situation as a challenge. They enjoyed experimenting with new teaching strategies to solve these puzzles and to improve their practice. Generally, teachers who experienced higher growth had past histories of courting change, were more positive to possible change opportunities, and sought new challenges. Teacher 8 said:

I like new situations. I don't like to stagnate. I don't stay. That is why I changed grades at [one school], just because I like something different. I took a year off. I was in Europe a year just because I wanted something different.

Attitudinal characteristics strongly influenced the teachers' level of professional growth. The teachers' receptivity to change and their commitment to experiment and reflect on practice were more powerful predictors of growth associated with transfer than age, teaching experience, severity of change, or source of change initiative. The high-growth teachers personally perceived the challenge and the potential for renewal implicit in the new situation. The low-growth teachers failed to recognize the challenge and treated the change as a continuation of past practices in a new location. Growth, therefore, was strongly related to internal impetus toward change.

*Contextual factors.* In addition to factors that might account for varying growth levels across individuals, the study also examined how the particular way the transfer intervention was conceived, planned, and carried out in this district influenced the overall growth. The data indicated that the transfer intervention in this district, like many other instances of decision making described by Simon's term *satisficing*, was conceived as an action that would partially address several issues in a way considered "good enough along all dimensions."<sup>19</sup> The school district administration continually stated that the primary purpose of the transfers was to foster the professional growth of individual teachers and principals and to renew teaching staffs within the

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<sup>19</sup>Herbert A. Simon, *Models of Thought* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 3.

schools. Yet other testimony and evidence pointed to additional purposes, such as alleviating conflicts between specific teachers and parents, other staff members, and principals; rearranging assignments to fit new staffing vacancies and redundancies, addressing the issue of distributing equitable resources to each community; and promoting positive public relations.<sup>20</sup> These competing reasons for the transfers moved the focus away from teacher development.

Since the transfer decision was rooted in the attempt to address several problems with one action, tradeoffs arose between the benefits intended for professional development and those necessary to accomplish other purposes. For example, many teachers and community members interviewed realized that a core group of several teachers who were experiencing problems was selected for transfer. This action created the necessity to transfer other teachers who were not experiencing problems to mask the remedial transfers and to open positions for the necessary transfers. A trustee said, "By transferring more than, say, a couple of teachers, I think they were hoping not to single out any deadwood that was being transferred." The reasons for transferring those teachers were neither clearly established nor shared with the transferred teacher.

Although the decision to transfer teachers was made with the intention of facilitating professional growth, especially for the teachers identified as experiencing problems, the relation between transfer and growth was never perceived. The failure of those making the transfer decision to draw a clear connection between the intended goals and the means intended to reach those goals fits Wise's description of *hyperrationalization*: "an effort to rationalize beyond the bounds of knowledge . . . the setting of ends which cannot be attained, given the available means."<sup>21</sup> One non-transferred teacher expressed her concern:

It is like having a bad apple in a barrel. You take it out and put it into another barrel and hope that it will get better. It just doesn't work that way . . . So call a spade a spade. Don't cover [problems] up under this glorious little title [transfer decision] and pretend that it is an answer. I don't think it is. I think it is avoiding the real problem.

The problems associated with the lack of a clear rationale for using transfer as a solution to several teachers' problems were carried into the planning process. Planning was approached as a simple logistical matter of moving teachers from school to school. No overt attempt was made to weigh or assess the individual needs of particular teachers to ensure that a transfer would be an appropriate vehicle for change. The need for systematic and substantial support was not foreseen. No teacher reported being consulted

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<sup>20</sup>Lynne Hannay and Nancy Chism, *Involuntary Teacher Transfer: An Intervention Strategy for Professional Development* (Thunder Bay, Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Northwestern Centre, 1985) (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 262 470.)

<sup>21</sup>Arthur E. Wise, *Legislated Learning: The Bureaucratization of the American Classroom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 65

about the possibility of transfer beforehand. Similarly, the time to develop new curriculums and the provisions for additional training that would facilitate growth were not allocated. Several individuals recognized the need for training if transfers were to result in growth. Teacher 2 said.

If they are going to institute transfers of that nature, then they should also provide inservice training for people.

A trustee said:

You know if you are transferring deadwood, you want to have some kind of follow-up to support that transfer. You can't transfer a person out of a school and just hope that the principal and staff members will be able to rejuvenate or transform that individual into a better teacher. I think it is up to the supervisory officer as well as the principal of that school to make sure they [the transferees] pull up their socks.

Problems created by the lack of a clear rationale and adequate planning were further compounded when the transfer decision was carried out. Transferred teachers, including those transferred because of specific problems, were not counseled about the reasons for their transfers or helped to see the potential of the change for growth. Teachers thought to be performing inadequately were never challenged to admit or consider problem areas in their teaching. Largely, they transported these weaknesses in practice to the new setting. For example, Teacher 2 was transferred because of problems with his teaching. Although he was reassigned three grade levels below his previous class, he continued to use the same type of projects in his primary class that he had employed in his upper elementary grade. No attempt was made to help him recognize the problems in his practice or to offer assistance. One non-transferred teacher pointed out the inadequacies of such interventions:

I think that if they made up their minds not to grow anyway, it doesn't matter where they are going to be placed. I think they need a real direct one-to-one in being told that your job is on the line or it is time you changed.

Other teachers transferred solely to accommodate the other changes experienced morale problems and wondered if their teaching had become suspect in some area. Their normal eagerness for new opportunities to learn actually seemed to decrease as they encountered difficulties and frustrations in their new situations. They became more wary of possible administrative manipulations and conscious of the lack of supportive conditions for making changes in practice.

Neither group of teachers was offered support in the form of adequate preparation time for a smooth transition, orientation to a new situation, and the assistance of technical resource people or professional counselors. Despite these shortcomings, however, professional growth occurred, suggesting that carefully planned transfers might provide the occasion for more consistent, significant growth.

## DISCUSSION

From a staff development perspective, the findings in this study evoke two major questions: Why does transfer promote growth, and how might transfer be used effectively as part of a staff-development program? The data suggests that teacher transfer provides a natural opportunity for individuals receptive to change to conceptualize new challenges. For several teachers and others interviewed in the study, transfer as a source of growth was an idea with clear face validity. "A change is as good as a rest" was a frequent reason cited for the transfer intervention. The common thinking was that over time individuals working in a given situation become stale. Teachers who sought a challenge voiced an uneasiness about their past practices. Teacher 9 described how this stagnation had happened to him:

In the past few years, I felt I was really working mentally to come up with new ideas. . . I felt that I was very good at it when I was first out of teachers college. Things came easy. And you had a great idea for at least one period every day. I never did expect that I could do it through a whole day. But at least once a day I would have a real grabber lesson. Then as I stayed there, it would be about once every two days. And then maybe once a week I would get excited about something. That began to worry me. If I am not excited, they are not going to be excited. So the creativity, I feel, has been improved [by the transfer].

Teacher 10 made a similar observation:

When you leave up displays each year. You don't take them down in June, like the solar system, and it gets faded. I noticed that I wasn't taking it down in June. I used to strip the room completely in June, throw away things, and start fresh. I then thought, no I'll leave it up. Then I got a little worried. Am I in a rut? I think I was. .

Teachers who did not seek a challenge rationalized that they had kept current professionally in their previous teaching situation. Teacher 2 explained his perspective:

I would think myself that I wasn't extremely stagnant or anything like that. I try to keep up with new materials. I am always buying new books, trying new ideas, and so on. We have *Learning* magazine. I look at those every so often. There are ideas in there.

Viewed within the theoretical context of challenge and support, the evidence indicates that the change of work setting prompted some teachers to reexamine their practice completely and others less predisposed to reflect on their practice to adapt in smaller ways. Transfer, then, can help teachers question taken-for-granted practices. Those who recognize and respond to the challenge benefit with a sense of professional renewal.

The varying levels of response to the challenge here, however, indicate that, in and of itself, transfer is not sufficient to ensure high levels of growth. More specific information on the reasons for the transfers and more in-depth feedback on perceived inadequacies is needed, especially for teachers singled out for "remediation" through transfer. For those unable or unwilling to use the occasion for change, the degree of growth was lower. Thus, staffing

decisions on possible transfers must be coordinated with staff-development considerations. Those responsible for staff development must intervene directly to help teachers to formulate challenges and must provide support throughout the process.

This case study suggests the need for an interface between environmental agents responsible for staff development and an individual teacher's impetus toward growth so that the optimum development can occur. Individuals demonstrating attitudinal characteristics associated with lower levels of growth (Table 2) might require increased pressure and support from the environment. Staff developers need to help these teachers to clearly delineate problems and avenues for development. Teachers with such avoidance tendencies toward change will require ongoing psychological and technical support in both formulating and addressing challenges to existing practice. Individuals with a tendency to search out challenges (high growth, Table 2) will require less assistance from staff developers. But these teachers often benefit from dialogue with colleagues in identifying puzzles and problems in their practice and assessing the effects of their experiments with new approaches.

Other approaches besides transfer might have resulted in higher levels of growth for some teachers. Those entertaining the use of transfer to further staff development, therefore, need first to consider carefully whether transfer is an appropriate vehicle for each teacher involved. The judgment should be informed by a direct interchange with the teacher on the present situation, possible routes to growth, and the level of challenge needed. Teachers should be encouraged to initiate transfers, and when others initiate transfers, teachers' participation should be sought. If transfers become a routine component of teachers' professional development plans, they may be disassociated with punishment and viewed as a regular part of a professional growth plan.

Also, the level of challenge posed by a transfer needs to be balanced by an adequate level of support. For several teachers, transfers provided a high level of stress without the additional assistance they needed to deal with the change effectively. Therefore, districts employing transfer to promote professional growth need to anticipate and arrange for resources that will be required to maximize that growth. These resources may include opportunities for peer exchange, clinical supervision, or counseling that will help the teachers recognize problematic aspects of their teaching or identify new occasions for experimentation; opportunities to obtain additional training or technical assistance in developing curriculums, materials, and teaching strategies appropriate to the new situation; opportunities to practice new approaches and receive feedback and guidance; and opportunities to obtain psychological or emotional support. Provisions for both short- and long-term follow-up to assess the impact of transfer also need to be considered.

#### SUMMARY

Viewed from a staff-development perspective, transfer is an effective vehicle for stimulating teachers to develop new strengths and insights. How-

ever, transfer is not appropriate in all cases, nor will simply shifting teachers from one location to another guarantee significant growth. An effective use of transfer for staff development entails:

- coordinating staffing decisions with staff-development considerations;
- weighing the appropriateness of transfer within the context of individual professional growth plans;
- discussing transfers with the teachers involved;
- recognizing transfer as a regular part of professional growth plans;
- providing appropriate support for transferred teachers;
- monitoring the effects of transfers closely.

Changes in work activity and work setting are invaluable sources of growth and revitalization for professionals in every field. Educators must recognize the positive potential of transfer and establish policies that will support its use in developmentally effective ways.

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LYNNE HANNAY is Head, Midwestern Centre, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 25 Joseph Street, Kitchener, Ontario N2G 1H9, Canada.

NANCY CHISM is Senior Associate, Center for Teaching Excellence, The Ohio State University, Suite 60, Neil Wood Gables, 2096 Neil Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

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The fifth edition, like the earlier ones, is organized around ten major topics of curriculum planning related to bases and criteria for the curriculum and to various levels of curriculum planning. An introductory module that includes a rationale, objectives stated as performance goals, a pre-assessment, a post-assessment, and alternative learning activities is provided for each set of related activities. This edition pays particular attention to future curriculum planning and includes several articles by key leaders in the field.

—Gregory J. Nolan

Gregory, Thomas B., and Gerald R. Smith, *High Schools as Communities. The Small School Reconsidered*. Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa Education Foundation, 1987. 149 pp. \$6.00.

The authors believe a sense of community has been lost in the American high school. Large high schools are no longer socially viable; a sense of alienation pervades school inhabitants. The authors make a strong case for rebuilding a sense of community in American high schools. This book provides proposals that administrators, teachers, and students may use to rebuild the sense of community in our nation's schools. Mountain Open High School in Jefferson County, Colorado, is presented as a model that embodies the many proposals for change set forth in this book.

—Gregory J. Nolan

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