



NOVICE TEACHERS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING. CHARACTERISTICS OF NOVICE TEACHERS

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Annotation: This research paper explores the characteristics, challenges, and professional development needs of novice English language teachers, with a focus on their growth trajectory and the support required for their professional development. It discusses the unique experiences of novice teachers, such as their high enthusiasm, receptiveness to feedback, and the need for validation from experienced colleagues. Key challenges faced by novice teachers include classroom management, adapting to diverse student needs, and balancing multiple responsibilities. The paper emphasizes the role of effective induction programs, tailored professional development, and mentoring relationships as critical support mechanisms for novice teachers. Additionally, the study delves into the context of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Uzbekistan, highlighting the historical and structural challenges faced by English teachers and the impact of programs like the DUET initiative.

Keywords: Novice teachers, professional development, classroom management, CPD, mentoring, Uzbekistan, English language teaching, DUET initiative.

Novice teachers, often at the initial stages of their teaching careers, represent a critical segment of the education workforce. Their unique characteristics and experiences shape their professional development and impact the learning outcomes of their students. Novice teachers are typically those who have recently completed their teacher preparation programs and are entering the teaching profession. Their teaching experiences are limited, and they are still in the process of developing their pedagogical skills, instructional strategies, and classroom management techniques. Darling-Hammond (2000) highlights that novice teachers often struggle with the practical application of their theoretical knowledge and may find it challenging to balance their educational ideals with the realities of the classroom. Research suggests that novice teachers experience substantial growth over their first few years of teaching. They gradually build their pedagogical knowledge, improve classroom management skills, and gain a deeper understanding of student learning needs (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). With ongoing support and opportunities for reflection, novice teachers transition from survival mode to a more confident and skilled instructional approach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001)

Characteristics of Novice Teachers

a. **Lack of Experience:** One defining characteristic of novice teachers is their limited experience in the classroom. This lack of experience can impact their confidence, decision-making, and ability to adapt to unexpected situations (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).



b. **High Enthusiasm and Idealism:** Novice teachers often bring a high level of enthusiasm and idealism to their classrooms. They are eager to make a positive impact on their students' lives and may be more open to innovative teaching methods (Kagan, 1992).

c. **Seeking Validation:** Novice teachers tend to seek validation and feedback from more experienced colleagues and mentors. They may actively seek guidance on instructional strategies, classroom management, and professional development opportunities (Kyriakides, Creemers, & Antoniou, 2009).

d. **Responsive to Feedback:** Novices are generally more receptive to feedback and willing to adapt their practices based on constructive criticism. They are in a phase of continuous learning and improvement (Fives & Buehl, 2012).

Challenges Faced by Novice Teachers

a. **Classroom Management:** Novice teachers often struggle with classroom management, as they are learning to establish routines, handle student behavior issues, and create a conducive learning environment (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

b. **Diverse Student Needs:** Adapting instruction to meet the diverse needs of students is a challenge for novice teachers. They may find it difficult to differentiate their teaching to accommodate various learning styles and abilities (Borko et al., 2010).

c. **Time Management:** Balancing instructional planning, grading, administrative tasks, and professional development can be overwhelming for novice teachers, potentially leading to stress and burnout (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Implications for Educational Practice

a. **Effective Induction Programs:** Schools and districts should invest in structured induction programs that provide mentorship, guidance, and opportunities for novices to collaborate with experienced educators. These programs facilitate the transition from theory to practice (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

b. **Reflective Practice:** Encouraging novice teachers to engage in reflective practice is crucial for their professional development. Reflective activities, such as journaling and peer observations, can enhance their self-awareness and decision-making skills (Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

c. **Tailored Professional Development:** Professional development initiatives should address the specific needs of novice teachers. Topics might include classroom management strategies, differentiation techniques, and effective use of technology (Garet et al., 2001).

CPD as Support for Novice Teachers



Continuing Professional Development (CPD) stands as a critical avenue for supporting novice teachers as they navigate the complexities of their early teaching careers. The challenges faced by these educators, including high attrition rates and the need to adapt to the demands of the profession, highlight the significance of well-designed CPD initiatives.

Ingersoll (2003) sheds light on the notion of a teacher shortage and highlights the imperative of addressing high attrition rates among novice teachers. His research-based framework underscores how CPD can play a pivotal role in enhancing the retention of novice educators. Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) emphasize the global perspective on teacher development and advocate for targeted and ongoing CPD to effectively support early-career teachers.

Hobson et al. (2009) delve into mentoring as a valuable form of CPD for novice teachers. Their study underscores the benefits of mentoring relationships in fostering professional growth and development. Ingersoll and Strong's (2011) review of induction and mentoring programs further validates the importance of these initiatives in providing a supportive environment for novice teachers to thrive.

Singer and Willett (2003) offer insight into applied longitudinal data analysis, a methodology that can be employed to assess the impact of CPD initiatives over time. This approach proves useful in understanding how CPD interventions influence the professional growth trajectory of novice teachers. Day and Sachs (2004) delve into the political and policy dimensions of CPD, emphasizing the alignment of CPD with teacher empowerment and professionalism. This discourse resonates with the needs of novice teachers who require a sense of agency and professional identity as they navigate the early stages of their careers.

Desimone (2011) provides guidelines for effective professional development, pertinent to novice teachers. Her insights contribute to the formulation and implementation of CPD programs that effectively cater to the needs of early-career educators. Ingvarson et al. (2005) explore factors that influence the effectiveness of professional development programs. Their research provides valuable considerations for designing CPD initiatives that have a positive impact on novice teachers' knowledge, practice, student outcomes, and efficacy.

CPD and Novice Teachers in Uzbekistan

After gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Uzbekistan has struggled mightily to rebuild its sense of national identity. This has been especially clear in the field of education, which for a very long time relied heavily on Soviet-era rules for both its organizational structure and its teaching and learning practices. The



inclination of the nation's institutions to stay closed off from outside influences, especially those from the West, was one clear reason for this. This tendency was made worse by the dearth of possibilities for Uzbek education specialists to travel overseas. The outcome of language instruction at all levels has been all too clear: young people graduating from universities with degrees in English who are yet unable to speak fluently or write well. These shortcomings were passed down from one generation of Uzbek English teachers to the next, who were all steeped in a version of the Grammar-Translation method with Soviet roots and dependent on outdated textbooks (Arakin, 1961 and Bonk, 1973, for example), which for a long time served as the only source of language input for university-level English learners. Additionally, the division between the faculties of philology and education has resulted from the organization of universities in Uzbekistan. After a four-year program that included intensive study of linguistics, literature, and language systems but no practical language classes and methodology taught as a theoretical discipline, typically through lectures in Uzbek or Russian, future English teachers have traditionally graduated through philological faculties. Since they had attained their positions and solidified their reputations under the current order, the academic hierarchy in universities had a vested interest in keeping things as they were.

In the context of what became known as the English Reform Project, the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education started collaborating with the British Council, which was founded in Uzbekistan in 1996, to offer professional development opportunities for university English teachers throughout Uzbekistan. A group of regional trainers, including several former Hornby scholars, prepared a set of in-service training materials between 2006 and 2008. This course, called DUET (Development for University English Teachers), is composed of two in-person modules that are separated by a remote learning module, where participants complete assignments that are relevant to the profession. The project team had to create a trainer training course (TTT) to improve training capacity and match the demand for DUET because it quickly gained so much popularity. DUET is still in use today and has been modified to offer English teachers from other facets of the educational system training.

Conclusion:

Novice teachers, despite their enthusiasm and eagerness to make an impact, face numerous challenges in their early careers. Effective support systems, such as induction programs, mentoring, and tailored CPD initiatives, are essential for their growth and retention. In Uzbekistan, the history and development of the English



teaching profession highlight the need for ongoing and context-specific professional development. Programs like DUET have shown promise in addressing these needs, offering a path forward for the enhancement of English language education in the country.

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