

1992

# A Field Experience: Teacher Orientation

Rena J. Talbert

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A Field Experience:

Teacher Orientation  
(TITLE)

BY

Rena J. Talbert

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Specialist in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1992  
YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

*October 13, 1992*  
DATE

*Oct. 13, 1992*  
DATE )

A Field Experience:  
Teacher Orientation Programs  
Rena Talbert  
Eastern Illinois University  
Fall 1992

Abstract

The purpose of this field experience was three fold: 1) to determine the existence of formal teacher orientation programs, 2) the contents of the programs, and 3) the level of satisfaction by the principal(s) regarding the formal teacher orientation programs for newly employed teachers. A survey of the high schools in Educational Service Centers 15, 16, 17, and 18 was conducted.

In addition, a thorough review of literature and research associated with the need and benefits from a teacher orientation program was presented. Included in the review was the components of a mentor program.

An analysis of the survey results identified three facts. One fact was that only one school actually had a formal teacher orientation program. Secondly, seventy-five percent of the schools whose administrators perceived themselves as having a formal teacher orientation program did not have an evaluation component in the program. Thirdly, none of the schools had a formal mentor program, although forty-four percent of the schools had an informal mentor program.

The findings and recommendations concluded from this study provided information regarding the need for a formal teacher orientation program and the benefits that would result for the school, community, students, and the newly employed teacher.

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Chapter 1

Overview

Introduction and Background

The teaching profession can lead to exhilaration, satisfaction, and a feeling of worthiness. Likewise, the teaching profession can lead to fatigue, depression, and a desire to change one's profession. Working in individual classrooms can lead to loneliness and a feeling of isolation. This is especially true for newly employed school teachers regardless of their prior teaching experience (Shulman, 1988).

Newly employed teachers must acclimate themselves physically and mentally to their new surroundings. Often this situation creates anxiety, confusion, and undermines a person's self-confidence. In order to assist the newly employed teachers, an organized, formal induction program would be helpful. Actually, the induction program needs to begin as soon as the contract is signed (Varah, Theune, and Parker, 1986).

A large number of private companies such as the Marriott Corporation and Disney Enterprises have very structured orientation programs (Deal and Chapman, 1989). These programs are aimed at communicating the companies' expectations, commitment to excellence, sense of history, and emphasis on quality of service. In the process, new employees gain a sense of belonging and acceptance. The Marriott Corporation

emphasizes quality and service repeatedly during the new employees' orientation process. At Disney Enterprises every new employee regardless of rank, is sprinkled with pixie dust and indoctrinated into the Disney Philosophy (Deal and Chapman, 1989).

Unlike the aforementioned companies, schools as a whole do not have structured orientation programs for newly hired teachers (Schlecht and Vance, 1983). Beginning teachers are often expected to perform like veteran teachers from the very beginning of their careers. Camp and Camp (1990) found that within the first year of teaching 15% of all teachers quit and within six years more than 50% leave the profession. The lack of a structured formal orientation program may have contributed to this negative response regarding the teaching profession.

#### Statement of the Problem

Newly employed teachers can have a profound effect on the school district and the students. Their formal indoctrination concerning school policies and values is imperative in carrying out the school's goals and objectives. The examination of teacher orientation programs reported in this field study had three purposes. The first purpose was to survey and determine the percentage of school districts which had established a formal teacher orientation program. The second purpose was to identify the content and methods used in implementing the formal teacher orientation program.

The third purpose was to obtain information regarding the extent of satisfaction that existed with the formal teacher orientation program. The survey utilized in this study was devised by this author. The results of this study were intended to provide feedback regarding the area of formal teacher orientation programs that could be adapted in order to strengthen a school district's orientation process for newly employed teachers.

#### Assumptions

The responses to the survey were assumed to be honest and sincere. It was also assumed that the random sampling of the designated geographic area would be sufficient in providing useful information for school districts interested in devising or revising a present teacher orientation program.

#### Limitations

This field experience focused on the need for, and implementation of, teacher orientation programs. Many different factors enter into the relationship between unique, individual school districts and individuals recently employed. But due to the extensiveness of individual characteristics, this field experience was limited to the concept of orientation programs in school districts regarding their newly employed teachers. The survey instrument's responses were limited to the principal's response from a random sample of public high school districts and unit districts in Illinois Educational Service Centers 15, 16, 17, and 18.

Operational Definitions

Newly Employed Teachers. Individuals with and/or without prior teaching experience who have been hired for the first time by a particular school district.

Mentor Teacher. An experienced, veteran district teacher who provides structured support and assistance to a newly employed teacher for a minimum of one year.

Teacher Orientation Program. A formal, structured school-based program designed to provide assistance and support to newly employed teachers. The program consists of goals, objectives, and intermittent meetings of at least one school year in length.

Acceptance. A feeling of being an important part of the school district and of being accepted by significant others in a school district.

Teacher Orientation Questionnaire. A questionnaire that was utilized as an instrument to survey the existence of a teacher orientation program, the content of the orientation program, and the satisfaction level of the principal's perception of the teacher orientation program.

Uniqueness of the Study

In light of the current financial condition of most school districts, the initiation of new programs without state funding is not viewed favorably. Yet, formal teacher orientation programs have proven that time spent with newly employed teachers during their first year of employment

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provides benefits for the students, teachers, overall school district and the community. Since the education of students is the main purpose of schools, then it logically follows that teachers are the most influential school resource in producing a quality education. Therefore, administrators need to emphasize the newly employed teacher's orientation process by structuring a minimum of one year's worth of activities geared toward supporting and assisting the newly hired teacher.

Too often, after newly hired teachers join the faculty they are left on their own or only given a brief overview of the school's objectives, the school system, the particular teaching position, and the community. Lasting impressions and judgments are often made from first impressions. Also during the orientation time, initial acquaintances are made with colleagues, community people, agencies, and service organizations. Since first impressions are very important, every effort should be made to orient the newly employed teacher so he/she gains a more correct impression or understanding of the overall school district and community.

Chapter II

Rationale, Related Literature and Research

Rationale

Teaching can be a lonely profession. Often, teachers work in a self-contained classroom behind closed doors. This can lead to feelings of isolation. The typical school schedule usually prevents colleagues from regularly observing one another teach. As a result, this prevents newly employed teachers from having a chance to learn from more experienced and/or better trained peers (Shulman, 1988).

Camp and Camp (1990) described teaching as one of the most difficult professions of all to master. They contend that teachers have too little time to prepare for their classroom duties. In comparison, physicians must serve a three to four year internship. Lawyers must serve as legal clerks and/or spend a set amount of time working as legal aides. Even in other professions, plumbers, electricians, and machinists must serve a specified apprenticeship period. But typically, newly employed teachers are hired, introduced to colleagues and the classroom, and then left to either "sink or swim" on their own (Varah, Theune, and Parker, 1986).

Newly employed teachers experience a complex set of problems. Many of the experiences lead to severe frustration and few successes. The veteran teachers may or may not

be aware of what the newly employed teacher is experiencing. Thus the principal's role as the building's instructional leader is vital in preparing a structured formal teacher orientation program to assist the newly employed teachers (Shulman, 1988).

#### Review of Literature and Research

Teacher orientation programs have become increasingly popular in an attempt to remedy the pleas for reforming teacher education. The Education Reform Act of 1985 passed by the Illinois General Assembly was an attempt to alleviate some of the concerns raised by the report "A Nation at Risk" (1983). During this time period the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) was mandated by the Act to conduct a review and study of the initial year of teaching and to assist in the orientation of newly employed teachers. Basically this Act identified and emphasized the need for support and assistance in regard to new teachers.

Griffin (1985) noted the public role of the teacher is a convenient target for the media and other people who are dissatisfied with the outcomes of schooling. From the generalized public dissatisfaction with public education, teachers and their roles have come under scrutiny. As a result, teacher education programs have also received attention. Part of teacher education programs include teacher orientation.

Odell (1986) studied teacher orientation programs. As a result, first year teachers and newly hired experienced teachers were found to have a remarkable degree of the same needs. Two primary needs identified by Odell (1986) were a need to obtain information about the school district and a need to obtain resources and materials pertinent to the curriculum being taught. In addition, Deal and Chapman (1989) argue that a need for organizational socialization of newly employed teachers also exists.

The stages of socialization used by schools generally include a three-stage process (Deal and Chapman, 1989) which includes the anticipatory stage, the encounter stage, and a change and acquisition stage. The anticipatory socialization stage includes all the learning that has occurred before an individual is employed. In a school setting, this stage is a very short period of time as compared to other professions. The encounter stage occurs when the newly employed teacher actually enters the school system and sees what the school is really like. At this time, some shifting of attitudes, values, and skills may happen. The idealism is being replaced with reality regarding the new teaching position. The third stage, the change and acquisition stage, includes the mastering of skills required to perform the job, successfully performing the role of teacher, and making satisfactory adjustments within the school and community.



Surprisingly these three socialization stages occur within the first few months of employment (Wanons, 1980).

Wanons (1980) identified five strategy steps in orienting new employees during the socialization stages: (a) training, (b) education, (c) apprenticeship, (d) debasement, and (e) cooptation or seduction.

Training refers to the acquisition of skills and/or knowledge regarding the job performance. Typically in schools, training is not provided by local school districts. Teachers generally must return to colleges or universities for further formal training. Informal training by a mentor, administrator, or other colleague will likely occur.

Education is the strategy by which new teachers are informed of the school's policies, procedures, and norms. This strategy is separate from the acquisition of skills or training strategy.

The third strategy, apprenticeship, contains elements of the training and education steps. Apprenticeship involves the newly employed teacher and a mentor working on a one-to-one basis with the outcome being that the newly employed teacher will receive training and education regarding the school and the community.

The fourth strategy, debasement, refers to the school's desires and attempts to become the main influence/authority in the newly employed teacher's professional life. This process, if taken to extremes, can be a very humbling

experience which may add to the person's feelings of isolation. Wanons (1980) believes this strategy can and does prompt new employees to switch occupations and/or places of employment.

The fifth and final strategy, cooptation or seduction, is a way of including the newly employed teacher in the school setting. Cooptation refers to the acceptance of the new person as a colleague and then the abruptness in which the new person is absorbed into the school. This occurs frequently in schools. Seduction is the process by which the newly employed teacher is offered several tempting choices by which to be accepted with one choice seemingly more attractive. This method is not as widely used in schools as it is in other professions/organizations.

According to Deal and Chapman (1989), few schools incorporate all five of the socialization strategies described by Wanons (1980). Most schools select the strategies which help them to indoctrinate and orient newly employed teachers to enhance and form a strong commitment to the goals and beliefs of the school district. The strategies of education, debasement, and cooptation seem to be widely used in school districts. These strategies have provided schools a process to teach newly employed teachers about the school's culture, goals, and objectives and a means to learn their individual roles within the schools.

Gorton (1991) admonished that the orientation process of newly employed teachers requires sensitive planning and careful execution. He emphasized that first impressions are very important. The manner in which new employees are presented with facts regarding the school's policies, objectives, and overall operation may become lasting impressions. Since the orientation process is so important, he suggested the building principal be responsible for planning the orientation program. Likewise, Vann (1991) stated the building principal, through an effective orientation program, could influence and build an outstanding staff.

Vann (1991) described an effective orientation program as containing (a) a clarification of the school's expectations, (b) a promotion of high standards, (c) structure, (d) an encouragement of reflective thinking and lifelong learning, (e) and an emphasis on the positiveness of the school. In addition, Gorton (1991) added areas to be reviewed in the orientation process in which the newly employed teacher might encounter problems. These areas include (a) planning and organizing for teaching, (b) motivating and evaluating students, (c) controlling and disciplining students, (d) establishing friendly/cooperative interpersonal relationships with other school employees, (e) communicating with parents and the community, and (f) building self-confidence. In reviewing the subject areas listed, it is apparent that neither a one day orientation program

nor a two or three day orientation program will suffice. According to Camp and Camp (1990) it is better to have a series of half-day workshops over a three month period of time than to have three full day workshops at the beginning of the year. A lot of information at one time tends to be overwhelming and the retention level is lower. By spacing out the orientation workshops, the newly employed teacher is provided with a base to relate the information and a time to answer questions of an impromptu nature (Vann, 1991).

Obviously a building principal cannot adequately orient newly employed teachers alone. Many schools are incorporating a mentor program to assist in the orientation process. According to Shulman (1988), the keystone to a formal mentor program is peer coaching. Peer coaching is defined as a process which involves observing instruction and providing constructive feedback. Furthermore, Shulman (1988) advocated the mentor program should have a strong commitment from the administration. The administration would need to show the commitment by providing resources, in-service training, and scheduling options for the peer consultations and observation times.

The mentoring process needs to be established in advance with the administrator, mentor, and newly employed teacher (Henry, 1990). The process should begin with an agreement between the mentor and newly employed teacher that clearly identifies the subject matter knowledge, teaching skills,

and classroom practices to be addressed. Also, a detailed description of an observation period and a follow-up conference between the mentor and the newly employed teacher needs to be reviewed. Henry (1990) indicated that mentors were critical since they could be involved on a nearly daily basis with newly employed teachers, whereas an administrator's contact would be more infrequent and would involve formal, summative evaluations. According to Henry (1990), a mentor should only provide formative growth experiences. The building administrator would perform the summative evaluations.

Reiman (1991) discussed the importance of having a formal selection program for mentors in place in a school district. The selection program should assess the candidate's commitment level to being a mentor, their ability for working with people, their skills in a broad area of teaching models, and their ability to work under stressful conditions. Davis (1991) concurred regarding the importance of the selection process for mentors. The selection needs to include only interested candidates who have the time and ability. Special caution was given in assigning the duties of a mentor to teachers as a favor or political reward by an administrator.

Davis (1991) listed several ideas in establishing the selection criteria for mentors: (a) the mentor and newly employed teacher should work in the same building, (b) they

should teach the same subject or same grade level, (c) the mentor should work with only one newly employed teacher at a time, (d) the mentor should not be a permanent mentor, (e) special provisions should be added for mentors and newly employed teachers of special needs students, (f) the mentor should have at least five years of teaching experience, (g) the mentor should possess good communication skills, (h) the mentor should be willing to receive training to be a mentor, (i) and the mentor should possess a commitment to the profession.

The building administrator has the primary responsibility for implementing and structuring the mentor selection process, the mentor program, and the overall orientation program for newly employed teachers. The principal is the building administrator in most school buildings. Vann (1991) stated that it is very important for the principal to act in a confident manner and to demonstrate the role of being a master teacher. According to Vann (1991) the role of a master teacher reinforces the principal's perception of being an instructional leader. Thus the principal's skills in classroom observation and the evaluation of newly employed teachers takes on an added dimension. In addition to the formal, evaluation periods, Vann (1991) advocated a series of scheduled meetings with the principal and all the newly employed teachers to meet as a group. Within this

setting a more collegial relationship can begin to develop where sensitive topics and routine matters can be addressed.

Wilson (1984) indicated that the main goals of an orientation program needed to be clearly defined. The overall orientation program needs to address how a newly employed teacher will learn the values, norms, and acceptable behaviors which permit one to function as a member of the school district. But Griffin (1985) cautioned against taking a totally scientific point of view in designing an orientation program. He suggested that it would be appropriate to use the scientifically derived principles of teaching effectiveness when the application of these principles are practical. However, he also emphasized that to use only the scientific principles in every school district would be dangerous. As school districts are unique, a variance in the design of the orientation program is also necessary. Griffin (1985) also emphasized the need to incorporate the knowledge and first-hand collective understanding of successful, experienced teachers in the program. Sometimes what works or what does not work, in certain school districts is due to local design.

Vann (1991) stated that the principal's role is very important in a successful orientation program. The principal, through the selection process, should help to hire the best candidates. Then the principal should help the newly employed teachers to fulfill their potential and

become outstanding teachers through an orientation program. Rebore (1987) agreed with the importance of providing an orientation program in helping newly employed teachers to achieve success and acceptance in the school and community. Two essential ingredients that a principal must contribute to a successful orientation program are commitment and time. Through commitment and time, a principal can build and maintain an outstanding staff, one teacher at a time, for years to come. Thus the orientation program will not only strengthen the school, but also the entire school district and community. As Vann (1991) referred to an orientation program, "It's an investment that will pay dividends for generations of students to come--and one that principals who view themselves as instructional leaders cannot afford to pass up" (p. 16).



Chapter III

Design of the Study

Research Questions

The survey questions were designed in order to ascertain the existence of formal teacher orientation programs, the program's content, and degree of satisfaction with the program. Questions one through ten relate to the existence of an orientation program. Questions 11 through 21 relate to the content of the programs. Lastly, question number 22 relates the satisfaction level of the principal regarding the program.

Sample and Population

As listed in the 1991-92 Directory of Illinois Public Schools, School Districts and Other Education Units published by the Illinois State Board of Education, there are 947 school districts. Of these, 423 are unit districts containing a high school and 113 are high school only districts. This author chose to sample high school only districts and/or unit districts that included a high school in Educational Service Centers 15, 16, 17, and 18 (see Appendix A). Out of a total possible 144 school districts, seventy-two surveys were mailed to the high school principals. The seventy-two schools were chosen by writing the school's district code number and county code number on a piece of paper. The pieces of paper were placed in a box and this author's son drew out seventy-two numbers. A cover

letter (Appendix B) and the survey (Appendix C) were then mailed.

Twenty-eight useable surveys were returned. Two surveys were returned which were not complete. Thus a 39% useable return rate was achieved.

#### Data Collection and Instrumentation

The survey/questionnaire utilized was designed by the author and is included as Appendix C. The design was intended to give basic identifying information. The first four questions addressed the type of district, student population, geographic make-up, and faculty size. The following six questions identified the number of newly employed teachers hired, whether previous employees had received a formal orientation program, and whether a formal, orientation program is presently being utilized. If a district did not have an orientation program, the survey/questionnaire was complete. If the principal thought the district had a formal orientation program, the next ten questions pertained to the specifics of the program. Also included was a question pertaining to whether the district had a mentor program and a question regarding the satisfaction level of the principal regarding the formal orientation program. The survey was administered by mail during the Spring of 1992.

#### Data Analysis

The results of the survey were compiled by dividing the

information into two categories. The first category was the school districts in which the principal stated that no formal orientation program existed. The second category consisted of the school districts in which the principal stated that a formal orientation program existed. This yielded an analysis of the percentage of respondents marking each choice.

Chapter IV

Results and Conclusions

Teacher Orientation Programs

The principals were asked to respond as to whether a teacher orientation program existed in their schools. Questions one through ten provided this information. As shown in Table 1, 57% of the principals stated a program did exist. School districts with enrollments of 1,001-5,000 were most likely to have established a teacher orientation program. This might be due to the larger number of faculty members involved as compared to smaller school districts. But, a higher percentage of high schools in secondary dual districts had teacher orientation programs than high schools in unit districts.

Table 1

Responses of Principals regarding the Existence of a Formal  
Teacher Orientation Program

|                         | Without a Program |     | With a Formal Program |     |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|
|                         | (N)               | (%) | (N)                   | (%) |
| All Districts           | 12                | 43  | 16                    | 57  |
| Student Enrollment      |                   |     |                       |     |
| Less than 200           | 2                 | 1   | 1                     | 0   |
| 200 - 500               | 2                 | 1   | 4                     | 14  |
| 501 - 1,000             | 6                 | 21  | 5                     | 18  |
| 1,001 - 5,000           | 2                 | 1   | 6                     | 21  |
| 5,001 - 10,000          | 0                 | 0   | 0                     | 0   |
| Type of School District |                   |     |                       |     |
| Unit District           | 6                 | 21  | 6                     | 21  |
| Secondary Dual Dis.     | 6                 | 21  | 10                    | 36  |

Teacher Resignations

The principals were also asked to respond to the total number of certified teachers employed in 1990-91 and 1991-92 in relation to the number of certified teachers who resigned in 1990-91 and 1991-92. As shown in Table 2, schools whose principals indicated they had an orientation program had .04% (four tenths of one percentage) of their cumulative total of certified staff members resign in 1990-91 with .03% (three tenths of one percentage) resign in 1991-92. Of the teachers who resigned, thirteen of the teachers only had one year teaching experience, eleven had two years experience, two had three-four years experience, and four

had five to ten years experience, eighteen had ten or more years experience and six did not answer the question. Of the total twenty-eight schools, ten or 36% of the schools stated the resigned teachers had received a formal orientation program. Interestingly, only eight of the sixteen schools whose principals presently expressed having an orientation program stated they had presented the teachers who resigned with an orientation program. On the other hand, two schools who presently do not have a formal orientation program had presented the former teachers with an orientation program. Possibly the orientation program has been discontinued.

Table 2

Teachers Who Resigned

|  | 1990 - 91 |     | 1991 - 92 |     |
|--|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|
|  | (N)       | (%) | (N)       | (%) |
| All Districts                          | 48        | .06 | 37        | .05 |
| Schools With an Orientation Program    | 31        | .04 | 23        | .03 |
| Schools Without an Orientation Program | 17        | .02 | 14        | .02 |
| Total Certified Staff in all Schools   | 796       |     | 803       |     |

Number of Years Experience of Resigned Teacher

|  | 1 yr | 2 yr | 3-4 yr | 5-10 yr | 10/more | No Ans. |
|--|------|------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| All Districts                          | 14   | 22   | 2      | 15      | 22      | 10      |
| Schools With an Orientation Program    | 13   | 11   | 2      | 4       | 18      | 6       |
| Schools Without an Orientation Program | 1    | 11   | 0      | 11      | 4       | 4       |

School Districts who had presented a Formal Teacher Orientation Program to the Resigned Teachers

|  | (N) | (%) |
|--|-----|-----|
| All Districts                                    | 10  | 36  |
| Schools Presently With an Orientation Program    | 8   | 29  |
| Schools Presently Without an Orientation Program | 2   | .07 |

Contents of the Orientation Programs

Table 3 (presented on the following page) lists the contents of the various teacher orientation programs as reported by the principals in the sixteen schools that answered affirmative to the existence of a formal orientation program. Questions eleven through twenty-one provided this information. The subject areas of school expectations and discipline were included in all sixteen or 100% of the orientation programs. An explanation of student and teacher handbooks were in 94% of the programs. The large schools of 1,001-5,000 students included curriculum planning in more orientation programs than the smaller schools. But stress management and community explanations were included in more of the orientation programs in the 501-1,000 student enrollment districts as compared to the larger schools.

Length of the Orientation Programs

According to the respondents, (table 4), 44% of the orientation programs consisted of one meeting only with the newly employed teachers. Eight or 50% of the respondents stated their programs consisted of more than one meeting, by marking the weekly category. Only one principal stated meetings were conducted on a monthly basis for a period of two years.



Table 3

Contents of the Orientation Programs

|                              | School Expectations |     | Discipline |     | Stu/Tea. Handbook |     | Curric. Plann. |     | Stress Mgt. |     | Comm. Expec. |     | Other |     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----|------------|-----|-------------------|-----|----------------|-----|-------------|-----|--------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                              | (N)                 | (%) | (N)        | (%) | (N)               | (%) | (N)            | (%) | (N)         | (%) | (N)          | (%) | (N)   | (%) |
| All Districts                | 16                  | 100 | 16         | 100 | 15                | 94  | 10             | 63  | 4           | 25  | 6            | 38  | 3     | 19  |
| District' Student Enrollment |                     |     |            |     |                   |     |                |     |             |     |              |     |       |     |
| Less than 200                | 1                   | 10  | 1          | 10  | 1                 | 10  | 0              | 0   | 0           | 0   | 0            | 0   | 0     | 0   |
| 200 - 500                    | 4                   | 25  | 4          | 25  | 4                 | 25  | 3              | 19  | 1           | 10  | 1            | 10  | 0     | 0   |
| 501 - 1,000                  | 5                   | 31  | 5          | 31  | 4                 | 25  | 3              | 19  | 2           | 13  | 3            | 19  | 2     | 13  |
| 1,001 - 5,000                | 6                   | 38  | 6          | 38  | 6                 | 38  | 4              | 25  | 1           | 10  | 2            | 13  | 1     | 10  |
| 5,001 - 10,000               | 0                   | 0   | 0          | 0   | 0                 | 0   | 0              | 0   | 0           | 0   | 0            | 0   | 0     | 0   |

Table 4

Length of Formal Orientation Program

|  | 1 Meeting Only |     | Weekly |     | Monthly |     |
|--|----------------|-----|--------|-----|---------|-----|
|  | (N)            | (%) | (N)    | (%) | (N)     | (%) |
| All Districts                              | 7              | 44  | 8      | 50  | 1       | 10  |
| District Category by<br>Student Enrollment |                |     |        |     |         |     |
| Less than 200                              | 0              | 0   | 1      | 10  | 0       | 0   |
| 200 - 500                                  | 3              | 19  | 1      | 10  | 0       | 0   |
| 501 - 1,000                                | 1              | 10  | 4      | 25  | 0       | 0   |
| 1,000 - 5,000                              | 3              | 19  | 2      | 13  | 1       | 10  |
| 5,001 - 10,000                             | 0              | 0   | 0      | 0   | 0       | 0   |

In reviewing the results, schools with medium size enrollments were more likely to have weekly meetings regarding orientation purposes. The respondents stated the weekly meetings lasted from once a week for two weeks up to once a week for nine weeks. The large schools and smaller schools were equally distributed in conducting one meeting only for orientation purposes.

Structure of the Orientation Programs

The structure of the orientation programs, as indicated in Table 5, provides more of an insight into the schools individual preferences in giving the newly employed teachers support and assistance.

The principal was the primary administrator in conducting the orientation programs. The principals conducted 44% of the sessions by themselves and 38% in conjunction with the superintendents. In total, the principal was involved in 81% of the total 16 orientation programs. The medium and

Table 5

Structure of the Orientation Programs

|                              | All Districts |     | Less than 200 |     | Student Enrollments |     |     |     | 1,001 - 5,000 |     |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------|-----|
|                              | (N)           | (%) | (N)           | (%) | (N)                 | (%) | (N) | (%) | (N)           | (%) |
| Who Conducted the Programs   |               |     |               |     |                     |     |     |     |               |     |
| Principal                    | 7             | 44  | 0             | 0   | 2                   | 13  | 3   | 19  | 2             | 13  |
| Superintendent               | 2             | 13  | 1             | 10  | 0                   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1             | 10  |
| Combination Prin/Supt        | 6             | 38  | 0             | 0   | 1                   | 10  | 2   | 13  | 3             | 19  |
| Other                        | 1             | 10  | 0             | 0   | 1                   | 10  | 0   | 0   | 0             | 0   |
| How Was Training Conducted   |               |     |               |     |                     |     |     |     |               |     |
| Individual Session(s)        | 3             | 19  | 1             | 10  | 1                   | 10  | 1   | 10  | 0             | 0   |
| Small Group                  | 12            | 75  | 0             | 0   | 3                   | 19  | 3   | 19  | 6             | 38  |
| Other                        | 1             | 10  | 0             | 0   | 0                   | 0   | 1   | 10  | 0             | 0   |
| Where was Training Conducted |               |     |               |     |                     |     |     |     |               |     |
| Central Office               | 7             | 44  | 0             | 0   | 2                   | 13  | 2   | 13  | 3             | 19  |
| Assigned School              | 9             | 56  | 1             | 10  | 2                   | 13  | 3   | 19  | 3             | 19  |
| Other                        | 0             | 0   | 0             | 0   | 0                   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0             | 0   |
| When Was Training Conducted  |               |     |               |     |                     |     |     |     |               |     |
| Regular School Time          | 6             | 38  | 0             | 0   | 2                   | 13  | 2   | 13  | 2             | 13  |
| Summer/Before School Starts  | 4             | 25  | 0             | 0   | 2                   | 13  | 0   | 0   | 2             | 13  |
| After School Hours           | 3             | 19  | 1             | 10  | 0                   | 0   | 2   | 13  | 0             | 0   |
| Other                        | 3             | 19  | 0             | 0   | 0                   | 0   | 1   | 10  | 2             | 13  |

large size schools primarily utilized the principal in this role.

Orientation sessions were conducted in small groups by 75% of the districts. Again, the large and medium schools were the forerunners in using the group method. Group sessions seem to be more time efficient and this could have been a reason for this figure.

In line with who conducted the orientation program, the training was conducted in the assigned schools by 56% as compared to the district office with 44%. The principal is the primary building administrator and this corresponds with the other totals. The large and medium schools were equally distributed in having the newly employed teachers meet in their respective assigned schools for the orientation program.

As far as when the training was conducted, Table 5 shows that 38% of the orientation programs were conducted during regular school hours. Convenience and scheduling conflicts could be contributing factors in this area. The smaller, medium, and large school districts intended to meet during regular school hours.

#### Compensation for Orientation Program

Table 6 shows that no one (neither the persons who conducted the orientation program nor the newly employed teacher) received extra compensation for participation.

Again, the time and structure figures were probably influenced by the lack of extra compensation.

Table 6

Compensation for Orientation Program

| Were Newly Employed Teachers<br>and/or Conductors of the<br>Orientation Program Com-<br>pensated Extra for Partici-<br>pation | Yes |     | No  |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|   | (N) | (%) | (N) | (%) |
| All Districts   | 0   | 0   | 16  | 100 |

Evaluation of Formal Orientation Programs

Table 7 shows that only one of the programs received a written evaluation by the participant of an orientation program. Surprisingly, 75% of the programs were not evaluated by the participants. Thirty-one percent of the large schools conducted no evaluation as compared to 19% of the smaller and medium sized schools.

Table 7

Evaluation Procedures of Orientation Program by Newly  
Employed Teacher(s)

|  | Not Eval. |     | Writ. Rpt. |     | Oral Rpt. |     |
|--|-----------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|  | (N)       | (%) | (N)        | (%) | (N)       | (%) |
| All Districts                              | 12        | 75  | 1          | 10  | 3         | 19  |
| District Category by<br>Student Enrollment |           |     |            |     |           |     |
| Less than 200                              | 1         | 10  | 0          | 0   | 0         | 0   |
| 200 - 500                                  | 3         | 19  | 0          | 0   | 1         | 10  |
| 501 - 1,000                                | 3         | 19  | 1          | 10  | 1         | 10  |
| 1,001 - 5,000                              | 5         | 31  | 0          | 0   | 1         | 10  |

As for the administrator or the conductor of the formal orientation program, likewise only one or 10% of the schools conducted a written evaluation of the program. Table 8 indicates that 75% of the programs were not evaluated, only one medium sized school conducted a written evaluation, 13% of the districts had an oral report as an evaluation by the conductor, and 10% indicated that the administrator's observation of the newly employed teacher was an evaluation of the orientation program.

Table 8

Evaluation Procedures of Orientation Program by the Administrator and/or Conductor of the Program

|   | Not Eval. |     | Writ. Rpt. |     | Oral Rpt. |     | Other |     |
|---|-----------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------|-----|
|   | (N)       | (%) | (N)        | (%) | (N)       | (%) | (N)   | (%) |
| All Districts                           | 12        | 75  | 1          | 10  | 2         | 13  | 1     | 10  |
| District Category by Student Enrollment |           |     |            |     |           |     |       |     |
| Less than 200                           | 1         | 10  | 0          | 0   | 0         | 0   | 0     | 0   |
| 200 - 500                               | 3         | 19  | 0          | 0   | 1         | 10  | 0     | 0   |
| 501 - 1,000                             | 3         | 19  | 1          | 10  | 0         | 0   | 1     | 10  |
| 1,001 - 5,000                           | 5         | 31  | 0          | 0   | 1         | 10  | 0     | 0   |

Mentor Program

In response to the question regarding the existence of a mentor program in their schools, 100% of the respondents stated they did not have a mentor program. Yet, six respondents wrote they had an informal mentor program and one responded he/she hoped to begin one. Apparently none of the schools have a written informal program, as no one returned a copy as requested on the survey.

Self-Assessment of the Orientation Program

As indicated in Table 9, 88% of the respondents stated they felt the orientation program was beneficial.

Table 9

Self-Assessment of the Orientation Program

| Do you feel the formal training program has been beneficial to the newly-employed teachers and to your district? |     |     |     |     |               |     |              |     |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------|-----|--------------|-----|
|  | Yes |     | No  |     | Did not Answ. |     | Gave Explan. |     |
|  | (N) | (%) | (N) | (%) | (N)           | (%) | (N)          | (%) |
| All Districts  | 14  | 88  | 0   | 0   | 2             | 13  | 5            | 21  |
| District Category by Student Enrollment  |     |     |     |     |               |     |              |     |
| Less than 200  | 1   | 10  | 0   | 0   | 0             | 0   | 0            | 0   |
| 200 - 500  | 4   | 25  | 0   | 0   | 0             | 0   | 1            | 10  |
| 501 - 1,000  | 3   | 19  | 0   | 0   | 2             | 13  | 2            | 13  |
| 1,001 - 5,000  | 6   | 38  | 0   | 0   | 0             | 0   | 2            | 13  |

Thirty-one percent of the respondents offered an explanation for their positive assessment of the program. Table 9 reflects their assessments and it shows that 13% of the respondents did not answer the question. Question number twenty-two on the survey provided this information.

The explanations offered as to why the respondent felt the program was beneficial were: a) the program clearly defined the school's objectives, b) it gives the new teachers support and does not leave them on their own, c) the assistance is positive, but more structure to the program needs to be done, d) the new teacher's feedback is positive and the observation of new teachers is more positive, and e) clear expectations regarding the school's environment, discipline procedures, methods, and facilities can be given in detail.



Chapter V

Summary, Findings, and Recommendations

Summary

This study focused on teacher orientation programs for newly employed teachers. This was accomplished by administering a survey to determine the existence of teacher orientation programs from a random sample of high schools in Educational Service Centers 15, 16, 17, and 18. Analysis of the survey results provided information regarding the content of the teacher orientation programs and the satisfaction level regarding them.

A thorough review of the literature and research regarding teacher orientation programs was also included. As a result, the advantages of incorporating a teacher orientation program into the schools program identified benefits for the school, the students, the community, and for the newly employed teacher.

Findings

Results of the survey indicated that 57% of the principals perceived their school as having a formal orientation program. Statistics were not significant regarding the number of employees who were employed and resigned in 1990-91 and 1991-92 in relation to the existence of a teacher orientation program.

The content areas of school expectations and discipline were included in all of the teacher orientation programs.

This inclusion emphasizes the importance of these two areas in the operation of the school. Also, receiving a 94% inclusion rate was that of student and teacher handbook information.

Eighty-eight percent of the principals stated they felt the teacher orientation program had been beneficial to their school and to the newly employed teachers. Several of the principals elaborated as to why they felt satisfied with the program.

#### Recommendations

The results of this study indicate that although 57% of the principals perceive their schools as having a formal teacher orientation program, only one school actually met this author's definition of having a formal program. In reviewing the statistics only one school had intermittent structured meetings for newly employed teachers lasting at least one year in length. Forty-four percent of the principals perceived one meeting only with newly employed teachers as a formal teacher orientation program. This indicates either a lack of knowledge on the specifics of a formal program or a need to condense the program due to constraints.

In order to improve on the structure of the program, a concentrated effort on the part of the building principal should be to promote and initiate proceedings regarding the need for a formal program. This cannot be accomplished by

the principal alone. The principal should organize a collaborative effort with other administrators and teachers in the unit/school in selling the concept and in finalizing the on-going program.

A second finding revealed that the majority (75%) of the newly employed teachers and the conductors of the program did not evaluate the program. An evaluation would provide valuable information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Furthermore, if the program is evaluated, the teaching staff might be more likely to see it as an important activity.

A third finding was that principals in forty-four percent of the districts would like to have formal or informal mentor programs, but that none of the districts had a formal mentor program. Again, the need seems to exist to have the program, but constraints or some other factor prevent it from occurring. A mentor program, as stated earlier, can enhance a formal teacher orientation program.

In light of the financial constraints regarding school funding in Illinois, the recommendations contained in this study can be implemented without additional funding. A formal teacher orientation program can certainly improve the school and community by improving the quality of education. It can also help the newly employed teacher to develop a sense of belonging and increase his/her self-confidence as a teacher.

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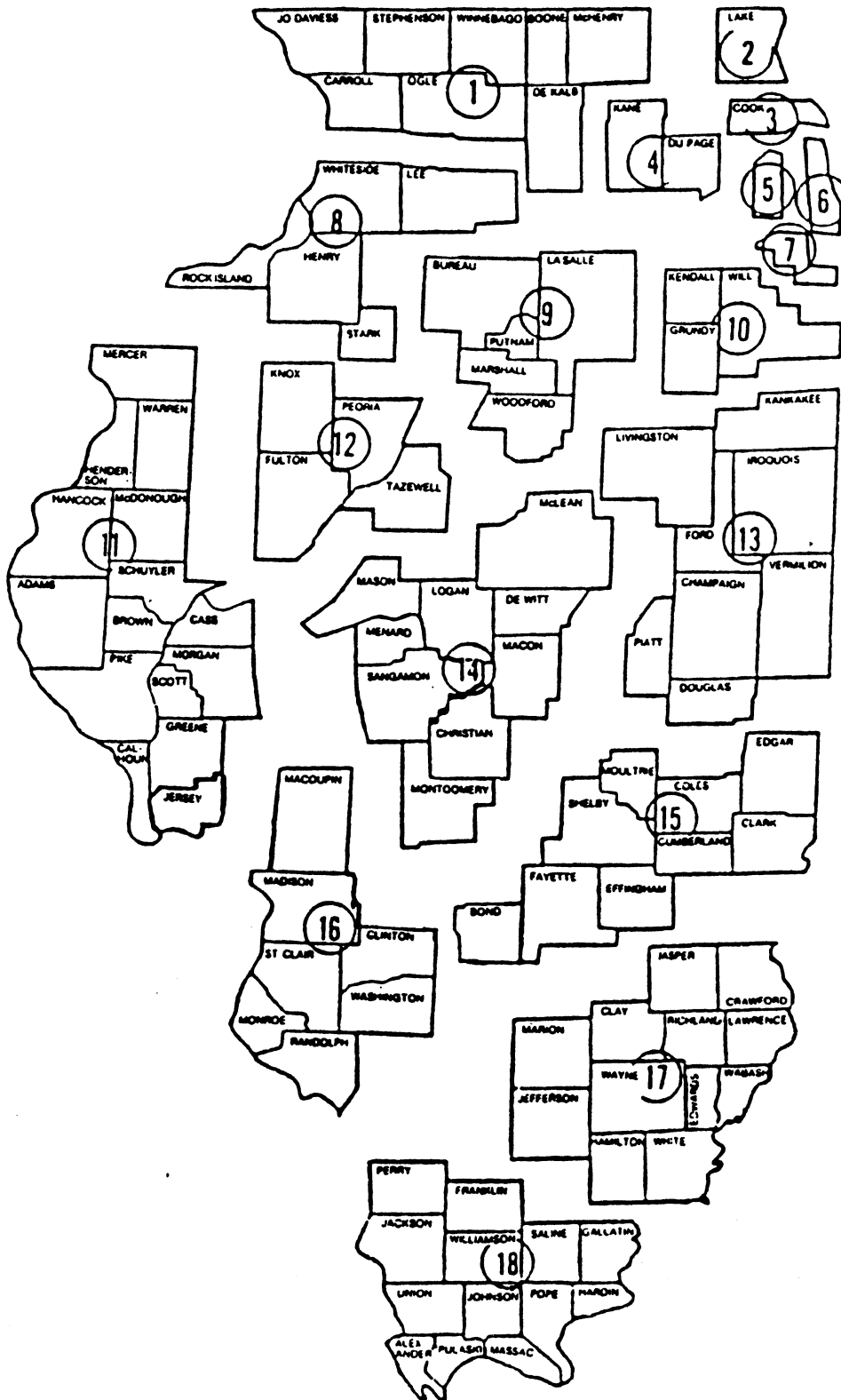
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Appendix A

Map of Educational Service Centers

### MAP OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTERS



Teacher Orientation 45

Appendix B

Cover Letter for Survey



Teacher Orientation 46

February 3, 1992

Dear Administrator:

I am in the process of fulfilling requirements for a Specialist Degree in Education at Eastern Illinois University. Would you please take five minutes of your time to respond to the enclosed questionnaire concerning activities in your school district geared toward newly employed (experienced and/or non-experienced) teachers.

Please feel free to elaborate on any question by writing on the back of the questionnaire or by enclosing an extra sheet of paper. Also, if your district has an existing, written beginning teacher program, please enclose a copy of your district's policy along with the completed questionnaire.

Your assistance in providing this data is greatly appreciated. The data will be utilized in completing my field study.

Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope by February 14, 1992. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,



Rena Talbert

RT:kk

Teacher Orientation 47

Appendix C

Teacher Orientation Questionnaire

Teacher Orientation Questionnaire

Choose one answer only.

1. Type of district: a) secondary \_\_\_\_\_ b) unit \_\_\_\_\_ c) elementary \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is your district primarily: a) urban \_\_\_\_\_ b) suburban \_\_\_\_\_  
c) rural \_\_\_\_\_
3. Present enrollment is: a) less than 200 \_\_\_\_\_ b) 200-500 \_\_\_\_\_  
c) 501-1000 \_\_\_\_\_ d) 1001-5000 \_\_\_\_\_ e) 5001-10,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
f) over 10,000 \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many certified teachers were/are employed in your district?  
In 1990 \_\_\_\_\_ In 1991-92 \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many certified teachers resigned in 1990-91? \_\_\_\_\_ and/or in  
1991-92? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many years had the certified teachers who resigned been in your  
district? a) 1 year b) 2 years c) 3-4 years d) 5-10 years e) 10 or  
more years
7. How many of the teachers who resigned received formal training for  
new employees? a) none b) one c) two d) please specify the  
number \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many non-experienced teachers did your district employ in  
1990-91? \_\_\_\_\_ In 1991-92? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many experienced teachers were originally employed in your district  
in 1990-91? \_\_\_\_\_ In 1991-92? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Were the newly-employed teachers (both experienced and non-  
experienced) given a formal training on procedures and expectations  
relevant to your district? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no  
  
If you answered no, the questionnaire is now finished. Please return in  
the enclosed envelope no later than February 14. If you answered yes,  
please continue.
11. What was the length of the formal training? a) one meeting only, meeting  
for approximately \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s) b) weekly for a number of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks,  
meeting for \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s), c) monthly for a number of \_\_\_\_\_ months d) as  
needed (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
12. Who conducted the formal training session(s)? a) Superintendent b)  
Principal c) Other Administrator d) Departmental Chairperson e) other  
(please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
13. How was the training conducted? a) individually b) small group  
c) other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
14. Where was the training conducted? a) Central or District Building  
b) assigned school c) other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
15. When was the training conducted? a) during regular hours b) before  
school c) after school d) other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

16. Is the beginning teacher compensated extra for attending the training?  
 yes  no
17. Is the trainer compensated extra for conducting the training session(s)?  
 yes  no
18. How does the beginning teacher evaluate the training session(s)? a) not evaluated  b) written report  c) oral report
19. How does the trainer evaluate the training session(s)?  
a) not evaluated  b) written report  c) oral report
20. Are the following subjects included in the training sessions(s)?
- |                             |                              |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| - school's expectations     | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> unsure |
| - discipline                | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> unsure |
| - student/teacher handbooks | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> unsure |
| - curriculum planning       | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> unsure |
| - stress management         | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> unsure |
| - community expectations    | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> unsure |
| - other (please specify)    | _____                        |                             |                                 |
21. Does your district have an assistance program other than a formal training program for newly-employed teachers such as a mentor program?  
 yes  no If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (If your district has a written program, please include a copy when returning this questionnaire.)
22. Do you feel the formal training program has been beneficial to the newly-employed teachers and to your district?  yes  no  
Please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking time to help me with my field study and for sharing information regarding your school district!