

Entry-year Teacher Handbook: Indian Lake Schools

MASTER'S PROJECT

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by

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest problems facing entry-year teachers today is the complexity of the task at hand. The student teacher is always aware that the resident teacher is available in the case of real need. The substitute teacher is aware that this is only a temporary arrangement. The entry-year teacher often feels alone and desperate, trying to control students, expedite paperwork and practice the craft of teaching. The principal that seemed so supportive in the interviews becomes distant and preoccupied. The entry-year teacher is isolated by the nature of the profession and often makes needless mistakes out of preventable ignorance.

The profession is not nearly so forgiving as it was when many of the current experienced teachers got their start. A mistake that would have cost a teacher of 20 years ago a reprimand, can, today, easily result in a lawsuit. The entry-year teacher is on a probationary contract; dismissal for perceived incompetence feels like a very real threat. Frustration among entry-year teachers runs high.

It was not the purpose of this paper to explore why this phenomena exists, but to develop a tool to deal with this problem specific to the Indian Lake Local School system. Over the course of twenty years of teaching, the author has encountered many entry-year teachers and watched their varied approaches to the profession. Some of the teachers have continued to successful teaching careers. Others have changed careers. Some that have remained in the

profession seem to be doomed to repeat the mistakes of the first year, year after year after year.

In the past year the author was involved in the Indian Lake Schools entry-year teacher-mentor program. Participation in this program, as a mentor, crystallized the notion that the first year of teaching does not have to be some kind of initiation ordeal. It is possible to have a first year of teaching that is nurturing and supportive rather than isolated and terrifying.

The author plans to participate in the entry-year program in the coming years. This handbook will be one of the tools of the program. The superintendent of Indian Lake Schools has been consulted on this project and has committed to making it a formal part of the new teacher orientation.

Being a pragmatic person, the author wished to gather information about what problems most often confound the entry-year teacher, find what additional help is needed by the entry-year teacher and provide this information to the entry-level teacher in a usable form. The handbook has been designed to become a work in progress for the entry-year teacher, incorporating journals and updates.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to create a handbook for use by all entry-year teachers at Indian Lake Local Schools. The handbook provides information about the district and its individual schools, common entry-year problems and some sources of assistance, and guidance on how to utilize the assigned mentor. The handbook reflects the personality of the current administration of Indian Lake Schools and was created with the full knowledge of the administration.

The handbook was to be an integral part of the Indian Lake Local Schools entry-year teacher program. A copy of the handbook will be made available to every mentor and entry-year teacher in the program. The value of the handbook will lie within its degree of use by the target group. It was designed to be a guide for entry-year teachers and the core of an entry-year portfolio or journal. This handbook could, conceivably, be the seed that sprouts a journal that spans an entire career. Perhaps it will be the foundation of a journal worthy of publication in years to come.

A secondary goal of the handbook was to promote professionalism among entry-year teachers. The author has a deep commitment to the notion of the teacher as a professional. This handbook was meant to guide the entry-year teacher at Indian Lake Local Schools toward an attitude of professional enthusiasm.

The handbook within this thesis was designed to be only a part of the entry-level teacher program at Indian Lake. It was developed to be a part of a program of orientation, needs assessment, mentoring, in-service training, and ongoing assistance.

Limitations

There exists an ample supply of "how to" guides for teachers to address the generic problems of the entry-year teacher. This handbook dealt with situations common to all teachers as well as those specific to Indian Lake Schools. Indian Lake Schools was selected because it is where the author teaches. The handbook was meant only for use at Indian Lake Local Schools .

The fall semester of 1994 marked the first year of a new administration and this handbook attempted to reflect the personality of that administration. It will

need to be updated in the event of a change of administration or in the case of any significant shifts in the demographics of the district. The handbook covered issues specific to the district. The value of the handbook will be in its accessibility to first-year teachers and mentors and the degree of use it receives from the intended audience.

Definition of Terms

Entry-year teacher was defined by the Ohio Administrative Code Book Rule 3301-22-02 as “any individual in the first year of employment under a classroom teaching certificate.” Entry-year teachers were sometimes referred to as beginning teachers or first-year teachers. It would not be unreasonable to expand the definition of entry-teacher to include experienced teachers that have changed assignments or returned to the profession after a leave of absence (Gordon,1991). An *experienced teacher* was any teacher with one or more years of teaching experience. A *mentor* was an experienced teacher assigned to provide professional and emotional support to an entry-year teacher. Mentoring was defined as “a relationship in which a person of greater rank or expertise teaches, guides, and develops a novice in an organization or profession ” (Gordon,1991, p.11). Teacher consultant was another term to specify a mentor. *Behavior management* was the the use of rules and routines, time and resources to maximize the classroom climate to facilitate individual student success. This included developing classroom rules and consequences for students failing to adhere to those rules. It incorporated the development of a climate that allows both the teacher and students to accomplish the task at hand (Bellon, Bellon, Blank, 1992). *Classroom management* and *classroom discipline* were considered synonymous to

behavior management. *Entry-year teacher program* was defined as a "formal, systematic effort to provide ongoing assistance to a new teacher during the induction period" (Gordon, 1991, p. 9). *Induction program and beginning teacher orientation program* were used as synonyms. The *induction year* was defined as the first year of teaching under a teaching certificate. A *problem* was considered any obstacle that interferes with the achievement of a goal (Cruickshank, 1981). A *need* was a valid concern or identified problem. *Teacher planning* was all of the processes involved in organizing content, strategies, activities and objectives (Yinger, 1980). In other words, most of the teaching processes that occur when the students are out of the room.

Significance of the Study

The handbook created in this project will be the foundation for the relationship between the mentors and the entry-year teachers at Indian Lake Schools. The handbook will serve as an encouragement to the entry year teacher. The journal or portfolio section should provide the entry-year teacher with the spark to start a professional journal that spans a career. A well organized journal could provide a teacher with the raw data for any number of research products. If nothing else, the journal will be a valuable piece of memorabilia.

The research has left the author far more qualified to be a mentor teacher. By delving into the research, the author found that assisting the entry-year teacher is much more than a couple of classroom observations and providing a shoulder for crying. The magnitude and complexity of helping an entry-year teacher is enormous, but manageable. Knowledge of the likely problems of the entry-year teacher and awareness of available, appropriate support is essential.

Summary

In this chapter the author has given some background on the problem of the entry-year teacher. Terms significant to the study were defined within the context of the study. The limitations of the study were specified. The significance of this study for the future was speculated. The chapter introduced the ideas and concepts integral to the formation of the handbook in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provided some of the pertinent research on the needs of entry-year teachers, sources of support for entry-year teachers and related topics. It included the mandates in Ohio Administrative Code involving entry-year programs and renewal of certificates.

Extensive research has been done involving the needs and problems of the entry-year teacher. While it is not within the scope of this project to review all of the published articles on the topic, a representation of research has been provided. The works of Veenman and Odell were found to be exhaustive in the identification of the problems and needs of the entry-year teacher. Their collective work identified the perceived and authentic needs facing an entry-year teacher (Veenman, 1984, 1987, 1992; Odell, 1986, Odell, Loughlin, & Ferraro, 1986-87). These needs were found to be related to certain environmental problems of entry-year teachers (Veenman, 1986; Odell, 1986).

In addition, sources of help for entry-year teachers were summarized. The sources for help were studied in an academic context. This was not meant to be a bibliography of practical sources of help but a synthesis of help indicated in some studies of programs for entry-year teachers. The work of Gordon (1990, 1991) was found to be instructive here. His Assisting the Entry-Year Teacher: A Leadership Resource (1990) was an excellent resource, useful to any school system developing or revising an entry-year teacher support program. Gordon provided a complete guide to the entry-year support program and a comprehensive guide to mentor training.

Finally, a brief discussion detailed the benefits to the school community of providing quality help to entry-year teachers. The literature all agreed that any successful entry-year teacher program will have ramifications beyond the entry-year teacher it was designed to support. Successful programs benefit the mentor, colleagues, administration, and the profession (Godly, Wilson, & Klug, 1986; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986).

Ohio Mandates Involving Entry-Year Teachers

The Ohio State Legislature made effective, as of July 1987, the entry-year teacher standard. In making entry-year programs mandatory for renewal of certificates for teaching, the State of Ohio recognized and validated the need for entry-year support for teachers. This mandate legitimized the need for the entry-year teacher support program in schools. The guidelines allowed school districts to design the entry-year support system to suit the need of the local district as long as they fulfill certain requirements (Administrative Code, Rule 3301-22-02).

The requirements described a universal entry-year teacher support program. Every entry-year teacher must be assigned a mentor for a period of at least one year. Each entry-year teacher must be oriented to the school district. The orientation must provide information about the pupils to be served; school policies, procedures and routines; courses of study, competency based education programs, and responsibilities for lesson plans; information describing the layout and facilities of the assigned school building, and any other information the entry-year teacher may need in order to be prepared for the classroom (Ohio Administrative Code, Rule 3301-22-02).

Further, the code described a program in which each entry-year teacher

shall be provided with direction in how to go about accomplishing the goals of the school curriculum and instruction in the instructional resources available related to those goals. Entry-year teachers are entitled to help with management tasks identified as especially difficult for teachers and support in the improvement of talents related to classroom management and instructional skills (Ohio Administrative Code, Rule 3301-22-02).

Entry-year teachers are the only teachers required, in Ohio, to participate in any type of induction program. It may be appropriate to extend these programs to teachers that have changed school districts, school buildings, grade levels, or content areas. These programs could also be adapted to experienced teachers that are having problems in the classroom (Gordon, 1990).

Problems facing entry-year teachers

The Dutch educational researcher, Simon Veenman, has performed extensive research on the needs of the beginning teacher. In 1984, he published a study that had been conducted in England, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Australia, Canada and across the United States. The study involved 83 bibliographic searches and covered a time frame from 1960 to 1983. This study reviewed international literature in order to form an international analysis of the problems of beginning elementary and secondary teachers (Veenman, 1984).

In this study, "Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers," Veenman (1984) concluded that there are eight problems most often associated with beginning teachers. This study involved teachers from all grade levels and from all over the world. Other problems were perceived, but was was the following eight that Veenman deemed most common:

Classroom discipline
Motivating students
Dealing with individual differences
Assessing student work
Relationships with parents
Organization of class work
Insufficient or inadequate class materials and supplies
Dealing with the problems of individual students (p. 160).

It did not make a difference as to the grade level of the teacher, nor the subject matter. These eight problems recurred with statistical reliability.

Classroom Discipline

Classroom discipline was the most common problem perceived by the beginning teachers. Veenman (1984) used discipline in a very broad definition. It encompasses most aspects of classroom management. Predictably enough it was noted that teachers having problems in the area of classroom discipline and management tended to be very negative in their relationships with successful peers. It was this group that was also most likely to leave the profession of teaching.

In the Varah et. al. (1986) description of the Wisconsin-Whitewater Teacher Induction Program, discipline and classroom management were listed as the two top problems facing beginning teachers. The review of the current literature included in this study cited discipline at or near the top of every list of problems common to beginning teachers. It was noted that no other problem caused more problems for beginning teachers than discipline.

Cruickshank (1981) identified the problem of control in his work on the identification of the problems facing teachers. He maintained that teachers foster a belief that a high degree of teacher control will result in an environment in which the students enjoy themselves and have productive learning

experiences. This was because when the students are misbehaving, the teacher is forced to spend time making decisions about how to control the behavior of the students. This feeling of being forced, by student misbehavior, to make decisions led to frustration among teachers.

Gordon (1990) repeated effective classroom management as the single greatest problem facing the entry-year teacher. He contended that the research supported his conclusion that entry-year teachers with good classroom management skills were more likely to succeed than teachers without such skills. The best teachers were those teachers with few discipline problems.

Motivating Students

Veenman's (1984) survey of principals' perceptions of the problems of beginning teachers listed student motivation as a common problem. It seemed especially prevalent in schools in the United States. Motivation of students ranked second on the list of perceived problems of beginning teachers list and predictably the secondary teachers considered this to be a greater problem than the elementary teachers. It was found to be one of the problems common to both experienced and beginning teachers.

The notion that student motivation was a pressing concern of entry-year teachers is supported by Cruickshank's (1981) description of the dilemma many entry-year teachers create when they try to promise student success. This desire to insure that all students succeed was credited with the creation of still more problems for the teacher by tempting the teacher to use invalid assessment techniques to insure success. The final result was inflated grades.

In her manual for entry-level teachers, Fuery (1991) deemed student

motivation important enough to devote an entire chapter to the topic. She linked student motivation to classroom management techniques. A well-managed classroom invited the students to increased interest in the subject matter and greater participation in class activities.

Classroom management and student motivation did seem to be linked. Teachers with effective classroom management schemes fostered students that succeed. Students in rooms without effective management tended to be off task to the point of wandering aimlessly about (Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson, 1980). Students were more likely to be successful in an environment that met their specific needs. Teachers were more likely to perform capably in an environment in which their needs have been met. (Brooks, 1985). An entry-year teacher who has experienced difficulty in motivating students may actually need to change managerial styles. Students can not be expected to remain motivated in a room full of disturbances, interruptions and distractions (Gordon, 1990).

Dealing With Individual Differences

Individualizing programs to meet the needs of the individual students was the third most frequently listed problem by Veenman (1984) and was high on his list of problems perceived by principals.

Odell et. al. (1986-87) listed the need for student individualization second only to the emotional needs of the teacher. The conclusion was that once an entry-teacher was comfortable within the classroom, the central need for support was in instructional and resource areas. In her analysis of the needs of teachers, Odell (1986) found that instructional help, including matching the teaching strategies to the students, was the second most common help provided to entry-year teachers. This type of help actually increased as the

school year progressed. The assumption was that as classroom management problems were conquered the entry-year teacher turned his focus to the instructional needs of the students. Questions in this area increased as questions about management decreased.

Gordon (1990) noted that meeting the individual instructional needs of students is closely related to the organization of the class work. In order to individualize the class work, careful planning must have taken place.

Assessing Student Work

Fourth most frequently listed by Veenman (1984) was the problem of assessing the work of students accurately. Cruickshank (1981) linked student assessment and student motivation as problems that affected each other. He claimed that teachers who were overly concerned about the success of their students tended to make mistakes in assessment, and grade inflation resulted. Odell et. al. (1986-87) suggested that questions about evaluation are cyclic and related to the grading periods and testing periods of each individual school. Gordon (1990) attributed the problem of concern over assessing students to the environmental problem of unclear expectations. Entry-year teachers were often not provided with enough district guidelines on the methods to be used for assessing and evaluating student work. Experienced teachers have a frame of reference for assessing students. Without a frame of reference built on experience, the entry-year teacher was compelled to rely on the school district policy to provide guidance in assessing students.

Relationships with Parents

Fuery addressed the problem by devoting a chapter to the need for entry-year teachers to make frequent and varied contacts with parents in order to keep the home-school communications lines running. She emphasized the

need to involve parents in every aspect of the educational process, despite beginning teachers reluctance to make parental contacts. Odell et. al. (1886-87) noted that questions about parent communications from entry-year teachers tended to decrease as the school year progressed. They did not suggest a reason but noted that after the November parent-teacher conferences, concerns about parents reduced dramatically.

Veenman (1984) listed developing relationships with parents as the fifth most frequently perceived problem. He described the problem of relationships with parents as having several aspects. Institutionalized events such as Parent's Nights and Parent-Teacher Conferences were one concern. Contacting parents and maintaining a sustaining relationship with parents was another. A common complaint was that parents were derelict in parenting skills and not supportive of the school and the teacher. Unique to elementary teachers was the complaint of frequent disruption of the class through visits and phone calls from parents. The teachers viewed these interruptions as a vote of "no confidence" from the parents.

Organization of Class Work

Organization of class work within Veenman's (1990) context was interpreted as the need for planning. Odell (1986) linked organization and planning to classroom management. She reported that the need for help in planning is cyclic, coinciding with the beginning of each new term.

Brooks (1985) noted that the central element to a successful school year is an effective plan. He suggested that first-year teachers need specific help in developing a solid plan for the school year. Failing to plan was failing to effectively teach. It was planning that he saw as the essential element in the craft of teaching.

Insufficient or Inadequate Class Materials

Insufficient or inadequate class materials and supplies was central to Odell's 1986 conclusions. She maintained that help in acquiring the proper class materials and resources is a much greater problem than any other need of entry-year teachers. If the stress of obtaining materials and resources was eliminated, the entry-year teacher can spend time taking care of the business of teaching. In other words, successful instruction was directly linked to adequate supplies, readily available.

Dealing with the Problems of Individual Students

Dealing with the problems of individual students was the final component of Veenman's (1984) list of perceived entry-year teacher needs. This did not refer to individualized instruction but to problems from outside the classroom that interfered with learning. He noted that the surveyed principals included dealing with the problems of individual students as a perceived need of beginning teachers.

Especially difficult for the young teacher was the role conflict that takes place when the teacher must keep a professional distance. Beginning teachers were found to often have highly idealized goals and plans for drastically changing the lives of their students. Teachers expected themselves to be a friend, confidant, parent substitute. The responsibility of these roles created a great deal of stress for the young, entry-year teacher (Gordon 1990).

Sources of Help for the Entry-Year Teacher

The entry-year support program has been mandated by the State of Ohio. The effect of entry-year programs can be much more than the simple satisfaction of a requirement for certification renewal. In addition, four other

goals were generally attributed to entry-year programs:

1. To increase teacher performance.
2. To increase the retention of promising beginning teachers.
3. To promote the personal and professional well-being of teachers.
4. To transmit the culture of the system to beginning teachers (Huling-Austin, 1988).

In order to meet these goals, the entry-year program must be successful in providing help, in a timely fashion, to the beginning teacher. These programs took many forms and were as diverse as the schools in which they are implemented. But any program that was successful seemed to provide both pertinent information about the school district and necessary materials and supplies for implementing teaching strategies (Odell, 1986).

Emotional Support

Not only did the entry-year teacher need to have technical support, but emotional support was also found to be vital (Odell, 1986). Reality shock-- the shock that set in when the ideals formed in undergraduate school met the realities of the classroom--was described as an authentic and demonstrable problem among entry-year teachers. The view from behind the desk was often a sorrowful reality compared to the bright expectations. The classroom was familiar, but everything was different. It was suggested that entry-level programs should be designed to soften that shock by easing the transition from college student to teacher (Veenman, 1992).

Support from Mentors

Mentoring was the element successful entry-year programs were built upon (Gordon, 1991; Varah et. al. 1986; Godley, Wilson, and Klug, 1986-87; Hawk, 1986-87; Kestner, 1994). The University of Wisconsin -Whitewater project found that a primary reason for the success of the program was the close

working relationship among the mentors and the first-year teacher (Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986). Entry-year teachers participating in mentoring programs often credited the mentor for first-year teaching success. The entry-year teachers gained self-confidence, learned technical aspects of the job, grew in creativity, better understood the school administration, developed clearer goals, and realized better people skills because of the interaction with the mentor (Gordon, 1990).

The mentor needed a collection of resources to provide for the entry-year teacher. One of the functions of the mentor was to be familiar enough with available resources that the entry-year teacher could be directed to specific help (Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986). Odell (1986) suggested emotional support was important but the most important need to address was the need for classroom materials and other teaching resources. So, the mentor was a resource person that advised the entry-year teacher on the availability of other resources. The mentor was not meant to be the sole source of help to the entry-year teacher. The mentor was a facilitator, giving personal and professional advice and presenting methods for successful teaching (Gordon, 1990).

Support from Colleagues

The entry-year teacher was described as requiring interaction with other teachers on the staff in order to gain insights and encouragement. The entry-year teacher benefited from informal relationships with the experienced teachers as well as stipulated classroom observations and formal discussion groups (Gordon 1990). Strengthening the professional relationships with other educators on staff helped to avoid the isolation that often served to cultivate negative attitudes in the entry-year teacher (Gordon, 1991).

Hawk (1986-87) noted that other teaching professionals rank second only to

mentors in degree of assistance provided beginning teachers. It was vital that beginning teachers develop strong ties to other professionals. These ties reduced the feeling of isolation and contributed to personal and professional growth. (Gordon, 1990)

Administrative Support

The principal was found vital to the growth and development of an entry-year teacher. Obvious time constraints often made access to the principal difficult for the entry-year teacher. The principal needed to be an active part of the socialization of the entry-year teacher into the building. The principal's role was that of an instructional leader (Gordon, 1990). The involvement of the principal and close communication between the principal and entry-year teacher helped to overcome the problem of ambiguity of expectations. This was accomplished by building rapport and trust throughout the school year (Gordon, 1991).

Orientation Support

Orientations to the the school year were seen as vital for the entry-year teacher. It was through the orientation that the entry-year teacher could become familiar with the community, school district policies and procedures, building policies and procedures and the curriculum. The orientation was the first step on long road. If the orientation was positive, success was more likely for the entry-year teacher (Gordon, 1991).

There was a widespread acceptance of the problems common to the beginning teacher. A needs assessment by the entry-year teacher was found to be an important part of the orientation. In order to nurture the entry-year teacher and provide the greatest opportunity for success as a professional teacher, specific needs must be identified (Veenman, 1986).

Needs assessment were accomplished in a variety of ways. The four described here can be used separately or in any combination. Personal interviews were conducted by the mentor, an administrator, curriculum supervisor, or other any qualified professional. An informal discussion was most often conducted between the mentor and entry-year teachers, although other professionals employed this technique. The goal of the informal discussion and the interview was the same, the only difference being structure. Even more structured was the use of a questionnaire. Questionnaires were be open-ended or closed-ended, and were adapted to individual school situations. The most effective form of needs assessment seemed to be the observation. The observation allowed the mentor and entry-year teacher to compare desired teaching outcomes to the reality of what was taking place in the classroom (Gordon, 1991).

First Day Support

A vital part of the orientation was the plan for the first day of, and the first week of the school year. The mentor could rehearse the entry-year teacher, once a minute-by-minute plan for the first day had been devised (Gordon, 1990). The first day plan was to be comprehensive, minute-by-minute, designed to met the needs of the students and set the tone for the school year (Brooks, 1985). An efficient classroom management plan instituted the first day of school expedited instruction though out the school year (Emmer et. al., 1980).

Planning and Time Management Support

One of the most frequent complaints of the entry-year teacher was the need for more planning time (Gordon, 1991). It may be that what was actually needed was assistance is using the planning time available (Fuery, 1991). Effective and efficient planners were able to achieve both their own personal

goals and the goals of the school district while eliciting student involvement and enthusiasm. There have been five levels of planning identified that the entry-year teacher needs to master. Yearly planning involved previewing the curriculum guide, sequencing the curriculum and arranging for texts and materials. This was commonly in an outline form. Term planning elaborated on the outline and detailed the material to be covered in the coming term. Unit planning was a compilation of the specific lessons that was to be employed to accomplish a curriculum goal. Weekly planning was the schedule for the week, complete with known schedule interruptions, with the specific lessons assigned to times of day or class periods. Daily planning was the addition of any details, lists of materials needed and preparation of the room (Yinger, 1980).

Professional Growth Support

Pickle (1985) stated that teaching is a growth profession.

Teachers, unlike Athena, do not emerge into the world fully grown. ...first-year teachers are characteristically less than professionally mature. Teaching is a complex progress in which expertise is gained over an extended period of time. (p. 55)

Reflection was established as one means to promote professional growth. Reflection was encouraged through journal writing, non-evaluative portfolios, student case studies and reviews of critical incidents. Journal writing was established at the onset of the year and consisted of any writings germane to the year's events. The journal did not necessarily need to be shared. The non-evaluative portfolio was a collection of student work samples, lesson plans, journal entries, photographs, or any item that recorded a critical incident from the year. Student case studies and reviews of critical incidents were opportunities for the entry-year teacher to gather and analyze data about a student or event (Gordon, 1991).

Benefits to the School Community of Entry-Year Teacher Support

An satisfactory entry-teacher support program should benefit more than just entry-year teachers that it served. The programs improved the teaching profession by retaining quality people in the profession. (Varah et. al. 1986). Research at the Wisconsin-Whitewater project found that entry-year teachers involved in a support program were more likely to see themselves as professional teachers, with long-term commitments to the profession and had more success in the classroom than entry-year teachers not involved in support program. In addition, principals noticed that entry-year teachers involved in a support program were less likely have classroom management problems that required the intervention of the administration than entry-year teachers not involved in support program (Varah et. al., 1986).

The mentor teacher often gained as much professional insight from participating in the program as the entry-year teacher. In an analysis of the North Carolina Induction program the majority of mentor teachers and one-half of the principals involved in the project reported that they achieved some degree of professional growth from participating in the project. Over half of the mentor teachers reported that helping an entry-year teacher improved their teaching skills, sharpened their communications skills, and helped them to understand the role of the administration in their district (Hawk, 1986-87).

The Oklahoma Entry Year Assistance Program as analyzed by Godly, Wilson and Klug (1986) indicated that;

“These professional gains are not limited to new teachers, but extend to the many individuals who interact with them. Furthermore, participation an assisting relationship aids in the establishment of a climate of collegiality that extends beyond the teacher consultant-beginning teacher diad.”(p. 71)

If entry-year teachers were socialized into the profession expeditiously, the profession benefited by inducting members with an esprit de corps and a ownership of the norms and values of the teaching profession. (Pickle, 1985).

Summary

This chapter reviewed some of the pertinent research on the needs of entry-year teachers, sources of support for entry-year teachers and related topics. It included the mandates from Ohio Administrative Code involving entry-year programs and renewal of certificates. A representation of research has been provided, dealing extensively with the research done by Veenman, Odell, and Gordon. A brief discussion sketched the benefits to the school community of providing quality help to entry-year teachers.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN

The State of Ohio has mandated a general entry-year program that included the use of mentor teachers to nurture support the entry-year teachers. The role of mentor was rewarding but also demanding. Mentors needed tools to assist in the socialization and the instruction of the entry-year teachers.

The research for this project was qualitative. Literature pertinent to the problem was reviewed in Chapter Two. The current Indian Lake Local Schools administration was given an opportunity to have some input in the project.

Research Design

The author studied pertinent literature concerning the problems of the entry-year teacher, descriptions of entry-year teacher programs and literature describing avenues of support for entry-year teachers. Chapter two described the author's research on common problems facing entry-level teachers. The author had extensive meetings with the incoming district superintendent and other professionals to determine the current goals and purposes of teaching within the Indian Lake system. The author was also able to draw on past experiences as a teacher (20 years) and as a mentor teacher.

The information from each source was synthesized and analyzed for commonality. The problems identified as common to entry-level teachers were almost universally agreed upon among the sources cited. Using the author's professional teaching experiences, pragmatic help sources were identified. Also noted was the superintendent's philosophies and suggestions. All of the above mentioned sources were the basis for the identification of topics to be

covered in the handbook.

Subjects

The handbook was designed to be used by the entry-year teachers and mentors in all four of the Indian Lake Schools beginning with the 1994-95 school year. This included one high school (9-12), one middle school (6-8) and two elementaries (K-5). An average of 5 to 10 new teachers were found to join the faculty of Indian Lake each year. Of these, about half were entry year teachers (Jim Jenkins, Superintendent, Indian Lake Schools, personal communication).

It was determined that the handbook be made available to experienced teachers that have changed assignments, as deemed necessary by the mentor teachers.

CHAPTER IV
THE HANDBOOK
INTRODUCTION

As stated in earlier chapters, this handbook was the result of a careful review of current literature on the related topics, consultation with school personnel, and judgments formed from the author's personal experiences. It was composed to address those problems detailed in Chapter Two.

PRESENTATION OF THE HANDBOOK

The subsequent pages, 26 through 57, contain the handbook as it will be distributed to the entry-year teachers and mentors at Indian Lake Local Schools.

High School
Middle School
Huntsville
Lakeview



**INDIAN LAKE
SCHOOLS
HANDBOOK FOR
FIRST-YEAR
TEACHERS**

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Welcome to Indian Lake Schools. Hopefully, this is the beginning of a long and prosperous relationship. You have had plenty of teaching theory while you toiled as an undergraduate. It is not the purpose of this handbook to expand on that. This handbook exists to give you some of the information needed in this first year at Indian Lake. It contains information about the community and the schools. It is meant to be an active guide in which you will be recording information and experiences. It will not give you the answers, but it will help you find the answers. Experience is the best teacher of teachers. Enjoy this first year.

Everyone at Indian Lake is working toward a common goal. That philosophy is expressed in this welcome from the Indian Lake Board of Education.

Welcome,

The goal of the Indian Lake Board of Education is to provide the best education possible, with available resources, to all children in the Indian Lake School district.

That goal would be impossible without a dedicated staff who accepts the responsibility of assisting in the development of our children. With their dedication, the staff shares a common goal, through education, of preparing our children to be productive members of society when the educational process is completed.

Through the years, the Indian Lake Board of Education and its administrators feel they have selected a competent staff who, judged by the educational results and their tenure at Indian Lake, demonstrates the commitment each member has made towards that goal. Each new member who is chosen to join the staff has demonstrated both the ability and the willingness to accept the responsibility of achieving that goal.

May you find many rewarding experiences along the way.

Sincerely,

Wilma J. Jacobs

Indian Lake Board of Education, President

The mission statement of the Indian Lake Schools is worth some study. This statement is the essence of education at Indian Lake. Look beyond your subject matter and never forget that you are in the business of providing people with the means to improve their lives.

Indian Lake Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the Indian Local School District is to provide an appropriate educational program and learning environment which will effectively meet the needs of its students and citizens and which will help its students accomplish educational goals which are significant, durable, and transferable.

An appropriate educational program will encompass those classroom, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities specially designed for students whose needs are met through special education, vocational education, and academic education.

A significant educational goal is one in which the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes that are acquired will be useful for much, if not all, of a person's life.

A transferable educational goal is one in which the knowledge skills, and/or attitudes that are acquired can be applied directly to another educational program, outside school to the world of work, and/or to one's personal life.

Indian Lake Schools recognizes that each child is a unique individual and that many experiences must be presented to ensure that each child is allowed maximum opportunities for a full range of human development and maximum growth.

The Board of Education, administrators, and all staff are committed to improving the delivery system of programs and services for the students of Indian Lake School District and will constantly work to improve those systems.

INDIAN LAKE SCHOOLS - THE COMMUNITY

Indian Lake is located in northwest Logan County. The school district is 110 square miles of primarily rural, agricultural real estate. The district was formed by the consolidation of the Stokes Township, Washington Township and Huntsville Local schools in the late 1950's and early 1960's. It is affiliated with the Logan County Schools and is a member of the Ohio Hi-Point Joint Vocational School District. The Logan County Office of Education provides teacher development and in-service programs, speech and hearing therapy, special programs for children with extraordinary needs, and curriculum supervision. The Ohio Hi-Point Joint Vocational School provides vocational training for 11th and 12th grade students in 23 different programs, post secondary programs through Urbana University and adult enrichment programs.

There are about 2,000 students served by the 125 teachers, 59 classified staff, 7 administrators and 9 support personnel. About 1,500 of these students are transported to and from school each day on a fleet of 18 buses. The district employs a full-time food service director and operates a cafeteria in each building. All cafeterias participate in the USDA Child-Nutrition Programs and therefore abide by all the USDA regulations. Ala carte items are available to students and teachers at most lunches.

The high school is located at the intersection of State Routes 274 and 235. It is the newest building, having been completed in 1970. About 600 students in grades 9 - 12 attend the high school building and it houses a 6th-12th grade multi-handicapped unit, administered by the Logan County Schools. The staff at the high school consists of 34 teachers, 2 guidance counselors, 2

aides, and 2 administrators. Over 135 courses are offered and a full array of co-curricular and extra-curricular programs. Students from the the athletic teams, graphic arts and music departments regularly receive local and state recognition for their accomplishments. High academic standards are stressed and the scores on the ninth grade proficiency are regularly on a par with other local districts and rank ahead of most urban districts in contiguous counties. About one-third of the graduates go on to post-secondary education . Annually the greater Logan County community awards the graduating seniors with \$50,000 to \$100,00 in local scholarships. The program at the high school is full spectrum. There are units for the Developmentally Handicapped, Learning Disabled, accelerated courses in the college preparatory tract and work-study programs.

The Middle School accommodates about 500 6th through 8th graders. It is located in Lewistown on County Road 54. The 6th grades are self contained and have limited exposure to the 7th and 8th grades. The 7th and 8th grades operate like a traditional junior high. The emphasis at the Middle School is also on academics. The PPC Club and the Study-Table program are two devices used as intervention techniques to prevent students from falling behind in academics. There are extracurricular and co-curricular programs such as sports teams, intramural sports, Student Council, Honors Art Club, and a service organization known as the Builder's Club. A show choir, The Sophisticlefts, is made up of 6th, 7th and 8th grades and performs all over the area at various events. An Academic club serves as incentive for students to achieve straight A's by rewarding those students with extra field trips throughout the year. A program unique to the Middle School is a yearly trip for selected students to such destinations as New England, Niagra Falls, Washington D. C., and

Florida. There is a comprehensive special education program with units of Developmentally Handicapped, Learning Disabled and Chapter I Math. In addition, an Enhanced Learning Program, Algebra I, and French I are offered to students that qualify for accelerated learning.

Huntsville Elementary is located on Napoleon Street in Huntsville. Students in the village of Huntsville attend this school as well as all students that live east of State Route 235 and north of the spillway at Indian Lake. Two programs are unique to Huntsville. "Reading is Fundamental" provides free books to students periodically through the school year. The Reading Recovery program provides intense reading instruction for at-risk 1st grade students. The Huntsville unit is one of only 35 sites in the state that is designated as a training center for teachers from districts across the state.

The Lakeview Elementary is located on Lake Avenue in Lakeview. It houses a Logan County Schools administrated multi handicapped unit for grades K-5. Its 600 students come mostly from the villages of Russells Point and Lakeview and all areas west and north of Indian Lake. Lakeview has an extensive Chapter I program in reading and math. The chapter teachers work with selected students and provide invaluable services helping these students improve their reading and math skills.

The two elementaries have their own, full-time, Physical Education and Music teachers and share an Art teacher. Both elementaries and the middle school have a literature based language arts programs. The math programs at Huntsville, Lakeview and the Middle School use manipulatives and emphasize pattern recognition. All four buildings have the services of a school psychologist, a speech and hearing therapist and curriculum supervision specialist provided by Logan County Schools. The Logan County Sherriff's

Department operates a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program in each of Indian Lake's schools.

Parents are very active in the education of Indian Lake Schools.

Teachers are encouraged to join the various booster groups. The Elementaries both have Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) boards that meet regularly to plan fund raisers and set policy on assisting the teachers and administration. Both have donated thousands of dollars worth of playground equipment, teaching supplies, computers and other educational furnishings. The Middle School has a Student-Teacher-Parent Board (STP) that has provided classroom supplies, purchased new computer equipment and installed carpeting on the walls of the gym. The high school has several parent committees that work on boosting academic recognition for students and combating student abuse of drugs and alcohol. Serving the entire district are the Music Boosters and the Athletic Boosters. These organizations operate various fund raisers throughout the year and provide much of the funds needed to maintain the facilities and equipment required by music and athletic departments. .

The school district has a current evaluation of about \$148,000,000 and has a tax rate of 26.75 mills. The total budget is over \$9,000,000. The other 48% comes from state and federal funds.

The school board recently placed a permanent improvement levy on the ballot, which failed. It is expected that another request for money will be forthcoming. Architectural consultants have been employed to assist the district in planning for facility upgrades or replacement. Most of the buildings are experiencing some over-crowding and it is generally agreed that some changes will need to be made in the facilities in the near future.

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YOUR MENTOR

Your mentor is not an extension of the administration. Any observations or discussions that your mentor holds are in strictest confidence. This information is not shared with the building principal or anyone. The mentor relationship is built on trust. The mentoring relationship is not a teacher/student relationship. It is an adult, professional relationship. It is established on friendship and a desire to share expertise and knowledge.

Your mentor is unique to your needs. A mentor is more than just someone to orient you to the building. Your mentor should also be able to help you perfect your teaching skills, increase the possibility that your contract will be renewed, boost your level of personal and professional growth, and empower you with the confidence needed to face the challenges of the profession. How this is accomplished is unique to every entry-level teacher/mentor relationship.

What sorts of information can the mentor provide? Almost any information is available from how to fill out lesson plan books to which janitor is most likely to help you attach hooks to your windows for hanging your house plants. Don't hesitate to ask questions of your mentor. If there is a procedure looming in the distance that you don't understand, **ask**. Your mentor may just have overlooked explaining the process because it has become automatic to him. Many of the tasks that will seem so awkward and new to you for the first few weeks will be routine and automatic in May.

Your mentor should be able to help you become active in professional organizations, share resources such as pertinent research and articles, be able to recommend other professionals from whom you can seek professional advice, offer tips from their own professional experiences and help you find resources within the community on a personal level.

As Soon as Possible.

Become as familiar as you can with the physical plant of the school. Helping lost students is much easier if you are not lost yourself! Explore the entire building, not just your wing. Huntsville and the Middle School are a mouse maze of additions and remodeling projects from over the years. It will take some practice to find your way around.

Read and study the faculty and student handbooks. The more familiar you become with the policies and procedures at Indian Lake, the more comfortable you will become their implementation. Read the negotiated agreement between the Indian Lake Education Association and the Board of Education. This will contain information about salary, personal and professional leave, sick leave policies and the like. If you have a question about your employment, see the Indian Lake Education Association building representative in your building.

Preview the course of study for all the subjects you will be teaching. The course of study is your guide to the subject matter you will cover. Plan the upcoming units within its goals and purposes. Time is precious in the classroom. Don't waste planning energy on a unit that is not appropriate for goals of the course of study. This does not mean you don't have the right to use innovative techniques. Stretch yourself. If you think that kids will understand the solar system better if they make models out of cookie dough and icing; go for it! If you love poetry and want to share it with senior social studies students, figure out a way to make it fit. It is said that we teach best what we love most.

If you are in charge of an extra-curricular activity, read the

goals and purposes for this activity. This is available in the principal's office. In addition to the goals and purposes, it will contain the budget for the organization. The goals and purposes are important because money can only be spent if it falls within the goals and purposes of the organization.

Get to know the support personnel. This is vital. The cooks, janitors, bus drivers, aides and secretaries keep Indian Lake running. Do not minimize their contribution to the education of our students. Get to know as many of the support staff as possible and treat them with professional respect. One day, when a student loses his pepperoni pizza beside your desk, you will be glad that the janitor likes you well enough to rush to your room with a mop. There will also be a day you desperately need a VCR in 10 minutes. You'll be glad that the library aide counts you as a friend. However, don't become in the habit of exploiting these friendships. The cooks might not mind loaning you a tablespoon of baking soda to finish a spur of the moment science experiment, but don't expect them to supply your entire science unit.

If you are new to Logan County, **make it a point to get to know the area.** There are plenty of retail stores in the district for shopping and browsing. Take a drive around the lake and find the places listed on your students' address cards. It's a picturesque drive to find such places as Turkey Foot Point, Five Parks, Orchard Island, and Crane Town Island. There are plenty of restaurants, snack shops and entertainment possibilities in and near the district. Patronizing the businesses in the school district is also a congenial way to get to know some of the parents and community leaders.

The First Day of School.

Be prepared. It is practical to devise a minute-by minute plan for the first day. Show this plan to your mentor and get some feed back on what you

may have forgotten to include. Plan more than what you think it will take to fill the time.

The most important task on the first day is to share your rules and procedures. You may want to have the kids share in the formulation of some of the rules. If you are going to hold a class discussion on the classroom rules, first set up the guidelines for a productive discussion. Establish your authority at the onset. Model the behavior you wish to see in your students. If one of the classroom rules is “No put downs” don’t start off with sarcastic jokes. Keep the students busy and productive that first day. Pass out the texts and get started, if time allows. If you appear unready to get down to work, the students will take your cue. Students are often a mirror of yourself. If you enter the classroom ready to work, eager to cooperate, and intolerant of behavior that detracts from learning, most of your students will follow your lead.

When explaining your classroom rules, elaborate. Go beyond just reading the list of rules. Give a student centered reason for each rule. For example, explain that the reason you require papers to be headed in a certain way is to insure that everyone gets full and proper credit for each assignment. Be sure to outline the consequences for breaking the rules. For example, if you will not give credit for late work, make that very clear from the start. It is also very important to keep good eye contact with your students during the explanation of rules and procedures. Take charge and control the first day.

On the following page is a check list of procedures you may want to include in your instructions to the students. Use it as a guide when making your first day plan.

Beginning School-Year Checklist

Use this check list to note procedures for which you have a plan. Circle any procedures that you do not currently have a plan for, but think you should. Star items that need to be ready for the first day. skip items you deem inappropriate for you grade level.

Share this completed check list with your mentor.

- _____ 1. Lunch count, daily attendance and announcements
- _____ 2. Restroom, drinking fountain, office visits
- _____ 3. Seating charts and classroom arrangement
- _____ 4. Fire Drill, tornado drill
- _____ 5. Lunch dismissal
- _____ 6. Recess procedures
- _____ 7. Tardy students
- _____ 8. Signal for teacher's attention
- _____ 9. Student movement in room
- _____ 10. Dismissal from class
- _____ 11. Student use of your desk
- _____ 12. Passing out class materials
- _____ 13. Use of shared class room supplies
- _____ 14. Turning in work, handing back work
- _____ 15. Student storage of materials
- _____ 16. Laboratory guidelines
- _____ 17. End of class clean up
- _____ 18. Student talk during seat work or study periods
- _____ 19. Student behavior after completion of work
- _____ 20. Make-up work
- _____ 21. Late work, Incomplete work
- _____ 22. Heading papers
- _____ 23. Use of manuscript or cursive
- _____ 24. Posting student work
- _____ 25. Grading policy
- _____ 26. Extra-credit assignments
- _____ 27. Posting grades
- _____ 28. Rewards and incentives for homework
- _____ 29. Rewards and incentives for behavior
- _____ 30. Parent information on rules and policies

After that first day, don't feel that you are all alone. **Don't hesitate to ask questions of your mentor and other members of the staff.**

Teaching is one of the most isolated of the professions. Teachers do not have much time to interact among each other. Principals can help, but they are often too busy or unavailable during your conference time. Make good use of your mentor and seek advice from more experienced teachers. Remember, you don't have to use every bit of advice, you can adjust the suggestions to fit your style.

Students often have problems that affect their school performance that are out of the scope of the classroom. The high school has two guidance counselors, the middle school one and Lakeview and Huntsville share a guidance counselor. If you have suspicions of child abuse, drug abuse, neglect or other drastic problems concerning a student, see the guidance counselor. Remember, you are bound by law to report any suspected child abuse to proper authorities. For classroom teachers at the present time, that means the guidance counselor, assistant principal or principal. If you are not sure about whether or not to refer a student for counseling, make an appointment with a counselor or talk to a fellow teacher and get a second opinion. Some of our kids have really big problems--bigger than what a classroom teacher can be expected to fix. Don't hesitate to get help when these situations surface in your classroom.

You may or may not have a teacher's aide assigned to you. If you do, be sure to be very clear what you expect them to do. Communication is the key. It is best to put instructions in written form so that you are both clear about the planned outcome.

If you have a child that is at-risk for failure, contact your Building Level Assistance Team. This is a school-based problem solving group that assists teachers in finding intervention strategies for at-risk students. It is a group of teachers that meet on a regular basis to brainstorm methods to meet the needs of selected students. If you suspect that a student needs special education placement, the Building Level Assistance Team is, by mandate, one of the first steps toward placement. Another excellent source of intervention techniques is The Pre-Referral Intervention Manual. Every building has at least one copy of this manual. It contains suggested intervention techniques for behaviors from tattling to drinking at school.

Don't forget the importance of parents as a resource. If you have a problem developing with a student, call the parents. Sometimes the parents only need to be made aware of a problem and a solution is forthcoming. Parents have a far greater scope of control over their children than teachers, if they chose to exercise it. Sometimes you need to devise a scheme for working together to help a student, such as a daily checklist or weekly contract. Sometimes parents will agree to hold a "carrot on a stick" at home as a reward for meeting selected goals at school. Parents can also be used as guest speakers and volunteer teacher aides. Don't hesitate to involve the parents in your classroom.

Don't forget to call home or send a note with genuine good news. Calling a parent to brag about the success of a student can do a world of good for all involved. Parents like to know more about what is going on at school than just an occasional grade report. Many times parents will share that they are more concerned with the comments on the grade card than with the letter grades.

Elementary teachers may want to initiate a running communication with parents in the form of newsletters, parent bags, or dialog journals. High School and Middle School teachers may want to try a newsletter or a weekly report card on classroom activities. In reality, written messages often never make it home and into the hands of parents. Requiring that notes be signed and returned helps. Sometimes a phone call is the most effective way to make sure the parent gets the message. Communication is the key to good parent-school relationships. If all that parents ever hear from school are negatives, it is tough for them to respond in positives.

If you are a **special education teacher**, you have probably already been introduced to the Logan County Coordinator for your specialty. If you haven't, ask your mentor to help you schedule a meeting as soon as possible. These people are in the business to help classroom teachers; give them ample opportunities to do their job. The phone number for the Logan County Schools is 599-5195.

If you have **questions about curriculum development**, call the Logan County Schools office and ask to speak to the curriculum director for your building. If you don't have a course of study or you have questions about the course of study, these are the people to see. The county school office is also the source for answers to **questions about your certification**. If you take additional course work, have all of your transcripts forwarded to the Logan County Schools Office. They are located in the Memorial Hall on Court Street in Bellefontaine. The phone number for the Logan County Schools is 599-5195.

If you have a child with a suspected hearing, speech or other health related problems, contact the school nurse. At the present time the nurse for Indian Lake is Shelley Stump, R.N. Mrs. Stump is provided

through the surfaces of the Logan County Health Department. You can best contact her by leaving a message in her mailbox in your school office or calling the Health Department at 592-9040. She will have a schedule posted in your building indicating what times she is available. There is no full-time health nurse in each building--each building has policies for handling a student that becomes ill or injured while at school. See your faculty handbook or talk to your secretary about the policy in your building.

It is a good idea to plan for the time you will be absent and a substitute will teach in your place. If you have a prepared emergency substitute folder--organized and easy to follow--it will be easier for the substitute to establish authority and maintain the standard of discipline you have promoted. You will want to include in this folder a daily schedule, information on school day routines, recess or lunch duties, locations of materials and other useful information. The following page is one example of a substitute teacher planning guide. You can make your own or purchase a substitute planning folder at most teacher supply stores.

Teaching is not an exact science--there will be problems. You may not face all of the problems in this handbook, but it is a safe bet that one of these will be at the top of your list before the end of the year. Don't let this daunt you. You don't have to have all of these problems, but some of them are going to occur. You will not solve all of these problems this year. In fact, you will still be dealing with some of them 25 or 30 years from now. Use the resources suggested below. Talk to your mentor; visit with your principal. Get help when you feel you need it.

Above all, don't ever assume that working with children is a process whereby if you do "A", then "B" will follow. Expect the unexpected. Be ready to roll with the punches and think on your feet. If first you don't succeed, pick yourself up, dust yourself off and start all over again!

Developing an effective classroom management style.

Developing your strategies this first year will be a work in progress. If you find that a part of your plan is not working - ditch it and go on. Don't sweat the small stuff. If you really don't care if kids chew gum in your classroom, don't make a rule against it. If you have a recurring problem in your classroom, develop a systematic plan to combat it. Use all those problem-solving skills you learned in undergraduate school.

However, try to avoid falling into a management rut of always stamping out brush fires. Have a plan, keep procedures simple and avoid vague rules. Make sure the students understand the rules in your class room. Plan to be at least one step ahead of the class. If you want the kids to be especially quiet for a guest speaker, don't spend the period before the speaker's arrival playing eraser tag. If you want to encourage group work, arrange the desks so the kids don't have to yell across the room to each other.

If your classroom rules and procedures are based on your own philosophy and grounded in common sense, you are on your way. If the only reason you find yourself following a procedure is because you remember that's how your teachers did it or that's how your mentor said he/she does it, you need to reevaluate. Remember, one of the main distinctions between successful and unsuccessful teachers is that the successful teacher is able to anticipate and engineer what is happening in the classroom.

When you feel you need help with management or discipline, talk to your mentor. The principal or assistant principal are also excellent consultants on this matter. It is best if you talk to them at a time when you can sit down and calmly develop a plan.

If classroom management becomes a challenge, there are books, video-tape courses, graduate classes, and in-services in abundance designed to address this problem. Talk to your mentor, other staff members, your principal, assistant principal or the curriculum supervisor and get their recommendations.

Learning the policies and procedures in your situation.

This goes back to some of those hints you were given for the first day of school. Get to know your building and get to know the procedures as soon as possible. This is where your mentor can be invaluable. Your mentor probably can not tell you a way to make Susie care enough to learn her multiplication tables, but your mentor can show you how to fill out a scan sheet or grade card correctly.

It is also a good idea to have your mentor fill you in on the quirks and idiosyncrasies of your building. Some of your colleagues may have a real bias against other teachers entering their room during class time or your principal may be hypersensitive about proper dress. The janitor that cleans your

blackboards may only do it on certain days of the week, if they have been erased. Try to learn these "survival skills" as quickly as possible. These skills are not life or death, but they do make life easier.

Obtaining needed instructional materials.

If you don't have enough textbooks, see your principal immediately. If there are not enough desks, chairs, etc., make sure that your principal knows about the situation. He won't fix it if he doesn't know it's broke. If there will be a delay in obtaining necessary materials, talk to other teachers in your department or grade level--they may have things that they could share.

If there is a special need for some supplemental materials, check to see if there is money from the PTO, STP or a booster group. There are applications each fall for grants from the Logan County Education Foundation. Other grants are available--see the curriculum supervisor for your building about availability.

If you need disposable items for a special project, consider offering extra credit if your students contribute the supplies. Many times parents are more than willing to send in supplies. Ask around school--someone may know an inexpensive source for the items.

Planning and organizing efficiently

This is a problem that some teachers never overcome. One of the number one complaints from teachers is that there is never enough time. Learn to use the time you have to your best advantage. It's a great deal easier to concentrate on presenting a concept if you are not stewing over the mountain of unfinished grading on your desk and the stack of paperwork that the office wanted yesterday.

When you do sit down to do school work, follow the same guidelines you give your students for homework. Find a quiet spot, with few distractions and a

handy supply of the materials you will need.

Keep a calendar that lists all deadlines, special events and personal appointments. Learn to use your Lesson Plan book as a weekly calendar. Make lists and prioritize them. Plan time at school to work by coming in early, staying a little late. If needed, close your door during your planning period and concentrate on the work at hand. Try working on grading papers or lesson plans during a set block of time each week. Don't assign more homework than what you can realistically grade. Sometimes it's appropriate to have students or aides grade papers.

On the other hand, do not feel that you are a unproductive or a slacker if you do not drag mountains of paperwork home each night. If you are able to get most of the work done at school, be proud of your efforts. Everyone needs to develop their own work style.

The following three pages are sample planning guides. These could be used--in addition to the lesson plan book--to help you organize your planning. Talk about these with your mentor and decide if it would be appropriate for you to try one.

Daily Plan Sheet

Date-

Priorities of the Day In Order

Progress & Results

Summary

WEEKLY ACTIVITY OR CENTER PLANNING GUIDE

WEEK OF :

ACTIVITY OR CENTER:

MATERIALS NEEDED	STUDENTS INVOLVED	ACTIVITY	MON
MATERIALS NEEDED	STUDENTS INVOLVED	ACTIVITY	TUE
MATERIALS NEEDED	STUDENTS INVOLVED	ACTIVITY	WED
MATERIALS NEEDED	STUDENTS INVOLVED	ACTIVITY	THU
MATERIALS NEEDED	STUDENTS INVOLVED	ACTIVITY	FRI

NOTES:

Grading and Testing.

Confidently assessing and evaluating the students' work is like classroom management. It may take you some time to find your style. Talk to other teachers in your department or grade level and find out what strategies they use. Be sure to read your faculty handbook and follow school policy on grading scales and grade assignments. It is mandatory that you follow the Indian Lake Schools policy in establishing a grading scale. This grading scale contains some unique grades (F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4). If this is confusing, talk to your mentor, fellow teachers or the guidance counselor.

If you have concerns about standardized tests that are required of your students, talk to a guidance counselor. Certain tests are required in certain subjects and grade levels. Language arts and mathematics teachers, at certain grade levels, are required to complete Pupil Performance Objectives. Special Education teachers have very stringent guidelines for testing. Your mentor and/or other teachers can help you with these.

Communicating with parents

The vast majority of the parents of Indian Lake students really do want to be involved in their child's education. Don't wait until you have a problem with a student to have contact with the parents. Send home your classroom rules, homework policy and course objectives at the beginning of the school year. Send home notes or make phone calls to give the parents 'good news.'" If a parent provides materials or snacks, send home a short thank you note.

There will come a time when you will have to deal with an angry or non-cooperative parent. Stay calm and stay focused on the reason for the conference. If the parent is emotional, listen without comment. Be sympathetic but don't make excuses or blame others. If the parent remains angry or

antagonistic, remind the parent that it will take both of you working together to help the child. If the parent remains angry and openly critical of you, suggest that he or she have a conference with the principal. Above all, stay calm and keep a professional demeanor.

Becoming active in booster groups is an effective way to get to know the parents of your students. It is also an excellent goodwill gesture. After all, teachers are often the beneficiaries of the funds raised by booster organizations. Another way to meet parents is to attend ball games, concerts and programs in which your students are involved. The kids always appreciate seeing their teachers at these events.

In addition, you can become active outside the school in the community. Getting to know parents outside of school is more relaxed and natural than within the confines of the school. Join a service organization, attend a local church, play Bingo, and/or visit local restaurants and stores. Just get involved.

On Becoming a Professional Teacher

Spend time getting to know your colleagues. Join professional organizations for your content area or grade level. You can gain release time to attend professional meetings. The district will provide a substitute teacher for your classes and pay for registration, mileage and lodging. Take advantage of this perk. Many of these conferences provide valuable information and reenergize you for the classroom.

Professional Growth Dairy

It is recommended that you keep a journal and/or portfolio during this first year. This can be invaluable when you plan for next year. One of the most effective tools you have in fostering your own professional growth is reflection. The portfolio need be no more than a box or a section of a file cabinet where you store artifacts from throughout the year. Such items could be a videotape of your teaching, examples of lessons that went exceptional well, photographs of your students at work or play, examples of lessons that did not go very well, letters from parents, notes from administrators, notes to yourself, or anything at all from your first year of teaching.

If you get in the habit of keeping a journal, it will almost certainly become a useful tool. This journal can be as simple as a spiral notebook with sporadic entries to using one of the following forms that details each day and time spent on each task. The journal can also be done using audio tape, if that's more convenient.

The notations in a journal can also be a practical tool in classroom management. Record in your journal your disciplinary contacts with students. Review your journal before parent or student conferences. You will be more prepared and appear more in control. Rather than saying, "Your child talks a lot in my class and I have to correct her for it frequently," you can share, "Every day for two weeks I had to stop teaching and ask your child to stop talking, at least three times, during a 40 minute class period." If you have initiated intervention procedures with a particular student, document these in your journal. If you find yourself in the process of identifying this child for a special education program, these records will be a part of the identification and assignment process. The Building Level Assistance Team can not, by mandate, recommend a child for a

special education program until it has been documented that intervention techniques within the classroom setting are ineffective in helping the student.

The following page is an example of a type of journal form. Make copies of this form or dream up your own. A spiral notebook will work fine. At any rate, keep some type of journal or portfolio. If nothing else, it will be a wonderful piece of memorabilia in the years to come.

In addition, the final two pages of the handbook are a “Needs Assessment” form for use by you and your mentor. This is meant only to be a guide for the two of you to help uncover how best to help you throughout the year. You should use this form at least three times during the year to try to insure that your needs are being met. This is a form of a diary, as your needs will change as the year progresses.

Needs Assessment for First Year Teachers

The following is meant to be a tool for use between you and your mentor. This tool is to be kept in strictest confidence and will not be any part of your employment file. It is recommended that you keep this within your portfolio.

Circle the appropriate answer:

1. Managing the classroom.

low need	some need	moderate need	high need	very high need
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2. Finding out what is expected of me by the school district, the principal, fellow teachers, parents, and others.

low need	some need	moderate need	high need	very high need
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3. Obtaining instructional resources and materials.

low need	some need	moderate need	high need	very high need
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4. Planning, organizing, and managing my time and work.

low need	some need	moderate need	high need	very high need
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5. Assessing students and evaluating student work

low need	some need	moderate need	high need	very high need
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6. Motivating students

low need	some need	moderate need	high need	very high need
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7. Learning and using effective teaching methods

low need	some need	moderate need	high need	very high need
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8. Dealing with individual student needs, interests, abilities and problems.

low need	some need	moderate need	high need	very high need
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CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICAL USE

The author opened with a description of the problems facing the entry-year teacher. These problems were many and varied. The author offered a handbook as a part of the whole solution to the dilemma of how best to assist entry-year teachers.

In Chapter Two, pertinent literature was reviewed. It was noted that most of the research agrees on the common problems perceived to be facing entry-year teachers. The researcher may have differed in assessment of the severity of the various problems, but the problems were basically the same through each study. The mentor was found to be the single most important factor in a successful entry-year induction process.

The author has composed a handbook which will give entry-year teachers at Indian Lake some viable help with an often overwhelming pursuit. In addition, this handbook will help the mentor teachers in their quest to encourage the entry-year teachers toward a successful teaching career. As a by-product, this handbook should benefit the entire profession by helping in the socialization of the beginning teachers into the accepted norms of the teaching profession. Finally, the students of Indian Lake will benefit from the exposure to entry-year teachers that possess confidence, knowledge and skill.

The next logical step would be the development of a similar tool for use by the mentor teachers in the Indian Lake Entry-Year Teacher Support program. This handbook would guide the mentor teacher in implementation of the support for the entry-year teacher.

The handbook should also be reviewed by all participants in the Indian Lake Entry-Year Teacher Program at the end of the 1994-95 school year in order to "fine tune" it. A careful appraisal of the usefulness of the handbook by the entry-year teachers and mentor teachers would be appropriate

The development of this handbook was a endeavor of concern: Concern for the profession and concern for the individuals setting out to join the profession. The author empathizes with the entry-year teachers. Every avenue of help available should be within their grasp. As with our pupils, there is no one best way to help. All reasonable approaches should be considered. This handbook was the author's contribution. It was an effort to further the ideals of the profession and the well-being of its novice members.

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