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BEGINNING TEACHERS : A REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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Introduction

The Sociology of Teaching (Waller, 1932) was one of the earliest publications to focus attention on the beginning teacher. In the latter part of this work, Waller briefly described the personality changes, such as expansion of the ego and ego frustration, which he found to occur in first year teachers. He also detailed his observations of the marked contrasts between experienced and inexperienced teachers, mentioning, for instance, that "discipline is more a problem . . . to the beginning teacher" and that "a new teacher is more likely to have an idealistic conception of the student-teacher relationship than is the older teacher" (Waller, 1932, p. 435). Although these perceptive comments still seem to have much relevance today, Waller never developed them further and, in the overall context of his treatise, they hold little prominence.

During the 1940's and early 1950's a small number of studies of beginning teachers, comprising mainly doctoral dissertations (e.g., Wallace, 1948; Homoeier, 1953; Elliot, 1954), was completed. However, in the late 1950's, particularly in Britain and the United States, the joint problem of teacher shortages and the high drop-out rate of young teachers gave rise to a new wave of studies on beginning teachers. Probably the best known of these researches was that undertaken by Mason (1961) on the status and career orientations of a sample of beginning teachers in the United States. Using postal questionnaire data, Mason was able to highlight some of the apparent reasons for the high drop-out rate of newly qualified teachers at that time (e.g., inadequate salary, desire to move into a higher ranked occupation). While the methodology of Mason's research and his conclusions relating to teacher commitment appear suspect (Ramsay, 1978), the publication of his report in 1961 clearly identified the beginning teacher as the subject of much needed research.

In the last two decades, the recognition of this need has resulted in reports of over 250 studies and a plethora of literature about the beginning teacher. In categorising this material, a broad distinction has emerged between the theory-based research and literature and that which is orientated toward the professional development and practices of beginning teachers.

Research and Literature on Professional Development

Much of the research and literature in this category has been reviewed extensively elsewhere (Ennis, 1972; Taylor & Dale, 1973; Ussher, 1977;

Battersby, 1976; Evans, 1976; Tisher et al. 1978) and either focusses on, or originates from, problems and difficulties that are reportedly encountered by beginning teachers. In this regard, prominent overseas investigations, such as those of Dropkin and Taylor (1963) and Cruickshank and his colleagues (1974, 1976), as well as Australian and New Zealand studies (e.g., Doyle, 1975; Otto, Gasson & Jordan, 1979), seem to show rather consistent problems reported by new teachers. Among the more frequent problems mentioned are the following:

- (a) handling discipline problems;
- (b) learning administrative routines and procedures;
- (c) acquiring and understanding the school philosophy;
- (d) establishing relationships with colleagues;
- (e) adjusting to the physical and emotional demands of teaching;
- (f) planning and evaluation;
- (g) difficulties with parents;
- (h) teaching some curriculum subjects.

One outcome of this emphasis on the problems of beginning teachers has been government sponsorship of investigatory and review committees and policy-orientated research in the area of teacher induction. This is particularly the case in England (see Bolam, 1975; Bradley & Eggleston, 1975, 1976, 1978; Department of Education and Science, 1971, 1976, 1977) and of late in Australia (see Fyfield et al., 1978; Mitchell, 1979) and New Zealand (see Department of Education, 1979). Once again, a common core of findings seems to have emerged, namely that:

- (a) teacher induction programmes be mandatory;
- (b) an experienced teacher should oversee the induction of beginning teachers;
- (c) provision in timetabling and staff arrangements be made for induction programmes;
- (d) teacher training institutions provide support services for induction programmes; and
- (e) beginning teachers should have their teaching loads reduced during the induction period.

Another outcome from this emphasis in the research and literature on the problems of beginning teachers has been the publication of hints and tips and various formulae for success as a beginner. Richstone (1971) in an article entitled, "First Week Survival Kit for a Brand New Teacher" provides some typical examples of these hints and tips:

Hang on to your sense of proportion; try for understanding; never say fail; criticize the act, not the child; preparation and pace preclude many problems; stroll to the trouble spot in advance; and vary the activities (Richstone, 1971, p.80).

As well, there has been a wealth of literature, often written in an emotive tone, on the trials and tribulations of first year teachers. Jackson (1974, p.102), for instance, refers to neophyte teachers as "strangers in an unfamiliar environment . . . never equipped with a sense of belonging"; Currie (1967: 403) speaks of the new teacher as one who is "alone — alone in a strange school"; Ryan (1970), Haigh (1972), Otty (1972) and Hannam et al. (1976) refer to the "formidable", "painful", "confusing" and "frightening" experiences which they claim "panic" and "terrify" all new teachers and often cause an "identity crisis"; while Crawford (1971, p.43) even refers to the "undesirable gastric distress" which besets young, uninitiated teachers. Folklore about the novice teacher also has been well documented in the form of plays and novels, some of which have had the added distinction of becoming award winning motion pictures (e.g., *To Sir With Love*; *Up The Down Staircase*; *Conrack*).

To date, this research and literature seems to have had little impact on the professional development and practices of beginning teachers. In New Zealand, for instance, teacher induction is still undertaken on a piecemeal basis; the high drop-out rate of young, beginning teachers from the profession does not seem to have changed substantially; and educational policy relating to first year teachers also appears to have been largely unaltered. Indeed, the emphasis on the problems of beginning teachers in the media (*New Zealand Herald*, 10 November, 1979), in empirical research, and in the popular, novel-like works of Ryan (1970) and Hannam et al. (1976) has cast a stereotyped image of the novice teacher as a person who is often ill-equipped to teach and struggles to survive in fitting in to the school system. This image tends to be reinforced through the publication of hints and tips for new teachers and various induction programme suggestions, such as those listed in the *New Zealand Review of Teacher Training* (1979, p.91).

Much of the research in the field is also deficient. There has been a tendency to rely on one-shot paper-and-pencil survey and questionnaire techniques to collect information on the experiences of beginning teachers. Indeed, most of the New Zealand studies have adopted this approach and, like their overseas counterparts, have done so at the expense of longitudinal, observational and case study researches (see Battersby, 1979, 1980). One outcome of this has been the failure to tap the complexities and dynamics of the everyday experiences of beginning teachers. Even those studies which have used or relied on interview and anecdotal data (e.g. Hannam et al, 1976; Shaw, 1977) generally have presented little more than a superficial and disjointed view of beginners' experiences.

The most pressing need, then, for research on the professional development and practices of beginning teachers is that which provides an indepth and systematic analysis of the everyday situations faced by

these teachers. This type of research may prove beneficial for two reasons. First, it would provide a holistic rather than a compartmentalised view of the experiences of beginning teachers. Hence, the problems these teachers face, how they adjust and cope, their successes and failures, as well as the relationships they develop with colleagues and pupils, will be seen in this wider context of their everyday experiences. Second, from this research it may be possible to derive policy suggestions, such as those which relate to teacher education and to the provisions for on-the-job training and supervision of beginning teachers.

Theory-Based Research and Literature

Much of the theory-based literature and research on the beginning teacher has its origins in the sociology of work, and, in particular, in the substantive area of professional socialisation. The history of theory and research in this field is a relatively brief one. The notion that socialisation occurs in adult life only became evident in the literature during the 1950's (e.g. Becker & Strauss, 1956; Becker & Carper, 1956) and a coherent body of theory and research on professional socialisation did not emerge until the mid 1960's. Just prior to this, the outcomes of two investigations of medical students had been published and these were to become prime exemplars of research into the making of professionals (Pemberton & Boreham, 1976). The most influential of these was *The Student Physician* (1957), based on research conducted at the Bureau of Applied Research of Columbia University under the direction of Robert K. Merton. The other publication, *Boys in White* (1961), resulted from research undertaken at the University of Kansas Medical School by Howard S. Becker and his colleagues. Since the publication of these two major works, there has been a considerable number of studies on the socialisation of occupational and professional groups, and these have been the subject for review in two comprehensive critiques.

The first of these critiques was undertaken by Olesen and Whittaker (1970). They focussed on professional socialisation studies across a number of occupational groups and were able to highlight a number of methodological and conceptual inadequacies. They claimed, for instance, that the "static, snap-shot analysis" of professional socialisation was prevalent, and yet the very term "socialisation" implied movement and change. In this context, they suggested that too little attention had been given to understanding the subjective issues in the behaviours and lives of those being studied. Further, they cautioned that "attitude", "value" and "norm" were conceptually inadequate terms and their use had clouded understanding of the process of professional socialisation. To overcome some of the deficiencies of past theory and research in this area, Olesen and Whittaker called for socialisation theories which were more closely linked to the everyday experiences of people in their occupational and professional groups.

This call for more relevant theory was reaffirmed a decade later by the authors of the second review (Ramsay & Battersby, 1979), who focussed more specifically on teacher socialisation studies and concluded that much of the research in this area was "often poorly conceived, based on shoddy methodology and reported in an alarmingly vague and confusing fashion" (Ramsay & Battersby, 1979, p.1). This conclusion was based on a detailed examination of the terminology, methodology and theoretical perspectives that were commonly employed in these studies.

On the issue of terminology, it was shown by Ramsay and Battersby that the term "socialisation" had assumed an ever-expanding range of sociological and psychological connotations, and that it was sometimes used as a synonym for acculturation and enculturation processes. Faced with these definitional dilemmas, Ramsay and Battersby concluded:

It is our contention that, while researchers should be aware that a variety of processes is taking place when a person enters a profession such as teaching, they should not allow themselves to get "bogged down" with conceptual problems. As long as a set of definitions is reached which is sufficiently clear, and which do not place blinkers on the researchers, then we believe that further debate in this area may be safely left to the philosophers. (Ramsay & Battersby, 1979, p.8).

Methodological weaknesses in research on the socialisation of teachers were also discovered by Ramsay and Battersby. A number of studies (e.g., Coulter, 1971; Anderson & Western, 1967, 1972; Kuhlman & Hoy, 1974; Warnecke & Riddle, 1974) were found to rely heavily on the use of one-shot attitude questionnaires and surveys, and after examining these researches Ramsay and Battersby made several observations which can be summarised as follows: seldom had the questionnaires been tested for reliability or validity; scores derived from the questionnaires were frequently found to refer to factors which seemed unrelated to the dimensions being tested; and high attrition and low response rates often characterised those longitudinal studies which relied on questionnaire data. In the light of these observations, the following caution was delivered:

Those researchers who focus on expressions of attitudes or opinions, or beliefs about certain behavioural changes, in questionnaires or scales, and believe these represent teacher socialisation, run considerable risk. (Ramsay & Battersby, 1979, p.10)

Ramsay and Battersby also reported on a small number of cross-sectional studies of teacher socialisation (e.g., Helsel & Krchnaik, 1972; Gibson, 1972; McNamara, 1972) which claimed to discover the behavioural and attitudinal changes in teachers. In some instances,

doubt was expressed about the validity of the conclusions of these studies. The research of McNamara (1972), which relied on a cross-sectional, small sample of women teachers, was cited as a case in point, and it was suggested that her conclusions about the commitment of women teachers could only be validly drawn from longitudinal research.

Perhaps the most obvious shortcoming in studies on the socialisation of teachers is the theoretical perspective which seems to be adopted by most researchers in the field, and this was recognised by Ramsay and Battersby when they commented that "researchers seem to have become shackled by the chains of their parent theories" (Ramsay & Battersby, 1979, p.3). A close scrutiny of the more prominent and frequently quoted studies reveals that their parentage can be traced to research undertaken by Merton and his colleagues (1957) on medical students and, in turn, to a sociological perspective known as structural functionalism. This lineage is illustrated in Figure 1.

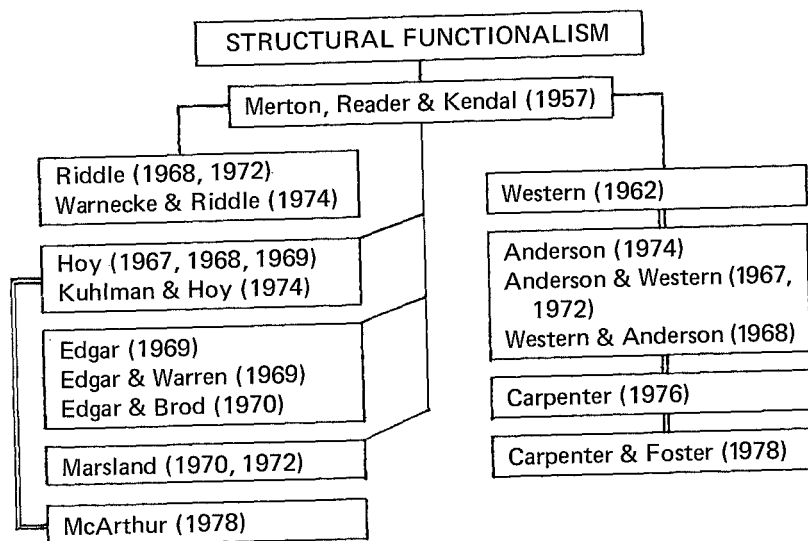


FIGURE 1: The Parentage of Some Prominent Studies of Teacher Socialisation

- direct lineage
- = lineage via its parent study

Source : Ramsay, P.D.K., & Battersby, D. *Research on Professional Socialization: A Review, Critique and a Suggestion*. Unpublished paper, 1979, p. 2.

Infused in each of the researches cited in Figure 1 is a theoretical model based on the notion that a teacher is socialised through acquiring the habits, beliefs, knowledge and dispositions which characterise the professional community of teachers. Carpenter and Foster (1978), for instance, state this quite explicitly:

[Teacher] socialisation involves pressures to change, to influence neophytes in socially desirable directions, to drop previous patterns of behaviour and accept new norms held by the socialising agent or 'significant other'. (Edgar & Warren, 1969, p.387)

One feature of this theoretical position is that teacher socialisation is seen as an input-output process which produces "man the conformer" with little recognition that the practices to which individuals may be socialised could be inadequate, undesirable or deleterious. The research of Marsland (1972) provides an illustration. Marsland argued that, although there is some variability in the process of teacher socialisation, people are "appropriately transformed" in terms of the conceptions they hold for their future role as teachers. He uses the diagram shown in Figure 2, to help explain this input-output process, where the dynamic intervening variables are professional identity (the extent to which trainees think of themselves as teachers), identity crystallisation (referring to the time when professional identity develops) and role model transformation (the extent to which trainees adopt appropriate role models).

Carpenter and Foster claim that models such as Marsland's, which are based on the structural functionalist perspective, can prove to be useful tools in conceptualising the process whereby teachers voluntarily "submit to socialisation" in order to gain something of value, such as certain skills or qualifications. This contention itself raises another criticism of the structural functionalist position, namely, that people are often seen as passive and submissive subjects, and that the teacher socialisation process is the active and domineering agent responsible for the transformation of people into teachers.

Associated with the theoretical stance of structural functionalism is an assumption that a primary goal of theory-building research on teacher socialisation is to express the orderable and causal nature of the process. Evidence can be seen graphically of this in the Marsland-like models of teacher socialisation used by Carpenter and Foster (1978), Edgar and Warren (1969), and Anderson and Western (1967), and also in the frequent and continued use of one-shot questionnaire and survey techniques which are supposedly designed to gather precise and quantifiable data which is needed to verify these notions of orderability and causality.

Although structural functionalism has been the most pervasive influence on theory-building research on teacher socialisation, it has not been the only influence. Becker and his colleagues' (1961) participant

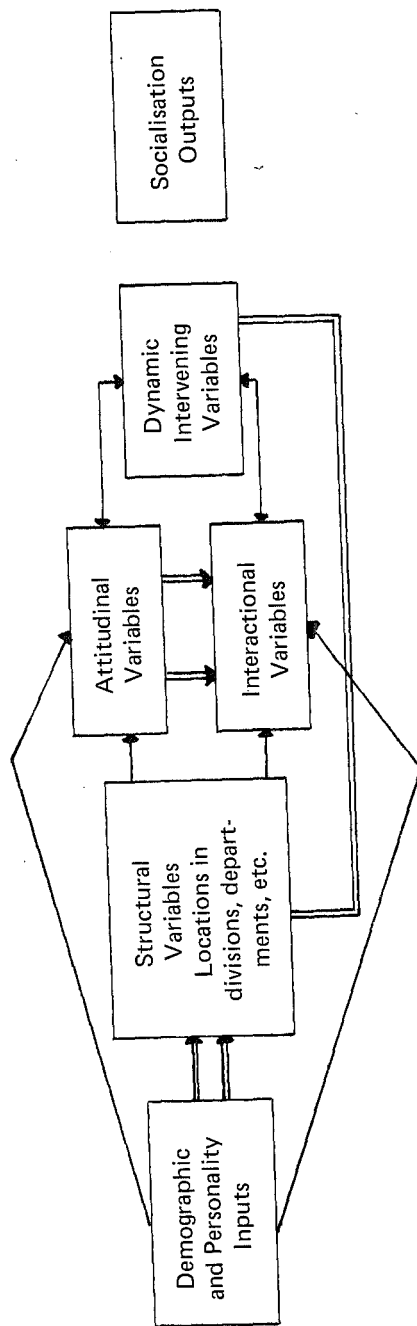


FIGURE 2: Marsland's (1972) Model of Professional Socialisation

Supposed explanatory (differentiating) power: = strong
 — weak

Source: Marsland, D. Education and training as transformation of persons: Some mechanisms of socialization. *Vocational Aspect of Education*, 1972, 24(57), p.10.

observation study of medical students, which was based on a sociological perspective known as symbolic interactionism, has been the model for a small number of studies (e.g., Raggett, 1975; Lacey, 1977). However, as Ramsay and Battersby point out, symbolic interactionists offer a perspective of teacher socialisation which differs little from that of structural functionalism in that socialisation is seen as an over-arching process whereby an individual engages in role learning which eventually "results in the situational adjustment of the individual to the culture of the profession" (Ramsay & Battersby, 1979, p. 2). Battersby and Koh (1980) extend this criticism further by suggesting that implicit in the symbolic interactionist notion of situational adjustment is a contentious assumption that individuals "turn into the kind of people a situation demands" (Battersby & Koh, 1980 p. 5).

Another, albeit negligible, influence on teacher socialisation theory has been the psychologically-based research. Here, the work of Fuller and her colleagues (1974, 1975) is probably the most noted example. Fuller's work, however, is fraught with shortcomings. Her notion of "teacher concern," for instance, is merely defined as "perceived problems or worries" and Fuller acknowledges that her empirical data on teacher concerns can be classified under other terms like "stress" and "self-concept".

Theory and research on teacher socialisation, then, can be seen to be deficient on a number of counts. Generally, past studies have been methodologically and/or conceptually inadequate. Moreover, theory-building research has been largely unproductive, and in some respects divorced from the very reality it seeks to explain. Indeed, the continued reliance on structural functionalism as a basis to teacher socialisation theory must be seriously challenged.

In an attempt to redress these shortcomings, perhaps the most obvious need is for the development of theories of teacher socialisation along the lines suggested by Olesen and Whittaker (1970) and Ramsay and Battersby (1979): that is, theories which are systematically derived from first hand knowledge about the everyday world of teachers. Such theories may then prove to be profitable starting points for empirical research on teacher socialisation.

Conclusion

To date then, studies of beginning teachers usually have been of two types: those which have sought to present an account of some of the day-to-day experiences (e.g., problems, stresses, etc.) of beginning teachers; and those which have attempted to analyse, from a theoretical perspective, the first years of teaching as a process of socialisation for teachers. This paper has shown that in both these areas, much of the research which has been carried out is found to be deficient on a number

of counts. For instance, there has been a tendency to rely solely on the use of one-shot questionnaires and surveys to collect data on beginning teachers, with the outcome that a fragmented and often incomplete picture is obtained of their experiences. Moreover, researchers studying the socialisation of beginning teachers have tended to base their investigations on established theoretical perspectives (e.g., structural functionalism) at the expense of exploring the possibility of developing new theories about teacher socialisation. The nett effect of these and other deficiencies in past studies has been the failure, on the one hand, to provide a comprehensive view of beginning teachers' experiences during their first years in the profession and, on the other, to arrive at theory about the socialisation of teachers which is grounded in data and closely tied to the everyday world of these teachers.

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CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC FACTORS AFFECTING THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF ABORIGINALS – AN ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVE

Vic Forrest *

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Introduction

Much has been written on Aboriginal education both within Western Australia and Australia generally but, in terms of the delivery of education to Aboriginal students, it can be argued that there has been little change in the attitude of those in control.

In the climate where there is a general movement away from teacher education and an emphasis on tertiary institutions to develop in other areas, a danger exists that Aborigines will continue to have teachers with little or no knowledge of the historical, cultural and linguistic differences that impede the development and achievements of Aboriginal children in the classroom.

It is within this context that this paper, in looking at Aboriginal education, will examine some of the following points:

- (a) definitions of Aboriginality;
- (b) the nature of cultural differences;
- (c) the exclusion years in Western Australia;
- (d) Government policies;
- (e) language as a barrier; and
- (f) current achievements of Aboriginal students.

It is realised that even this approach is limited when one is attempting such a broad topic. Other areas that need to be mentioned include the debate on the educability of Aborigines; the standards of housing, health and employment; and racism and the degree of overall general acceptance by white Australians who have been socialised to reject Aboriginal people. The above-mentioned areas themselves need to be researched to gain an understanding of race relations in Australia and their bearing on education for the Aboriginal child at school. These issues are too broad for the purpose of this paper.

Attitudes of the average white Australian toward Aborigines have undergone a dramatic change in the last few decades. From a history ranging from complete genocide in Tasmania to the exploitation of cheap labour in the north, Australians in recent years have, for the first time,

* Mr. Forrest is the first Aboriginal to be appointed to a Western Australian tertiary institution.