Beginning Teachers’ Experiences of Induction: the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’
Lesley Abbott, Anne Moran and Linda Clarke, University of Ulster


A teacher is never trained but always in training. (Osler Report, 2005)

Introduction
The induction of beginning teachers* presently occupies a significant position on educational policy agendas ‘after decades of marginalisation’ (McNally & Oberski, 2003: 59), and, as Heilbronn and her colleagues observe, ‘Induction has a long history’ (2002: 371). They recount attempts dating from 1925 to imbue the first year of teaching with ‘characteristics of both assessment and systematic professional development’ (p. 372), asserting that statutory induction is ‘the new teacher’s first step into full participation in the professional role of the teacher’ and that the support given at this time is crucial for the new teacher’s future (p. 376). It is a critical dimension in the formation of a teacher – the ‘transition to teacherhood’ (McNally, 2003: 65), one upon which an emergent career in education is built, and is a key phase in teacher development when practices and attitudes are formed and consolidated (Moran et al., 1999). Moreover, this important segment of a teaching career has ‘implications for teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction and career length’ (McCormack & Thomas, 2003: 125). It is more than merely orientation to the school implying a brief administrative process, but is intended to be fully planned and ongoing professional development and support (Khamis, in McCormack & Thomas, 2003).

Yet, the first year of experience as a graduate teacher is described, seemingly worldwide, in quite graphic terms, for example, in Belgium as ‘praxis shock’ (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2001), in the Netherlands as ‘reality shock’ (Koetsier & Wubbels, 1995), in Australia as ‘being ‘thrown in to the life of a school with a sink or swim philosophy’ (Rolley, 2001: 40), and in the United Kingdom (UK) as ‘a dramatic and traumatic change’ (Capel, 1998: 393) or, less drastically, as ‘teaching fledglings to fly’ (Moyles et al., 1998). In the United States (US), Darling-Hammond et al. (1999: 216) noted that, whereas in other professions novices continue to ‘hone their knowledge and skills under the watchful eyes of more knowledgeable and experienced practitioners …. The normative conditions of teaching are far from this utopian model’.

There is agreement among researchers, however, that when beginning teachers first meet the ‘survival’ stage most are generally overwhelmed and under-prepared for the workload they encounter (Dinham, in McCormack & Thomas, 2003: 126). Many can struggle during the first few years of teaching in the absence of adequate professional support, effective induction and mentoring (McCormack & Thomas, 2003). Furthermore, neglecting to provide a proper induction can result in a weakening of the commitment of new recruits to remain in the profession (Kelley, 2004). Demonstrating that ‘some induction programs may positively influence retention’ (p. 439), Kelley reports research
to that effect in New Mexico (Odell & Ferraro, 1992), in Ohio, New York and Washington (NCTAF, 1996), and in California (Strong & St. John, in Moir & Baron, 2002).

*This term (used in Northern Ireland) is employed interchangeably throughout with ‘newly qualified teachers’ (NQTs)

**What does induction comprise?**
At what may be termed the prelude to a new teacher’s career, the provision of effective support is a vital and complex matter (Draper et al., 2004). As well as the ‘socialisation process’ of newcomers to the profession (Jones, 2005), there are the practical matters of being assigned a mentor (an induction or teacher tutor), of having a reduced timetable, of both being observed and having the opportunity to observe experienced colleagues, and of developing the capacity for critical self-reflection. Harrison (2002: 256) also adds having protected time for review meetings, structured discussion with particular colleagues, visits to other schools and systematic collection of evidence for ‘a crucial summative assessment’. Suggested outcomes of this kind of induction are increased reflection; improved collegiality, openness and communication; greater teacher autonomy, self-growth and personal efficacy; increased teacher retention; less anxiety and burnout (Glickman & Bay, in Smetham & Adey, 2005: 188).

Furthermore, induction is seen as being firmly located within the arena of ‘raising standards’, and the working definition of the term as set out by DfEE (1999a) is not about the transmission of basic information about the workplace and working conditions (Kyriacou & O’Connor, 2003:186). Rather, it is:

... well-targeted support in the first year of teaching, which will in turn help [newly qualified teachers] to give their best to pupils and to make a real and sustained contribution to school improvement and to raising classroom standards. It will also provide a foundation for the [new teacher’s] long-term continuing professional development and career development. (DfEE,1999a, p.1)

Most of all, as Sharp (2006: 21) asserts, ‘A comprehensive and adequate induction needs to be provided to all beginning teachers, regardless of locality, teaching role and teaching status – contract or permanent’. Theoretically, all this is what induction is supposed to be, whereas in practice reality may differ.

**Current arrangements for induction in the UK**
Given all these inarguable benefits both in the short- and long-term, what are the current arrangements for teacher induction de nos jours? They vary throughout the UK and opinion appears divided as to what constitutes a relevant, satisfactory and fulfilling experience. Northern Ireland (NI) was the first part of the UK to introduce induction arrangements in 1997, followed by England in 1999, Scotland in 2002 and Wales in 2003 (Parkinson & Pritchard, 2005).

**England**
All newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are expected to complete a statutory induction, during which they must demonstrate that they have met the ‘Standards’ necessary for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) – the ‘mandatory gateway into the profession’ (Hextall & Mahony, 2000: 323), as specified by DfEE (1999a, b), as well as meeting all the induction standards (O’Brien, 2004). Induction lasts for one academic year, and although it need not be started straight away, it is in the beginning teacher’s best
interests to do so as soon as possible after acquiring QTS as a long delay might adversely influence employment prospects (NASUWT, 2003). It can, however, be spread over five years. Where supply teachers are concerned, in England they can start induction once they are in a post lasting one term or more (www.teachersunion.org.uk).

**Wales**

Provision for the induction of newly qualified teachers in Wales, once they have QTS, includes the statutory requirement that their teaching time does not exceed 90 percent of the average timetable. Induction should consist of an individualised programme, build on existing knowledge, skills and achievements (taking into account the Career Entry Profile (CEP)), involve the teacher tutor, include regular reviews of progress and develop the NQT’s skills of self-evaluation (NASUWT, 2005: 4-5). From 2007, NQTs in Wales are being provided with a guaranteed three years of mentoring, in-service training and learning opportunities, with access to funding for this period upon which they can draw to make choices about their individual needs and how best these may be met. Induction can be undertaken in up to three separate schools (http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/). However, the NASUWT (2005: 3) spoke of the ‘plight’ of supply teachers who do not have the luxury of this bridge from initial teacher training to effective professional practice.

**Northern Ireland**

Teacher education in NI differs from England and Wales (Moran et al., 1999) in that it has retained a competence rather than a standards approach to teacher development that is designed to embrace initial teacher education (ITE), induction and early professional development (EPD). The dominant theme of ‘partnership’ means that a lead partner acts as principal provider at each of the three stages: the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) at the initial phase, the local education authorities during induction (Education and Library Boards (ELBs)), and the schools during Early Professional Development (EPD) (NITEC & CEPD, 1998; Moran et al., 1999).

The Teacher Education Partnership Handbook (TEPH, 1998) was designed to secure a common shared approach to the provision of support for beginning teachers during all three phases of early teacher education and to have together in one place guidance for all those involved, including the beginning teacher. It is based on a model of partnership originally set out in the Department of Education’s paper *The Arrangements for Initial Teacher Education from September 1996, based on the review of teacher education taken place between 1994 and 1996*. The partnerships were predicated upon an integrated model recognizing the development of competence over time, and identifying those aspects of learning to teach which were most appropriate. In respect of ITE, the handbook explicitly states that ‘schools and HEIs have complementary roles ... each has a distinctive and particular contribution to make to the professional development of student teachers. HEIs can offer student teachers an academic and professional framework ... without the strength and practical focus given by schools, however, the programme for student teachers would be incomplete’ (TEPH, 1998: 21).

In respect of induction, the guidance document articulates the aims of induction and provides information on the effective use of the Career Entry Profile (CEP), emphasizing that it is an important link between the initial and induction phases. The roles and responsibilities of all those involved are specified in detail and the guidance explicitly states that schools should modify the programme to meet the needs of temporary
beginning teachers who are in schools for less than a year. Those employed for a year or more, for at least ten weeks and even for fewer than nine weeks (but whose contracts are extended incrementally), are entitled to almost the same level of support, the only difference being the number of occasions on which they are observed teaching which reduces to one for those employed for at least ten weeks. Beginning teachers engaged in day-to-day substitute teaching should be supported as far as possible, but they themselves are encouraged to compile a range of their teaching experiences and to keep a log which reflects their professional development (TEPH, 1998).

Because of the shortage of teaching posts in NI (see below), there is no fixed time in which a newcomer to the profession must complete induction although ‘normal’ duration is one year. In respect of temporary teachers, NITEC & CEPD (1998: 49) suggested that if they are ‘in post for a period of 8-10 weeks or more’, they should be ‘initiated into the [school’s] induction programme, albeit a condensed version’. But it is difficult to see how the haphazard experience of graduates in multiple posts as short-term temporary or supply teachers can readily lend itself to this arrangement. Moreover, the dearth of jobs has meant that many beginning teachers in the post-primary sector are not teaching subjects for which they were trained. Some are teaching in a different phase or type of school, for example trained in post-primary and teaching in primary, special schools or alternative education. In other words, multiple factors have impacted on the support which beginning teachers receive. A distinctive but related aspect is the approach to mentoring adopted within schools which, in turn, relates to the varying capacity of mentors to fulfill their role and the informal status of mentoring in NI schools.

Scotland
In Scotland, however, a very different model prevails. The McCrone Report (SEED, 2000) ensured that, ‘Early engagement in, and the development of, positive attitudes and habits in relation to professional development are now regarded as paramount for Scottish teachers’ (in O’Brien, 2004: 5). Thus, from 2002/03 there has been a one-year, guaranteed training post for all newly qualified teachers who now have a 70 percent workload, 30 percent of working time for professional development, and ten percent of an experienced teacher’s time for support (Draper et al., 2004). This was in response to the hitherto fragmented teaching experiences of new teachers on short-term contracts – ‘the ‘scandal’ of teacher induction through short-term supply’ (McNally, 2002: 149). McNally blames the ‘complex history of neglect’ for vulnerable, new teachers being increasingly used for supply teaching and being ‘subjected to a discontinuity of teaching experience which [undermines] any notion of a stable, supportive induction period’ (p. 150). Either that or they were turning to other forms of employment thus ‘becoming lost to teaching’. He refers to the appalling example of the new teacher on probation (the two-year induction period in Scotland) who had ‘122 separate periods of employment in 52 separate schools’ (in Draper et al., 1997), an extreme case, but one reflected in a current, worrying trend in NI due to continuing demographic downturn resulting in falling enrolment figures and subsequent school closures. This is also attributed to the re-employment for supply purposes of retired teachers in preference to NQTs.

Teacher education in Northern Ireland – supply and demand
A vignette briefly explains supply and demand in ITE. There are five routes: two universities provide the one-year Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), two university colleges the four-year Bachelor of Education, and the Open University the post-primary PGCE. Although those wishing to enter teacher education can, naturally, apply to institutions elsewhere, most enrol and take up posts in NI, described as a
relatively ‘closed system’ (Smith, 2003). The Department of Education uses the Teacher
Demand Model to determine how many teachers are needed each year, and also takes
into account factors such as the steady decline in the school age population
(Montgomery & Smith, 2006). This brings us to the kernel of the paper, since, as
Montgomery & Smith point out, ‘research into the employment status of beginning
teachers in recent years suggests that there are ongoing difficulties finding employment
for all those who have qualified to teach’ (p. 52). The NASUWT (2006) spoke of NI
beginning teachers being ‘let down … after the latest statistics revealed that only 22% [in
2003-04] … secured jobs in their first year’.

The Curran Report, an inquiry into Teachers’ Pay and Conditions of Service in NI (DE,
2003), had already recommended a scheme ‘similar to that in Scotland, which would
guarantee newly qualified teachers at least one year of work’:

In our view the need for continuous employment during the initial year and the
availability of consistent mentoring during early professional development is an
essential part of establishing teaching excellence. (DE, 2003, Part 1, p. 11)

Most of its recommendations were implemented, but not this one, even though in Part 2
of the report (DE, 2004), it was similarly advocated that ‘a support scheme should be
introduced to assist unemployed NQTs, in the first year after qualification, to have a
guaranteed full-time teaching post and this should be in place by September 2005
(Paragraph 78)’ (p. 6). This did not happen.

A more recent report by the Education and Training Inspectorate provided figures from
the five ELBs (ETI, 2005) clearly demonstrating that beginning teachers entering
permanent employment in 2002-03 and 2003-04 were far outweighed by those in
temporary positions. Tables 1 and 2, respectively, illustrate the employment statistics for
the two consecutive cohorts in respect of primary/nursery/special and post-primary
teachers. The data also reveal, though, that in 2002-03, half could avail of induction
(combining permanent and one-year temporary) and half could not (the remaining three
categories). The following year, those who could not had risen to almost 52 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>2002-2003 Employment patterns among NI beginning teachers: primary, nursery, special and post-primary (n=909)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-year Temporary</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1-year Temporary</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in post</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: ETI, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>2003-2004 Employment patterns among NI beginning teachers: primary, nursery, special and post-primary (n=1023)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-year Temporary</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1-year Temporary</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in post</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: ETI, 2005)
More recent figures supplied by DE (in August, 2007) indicate a continuing, gradual decrease in those obtaining permanent posts, and correspondingly fewer able to undertake full induction (combining permanent and one-year posts) (figures rounded to nearest whole number). As in Tables 1 and 2, all school sectors were combined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PNS/PP 2004-05 (n=1102)</th>
<th>PNS/PP 2005-06 (n=914)</th>
<th>PNS/PP 2006-07 (n=934)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-year Temporary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1-year Temporary</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in post</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source, DE, 2007: figures specifically requested)

The Inspectorate, nevertheless, described current arrangements for induction positively:

... generally effective in a majority of schools [interpreted quantitatively as 50%-74%], especially for the beginning teachers who are in permanent employment or who are on one-year temporary contracts. (ETI, 2005: 3)

A key area for improvement was:

In order to improve the quality of induction for beginning teachers, the teacher education partners, the General Teaching Council for NI (GTCNI) and the Department of Education need to:

- institute induction arrangements that ensure the professional development of beginning teachers on short-term contracts, part-time contracts or without employment is equitable, coherent and progressive. (p. 8)

Another area for improvement was the identification of ‘ways in which CASS and the higher education institutions (HEIs) can share their expertise and work together more systematically to ensure there is continuity and progression in the transition from initial teacher education to induction’ (ETI, 2005, 2.7: 8-9). The GTCNI itself recommended that, ‘A critical examination of the current arrangements in Scotland for a “Guaranteed Induction Year” should be undertaken with a view to evaluating the potential to introduce a similar scheme in Northern Ireland’ (GTCNI, 2005: 43).

The inevitable outcome of the competition for teaching posts in Northern Ireland, therefore, is the disparate nature of induction for a substantial minority, in itself deemed generally satisfactory, but which, in terms of actual access by beginning teachers, is highly inequitable and dependent upon employment status. At best, the new teacher registers for induction and is ‘signed off’ within their first year as a professional practitioner. At worst, they may begin induction late in their first year as a qualified teacher or not at all which is both unfair and soul-destroying.
What path ahead for teacher induction in NI?
Recently (June 2007), the teacher induction year was discussed during the Private Members’ Business Session, according to the Official Report of the Northern Ireland Assembly (Hansard). Again, reference was made to the fact that it is becoming increasingly hard for university graduates to find employment, particularly newly qualified teachers, and places on teacher training courses remain heavily oversubscribed - sometimes five times more applicants than places [in the present study, 12 applicants for every primary place in 2004-05]. The situation for graduate teachers was described by one member as ‘reaching crisis point’, there was another call to emulate the Scottish policy which has met with much praise within the profession (see Draper et al., 2004), and the Minister was asked to liaise with her Scottish counterpart in this regard. The apparently rhetorical question was asked ‘What happened to the Curran Committee of Inquiry and all its recommendations’ (see DE, 2003, 2004)? The response was that they were still ‘in the wilderness’, as direct rule Ministers ‘were not prepared to seek the resources to implement them’. The Minister herself has yet to respond.

There was clear resonance, then, with the findings presented here. The paper is based on a three-year project on values in teacher education at the University of Ulster (UU), funded by the Economic and Social Research Council’s Teaching and Learning Research Programme (ESRC-TLRP). It sought the opinions of student teachers on a wide range of issues during ITE, induction and their first year of EPD. It is on the second of these stages that the paper focuses. Specifically explored are the experiences of graduate teachers with respect to registering and ‘signing off’ induction; the sources and nature of the support provided during the first year of teaching; and their overall perceptions of personal and professional development. Not least, it examines the variation in experience resulting from the differing types of employment.

Methodology
From the 40 PGCE students in the 2004-05 cohort who agreed to be tracked into induction and EPD, 30 were contactable after qualifying of whom 16 were in the primary (P) and 14 in the post-primary (PP) sector. Both groups consisted predominantly of female (f) teachers, the primary group made up of 4 males (m) and 12 females, the post-primary of three males and 11 females.

The patterns of employment indicated in Tables 1 and 2 (ETI, 2005) are reflected in the small sample here (except for the part-time and ‘not in post’ categories), as those in permanent posts are very much in the minority (Table 4). Findings must be interpreted tentatively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
<th>UU Graduate teachers’ employment pattern during induction year (2005/06) (%) (n=30)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-to-one interviews were set up with each beginning teacher with their voluntary informed consent, and these were tape-recorded and transcribed. At the outset of the project, as PGCE students, they were fully informed of the nature and purpose of their potential involvement over the three years and this was reiterated at each stage of the
study. They were advised that they could withdraw at any time without coercion or penalty.

Findings

Profile of sample group
From the 16 primary beginning teachers, most were in temporary, one-year posts (7: 2m, 5f), six were supply teachers (2m, 4f), and three were in permanent posts of whom two had started the 2005-06 school year in a temporary capacity but soon thereafter were made permanent (3f). In the post-primary group (14), six were in temporary one-year posts (6f), five were permanent teachers including, again, one initially employed on a temporary basis (1m, 4f), and three were supply teachers (2m, 1f).

The majority (22) (73%), therefore, were in temporary posts (13: 7P, 6PP) or supply teaching (9: 6P, 3PP), with less than a third in permanent jobs (8: 3P, 5PP), with wide disparity in relation to securing employment in the induction year.

Experiences of first year of teaching
Unsurprisingly, a range of both positive and negative experiences emerged. One supply teacher, for example, could compare his highly sporadic experience in a number of schools with the benefits of a few months spent in the same place:

I started off feeling a bit like a travelling salesman ... I had to go and sell myself to so many schools just to get any work. ... from September to Christmas I was working in different schools. ... no long stint in any one school ... two to three days here, a week there, a day there and ... it did annoy me for a while because of the complete lack of routine. But from December until recently ... in the same school ... a different side of things and I enjoyed it much better. I got to know the other teachers and I got to know the kids, and I got to know my own teaching style better as well. (P, m)

Similarly, two female colleagues spent periods of widely varying duration in very different schools and also across education phases, resulting in patchy experience, uncertainty, a lack of continuity and no financial security. One said:

From September to December... all key stages right from nursery. ... a large urban school with over 600 children [and] in small rural schools with 8 pupils in Key Stage 1. From December to after Easter, ... again subbing in ... bigger ... smaller... and middle-sized schools.
(P, f)

Another was grateful to progress to three weeks’ work per month, but still needed a week-end job to make ends meet. The brief period of continuity again allowed a first sense of ownership:

... I actually got a Saturday job between September and Christmas from nine to six, because I was never sure how much money I’d be getting. I had a car to pay off. Towards Christmas ... I was getting on average about 15 days a month which was really, really good. From Easter to June I had a Primary 1 class every day and that was nice, because it gave me a wee bit of responsibility. (P, f)
By contrast, two teachers who started on temporary contracts after graduating then were made permanent (one in NI, one in Scotland) had much more favourable experiences:

I’m through the induction course … and been to about five courses, and for the first action plan I worked on behaviour management which [was] really, really useful … how do I control all these children? (P, female)

Last year, when I was studying [here], there were no jobs available for teachers newly qualified … so when West Lothian Council came over to the University and talked to the PGCE primary I was interviewed in June … and started in August. (P, f)

Post-primary experience of supply teaching also varied substantially, in employment terms, school sector and the extent to which the beginning teachers taught their own subject specialism. It could resemble a patchwork quilt. One spoke of having ‘two main blocks’ of substitute cover in the same school with ‘other individual days’; a second had a combination of substitute teaching that, in its totality, amounted to ‘29 hours teaching time [weekly] from January to June’ (PP, male); a third, qualified in Art and Design, had been in eight different schools including two in the primary sector, the longest time for a week, and although she appreciated doing Art with primary pupils said:

… [it] could be English, Science, Maths which I have no idea about, and you’re basically just there to cover a class. (PP, f)

A Technology and Design graduate in a permanent post felt very lucky to have been appointed, but was teaching “art, citizenship … PE and … a couple of junior IT classes” (PP, female). An English graduate had a one-year contract to teach RE, but said ‘I was blessed to get a year-long contract’.

Registration for induction
Most beginning teachers had registered for induction with their ELB (regardless of employment status) (24: 14P, 10PP) - all eight permanent teachers (3P, 5PP), 11 temporary (6P, 5PP) and five supply teachers (5P), but a full one-fifth of the sample did not begin the induction process at all. For those who did so, experiences were largely very positive. They had a clear picture of the structure of induction from the outset and completed, or were about to complete, and were already looking ahead.

I registered the moment I started my permanent post, and had been in touch with the [ELB] Induction Officers just enquiring when I could start. (P, f, temporary-made-permanent)

My induction year is completed now. … [the teacher tutor] said to me “Organise with the teachers for observations throughout the year, do your lesson plans, have all your preparation done, show us what you’ve prepared”. (PP, f, permanent)

I’ve … been signed off by the Board of Governors [and] starting EPD as soon as I can. (P, m, one-year temporary)

The beginning teacher in a Scottish primary school explained:
You register with the General Teaching Council Scotland ... it's called a probation year. That's where you fill in an interim, then a final, profile to apply for full registration. I'm nearly finished that process now ... weekly meetings with a mentor ... a series of ten classroom observations this year with different members of staff, and feedback.

One short-term temporary teacher had managed to continue her induction although spanning two schools:

[I registered] in the first school because I arrived at the start of September, and I've been carrying it out throughout the two schools. (PP, f, temporary)

On the other hand, most of the supply teachers tended to believe that, somehow, induction was not yet for them. One who registered for, and began, induction, decided not to continue, believing time spent in the classroom was more valuable, but thereafter regretted his decision:

I went to the first two meetings ... then I thought I preferred the experience of being in the classroom to having an induction year. Now, with hindsight, I wish I'd completed it. I was talking to friends on the [ELB] courses – that would have been great, something to have almost completed in my first year, but on the other hand, I think that when the courses were on, I had those days mapped out in school. Since then, I've put [induction] on hold. (P, m, supply)

A post-primary colleague, however, had a better experience after encouragement from a the Vice-Principal:

She said to me because I was subbing, the courses are for substitute teachers as well. They wanted everyone to apply ... so I went along. You got to meet other people who were exactly the same as yourself, and got information on courses you could attend. (PP, f)

However, demonstrating how school circumstances could militate against those on short-term contracts, when this same teacher moved to another school after Easter, she was unable to complete induction because of staff shortages:

I had completed all the lessons and observations, but they just said it wouldn't be possible in the time to get it completed because they wouldn't be able to free up teachers to come and observe me. I still have the second half of induction to do ... a project and a set of lesson plans, a scheme of work on a particular subject area, and continuous lessons. Two of those have to be observed: one by another teacher, one by your teacher tutor and at least one by the Principal – a minimum of two observations, forms to be filled in, evidence of work completed ... that sort of thing.

The picture varied strikingly for the six beginning teachers who had not registered for induction (6: 2P, 4PP) (4 PP, supply; 2 P, short-term temporary). Although the ELBs are supportive and offer short courses for beginning teachers who are supply teaching or not in employment, not all recent graduates were aware of this. Additionally, there was a perception that a beginning teacher had to be in a school for at least six weeks before
they could register for induction, and if there was observation of their teaching, it could be extremely limited. One teacher who did not begin induction until January of his first year was unhappy with the arrangements which, he felt, had adverse career implications:

I think you have to be [in a school] for six weeks before you can [register]. That was quite annoying because at the start of the year there were a number of courses I could have gone to … I’d like to have got the experience from them, but I missed out on that whole first section of courses and it means now that even though I’m half way through my induction year, I’m going to have to go back this year and do them. I think that side of things is a bit stupid …why don’t you just do the induction with everybody else and that way if you’re applying for jobs you can at least say that you’ve started? (P, m)

I don’t think it’s relevant for me at the moment because I’m just going into schools on a day-to-day basis …. (PP, f)

I sort of feel there is no point until you get a permanent job, really. I got one person [observing] me [who] gave me feedback, but it was only the one. I just didn’t get an opportunity to get a second or third. (PP, m)

**Career Entry Profile**

Just over half of the graduates were asked for their Career Entry Profile on taking up a post, all of whom were either in permanent or one-year temporary employment (17: 8P, 9PP):

… [it’s] in our induction file. (P, f, permanent)

That had to be in the portfolio and they advised you to set targets for your action plans … definitely prominent. (P, f, one-year temporary)

However, a substantial minority were not asked for it, all of whom were short-term temporary or supply teachers (13: 8P, 5PP), and fared much less well in terms of interest being shown in the CEP and action being taken to build upon it as a vital aspect of individualised support during induction.

Nobody asked for it (P, f, supply).

… one VP sort of scanned over it but didn’t make any comment. (P, m, supply)

One supply teacher who had been in seven different schools was only asked for her CEP once she obtained a permanent position:

Just the one school [asked to see it] when I got the post. They were concerned that I still had it so I could do my induction, and my teacher tutor asked to see it so that she could see where I was coming from and what I was aiming to work on, but no other school mentioned it. (P, f, supply)

Another who had been in three schools was not asked for his CEP at all. A third felt that the short duration of his employment in a range of different schools precluded any sustained work on his CEP, although he tried to focus on a limited area himself:
... the main school who was interested was the [one] I was in for a longer period of time. I think that the CEP was left down to me and what I thought I had to improve on ... but I suppose, in a way, I did take on board what I wanted to achieve. I took a smaller section and worked on it instead [as] it would have been impossible to take a huge big topic and try to work on that in a few months. (P, m, supply)

In the post-primary sector, the experiences of permanent or one-year temporary teachers were similar: “I have it completed ... two action plans, one on classroom management, the second on extra-curricular activities” (PP, m, permanent), or “It was requested by the teacher tutor as a starting point for our teaching plan” (PP, f, permanent), or:

It was excellent .... It made total sense and I knew exactly what I was meant to do. It wasn’t just doing it for a paper exercise. It was an integrated part of professional development. (PP, f, permanent)

... the areas of, well, we will call them weaknesses, that I really wanted to improve upon, I thought, “OK, let’s go for that for induction year” - things that all beginning teachers worry about, classroom management, owning the space in your room and really motivating the kids ... all part of what I pursued in my induction. (PP, f, temporary)

Two post-primary supply teachers in this phase, when asked whether anyone had asked to see their CEP - one in three schools, the other in eight - said, respectively, “No, never” (m) and (emphatically) “No!” (f). Another who had been in teaching in two schools responded, “That was a complete waste of time. Complete waste of time” (m). Again, vastly differing experiences dependent on the employment status of the beginning teachers were all too apparent.

**Pursuing a Personal Action Plan**

Most beginning teachers were pursuing a Personal Action Plan (23: 13P, 10PP) linked to their own needs as expressed through the CEP (also classroom needs), and usually drawn up by the beginning teacher in consultation with the teacher tutor. However, the nature and extent of support for this varied markedly, as did the links between the Personal Action Plan and the school development plan:

The first one, it kind of fitted in with the school development as well ... to integrate investigative maths lessons into the six-week planner, and to do one per term, so I did that between Christmas and Easter. Then after that, I found that the literacy hour tended to slump, so ... I went to the induction training day for literacy ... it gave me different ideas for developing comprehension skills. (P, f, temporary)

Induction is made up of two cycles and you have two action plans. The first I did on positive discipline and introduced strategies into the classroom. The second I did pastoral care [as] our school was reviewing the pastoral care policy, so I became part of the core action group to bring it up to date. (P, f, temporary)
I did most of my first action plan, but that was never completely finished. ... but with the amount of extra curricular activity and so on in the Department that all came to a standstill. My teacher tutor was aware of the pressures that I was under and she didn't pressure me to get that finished, so it kind of fell by the wayside. Then at the start of this term, there was no mention of it at all from my teacher tutor, which is interesting. (P, f, temporary)

From the seven less fortunate individuals who were not pursuing a Personal Action Plan (3P, 4PP) (5 supply and 2 temporary teachers), one said despondently, “Maybe next year” (P, m).

Sources and nature of support received during induction
Firstly, the source of support during induction was most likely to be other beginning teachers (24: 15P, 9PP), stated by all but one in the primary phase and over half in the post-primary sector. Other teachers were cited second (20: 11P, 9PP), followed by teacher tutors (18: 10P, 8PP), then Principals, although less so amongst post-primary respondents (16: 12P, 4PP), then ELB induction officers (15: 10P, 5PP). Vice- Principals were mentioned by 5 teachers (P) and Heads of Departments by 3 (PP) and seven said that they kept in contact with PGCE colleagues (5P, 2PP). Two primary teachers in each case had support from friends and relatives. Very much in the minority as a source of support during the first year of teaching were PGCE tutors (2: 1P, 1PP), friends who were teachers (2P), and relatives (2P).

No beginning teacher received support from the GTCNI, although a typical comment was that they only heard from them “when they are taking money out of my bank account”!

Secondly, from those who identified the nature of support received during induction, most said it related to professional development (14: 8P, 6PP), and to the provision of resources (14: 7P, 7PP). Twelve referred to being given advice and encouragement (6P, 6PP), six to help with action plans (5P, 1PP) and three to guidance on discipline (2P, 1PP). Seven in the primary sector had support with teaching strategies, and four with ideas and information about their ELB. These two sets of data came from 13 temporary, 8 permanent and three supply teachers. Six supply teachers could offer no responses to either source or nature of support.

Overall view of induction experience
Most beginning teachers spoke highly or favourably about induction overall (23 or almost 77%), all but two in permanent or one-year temporary posts. Specifically, eight described it as “Excellent, I couldn’t have asked for anything more” (3P, 5PP), five “very good” (3P, 2PP) and four “good” (3P, 1PP). Three found it “OK” (1P, 2PP), three others “not much good” (3P).

In sharp contrast, once more, the remaining seven supply teachers said they had no induction experience at all, with mostly nil responses:

I have no idea how to answer that one. I just didn’t get my induction done. I didn’t feel isolated, but I didn’t feel like I got lots of support. (PP, m)

The supply teacher who earlier described himself as a ‘travelling salesman’ was able to complete the first half of his induction only, starting with a temporary period of employment from December in his first year of teaching. This was eventually extended, but only on a piecemeal basis:
... and I never got that second part of the induction portfolio completed, or even started. I didn’t think, and the teacher tutor didn’t think, that it would be worthwhile, which was unfortunate because, in reality, I would have had enough time to complete it. (P, m)

This was highly regrettable as he believed that the pupils, the school and he himself benefited from his first action plan:

I took on the topic of thinking skills within the class and it was good to get an excuse to try to research something and really focus on it for a while. I think it had benefits in the classroom and for the school. I wouldn’t say it was old-fashioned, but they definitely had a way of doing things and a lot of it was chalk, talk, work sheets and no chance for the kids to really think about what they were doing. … [With me, they] got a chance to think, “Well, why are we doing this?” and “How are we doing it?” and “What are we learning from it?” … it really helped the kids, but it helped me as well because I was able to assess their work a lot better, and was able to see that they did or didn’t understand something. Then we had feedback from them, because they were in the process of reviewing their own work and I was able to look at that and then compare my notes to theirs. I think it was quite a productive process. (P, m)

Nonetheless, three of the seven supply teachers, whilst describing induction as “Not good”, spoke positively about peer support and collegiality (3P):

I think if you’re getting support from other teachers who are in the same situation as you … it’s great …. We often swap resources … planning things together, getting ideas from each other so it’s good in that respect. (P, f)

Conclusions
What conclusions can be drawn about induction in Northern Ireland? From the findings here, it worked well for beginning teachers in permanent or one-year temporary posts. For those in a supply or short-term capacity it did not, and any engagement with the induction process was minimal, disjointed and disappointing. Clearly, the minimum entitlement was not working. Similar findings in Australia suggested that, ‘This lack of induction has negative repercussions for all stakeholders’ (Sharp, 2006: 12). Indeed, the most damaging consequences apply to the most vulnerable teachers - ‘those beginning in the profession’ (Tromans et al., 2001: 27). There is similar concern in Ontario where the ‘annual new teacher “surplus” … at the beginning of the decade grew more than 400 per cent (Ontario College of Teachers, 2007: 3), most teachers do not progress beyond occasional teaching in their first year and the New Teacher Induction Programme (NTIP) in 2006-07 centred mainly on those with regular contracts (ibid., p9).

What can be done to help new practitioners not in permanent employment? In the absence of a contract, after all, they cannot continue to develop their professional identity and self-esteem (Kelchtermans & Ballet (2002: 113). Further, what does induction mean for new teachers who teach outside their own subject specialism(s) or school sector? Given, too, the lack of interest reported in CEPs and Personal Action Plans (see also Moran et al., 1999), their relevance for supply teachers or short-term contracts must be questioned.
One option is the Scottish model, however, it is clear that a flexible approach is necessary, and GTC Scotland (2005) has already admitted that ‘a “one size fits all” approach to determining the content of an ITE … or induction programme … for the early years of teaching will no longer work’ (GTC, 2005: 21). There is strong support, though, among some stakeholders, such as GTCNI, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the teacher unions, for the benefits of a guaranteed induction year for all beginning teachers, although the Minister has yet to respond in this regard. This may only be a temporary solution and a more sustainable model is needed, but the beginning teacher is at least inducted into the profession. Certainly, it would cost a great deal of money (£12 million in the first year and £19 million per year thereafter - above NI Assembly source), but the argument for a timely and effective induction is unequivocal.

One possibility is that Principals and those responsible for induction in schools should aim to offer as much stability and sustained support as possible to each supply or short-term temporary teacher, by discussing, identifying and responding to their on-going professional needs, that is, schools would assume a key role in supporting all phases on the teacher education continuum. The ELBs should consider how this might best be achieved, and could link it with relevant courses for induction/teacher tutors to help manage such individuals – ‘support for the supporters’ (O'Brien, 2004: 5, in McNally, 2002). After all, they are currently the lead partner in induction, yet the findings showed that beginning teachers found their peers to be the best source of support. Again, the arrangements in respect of the lead status of partners is not working as effectively as envisaged.

A different means of supporting (not replacing) induction may be reached through the Government-funded pilot project already underway that involves all NI teacher training institutions, whereby beginning teachers record their work (a suggestion of Osler (2005) if they move between schools) using the medium of e-portfolios. Thus, they would record planning, practice and reflection, build confidence and capture enthusiasm, which may lead to the parallel development of academic and professional qualifications. All new teachers should be enabled to embed their practice – what works and what does not - through a coherent programme that starts with induction and embraces the whole career spectrum, fostering ‘a supportive culture of lifelong adult learning’ (O’Brien, 2004: 6, citing the Board of Teacher Registration, Queensland, 2002). Moreover, they must be able to explore the key question, ‘in what ways am ‘I’ showing, or not showing, the qualities of a good teacher?’ (McNally & Oberski, 2003: 68). Nine of the 30 graduate teachers in this study did not have a good induction. They may be few, but they are there and they are important.

In a recent policy review of teacher education in Northern Ireland, Osler (2005), as part of his recommendations for future provision, proposed extending and strengthening the role of HEIs across induction, EPD and CPD. This would be conditional on having a commitment to teaching duties in schools ‘in parallel with their role as teacher trainers and that the initial training which they will provide will be taught in part by high quality serving teachers seconded by the employing authority for this purpose … This would be a contractual commitment …’ (Osler, 2005: 14). This proposal is then further exemplified when Osler suggests that staff involved in ITE in HEIs should be expected to teach in a school for a period of not less than four weeks every year, and should have a sabbatical on full-time attachment to a school, staff filling a post every fifth year (Osler, 2005: 22). He also advocated much greater use of high quality teachers as part-time contributors to the ‘ITE theory in College’, going on to say, ‘Finally, the … necessary
professional development of ITE staff should include mentoring by high quality profile teachers’ (Osler, 2005: 22).

The language and tone of this document is unambiguous. In respect of the induction phase, Osler specifically advocates integrating the induction year more seamlessly with ITE, but with responsibility moving from the HEI to the school, being supported by a mentor from the ITE institution. This would result in continuity of style in training, as well as a maximizing of the influence in the early weeks of teaching by mentors already known to new recruits. However, the logistics of this would need to be carefully worked through to avoid unnecessary replication by the various HEI providers, especially where more than one teacher is employed in a school.

In his recent GTCNI lecture, Professor Christopher Day emphasized that “teacher commitment, resilience and effectiveness – a passion for teaching – cannot be taken for granted. Rather, it needs to be nurtured and sustained “ (Termtalk, 2007: 4). Surely no stage on the teacher education continuum can be more important than induction for ensuring that this is put into practice? There is a paucity of research on the experiences of beginning teachers engaged on a short-term or supply basis (Tromans et al., 2001; Sharp, 2006), and this is worthy of much greater scrutiny within the collective endeavour of induction.

References


National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (2005) NASUWT calls for all newly qualified teachers throughout the UK to be guaranteed employment in their first year to complete their induction, August 5 (http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/ accessed 27/7/07).


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