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Beginning Teachers' Pedagogical Skills and Knowledge Towards Positive Pedagogic Teacher-Student Relationships*

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This study investigated beginning teachers' self-perceived pedagogical knowledge and skills in engaging and managing their students. More specifically, it discussed the development of positive pedagogic teacher-student relationships across three time points: at the exit of their pre-service program, at the end of the first year of teaching, and at the end of the third year of teaching. Four factors were extracted: (a) student learning; (b) accommodating diversity; (c) classroom management; and (d) showing care and concern. A sample of 358 beginning teachers participated in the study. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) results showed that there were significant increases in all four factors across the three time points. The results are useful in informing teacher education programs as well as teacher induction programs to facilitate support for beginning teachers during their beginning years of teaching.

Keywords: beginning teacher, teacher knowledge, teacher skills, professional development

Introduction

Research has shown that teachers have doubled the impact on students, as do school policies regarding curriculum and assessment (R. J. Marzano & J. S. Marzano, 2003). Positive pedagogic teacher-student relationships are believed to be necessary for effective teaching and learning to take place (D. McInerney & V. McInerney, 2006; Szejnberg, Den Brok, & Hurek, 2004). A meta-analysis of more than 100 studies (R. J. Marzano & J. S. Marzano, 2003) indicated that teachers who had high-quality teacher-student relationships had 30% fewer discipline problems over a year than teachers who did not have high-quality relationships with their students. Thus, the purpose of this study is twofold: (a) to gain an understanding of beginning teachers' perceptions of knowledge and skills in engaging and managing their students in order to develop pedagogic teacher-student relationships; and (b) to examine changes (if any) in these perceptions from the exit of their pre-service program to the end of their third year of teaching.

It is important to understand how the interpersonal interactions that occur between teachers and their

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students change as they progress from pre-service education to become beginning teachers. This study hopes to add to existing research and literature on beginning teachers' development in two ways: 1. It can shed light on the perceptions of beginning teachers of their pedagogical knowledge and skills in engaging and managing their students in Singapore; and 2. Data gathered as part of this study may be useful in informing teacher development programs as well as teacher induction programs of the impeding factors and the areas for facilitating support for beginning teachers.

Literature Review

Teaching is a complex, multi-faceted task, comprising both cognitive and emotional understanding (Hargreaves, 1998; 2001; Black, 2002). Teachers make decisions, engage in frequent interactions, and use various forms of knowledge and skills to engage students and facilitate student learning (Hargreaves, 2001). Teachers and students are always in a relationship. Weinstein (1998) suggested that having a better understanding of student-teacher pedagogic relationships provides many insights into the pre-service teacher education programs as well as induction programs. "Many teachers fail to realize that interpersonal relationships with students are as important as delivering a well planned lesson if not more" (Lourdusamy & Khine, 2001, p. 3).

The review of literature is in two parts. The first part focuses on the role of establishing teacher-student relations through care and concern for the students. Alder (2002) noted that most beginning teachers cited caring as the primary reason for entering the teaching profession. Weinstein (1998) stated that the commitment to care for/about children is central to conceptions of good teaching. The second part focuses on establishing good teacher-student relations that cater for the diversity in the classroom. Teachers need cultural competency to handle the increasingly diverse schools. Apart from cultural diversity presents in today's classrooms, teachers also need to handle students' academic diversity, such as different learning styles and motivational levels.

Care and Concern

Gay (2000) wrote that "Caring is a foundational pillar of effective teaching and learning, and the lack of it produces inequities in educational opportunities and achievement for ethnically different students" (p. 62). Teachers who create caring relationships by learning about their students' interests and strengths established a foundation that fostered a learning environment which engaged students. The role of caring and its role in student learning have been studied in many empirical studies. Noddings (2005), who specialized in the area of caring, stated that a caring teacher is concerned for the students' development as complete moral people as well as achieving in academics. Tartwijk, Brok, Veldman, and Wubbels (2008) identified that the reason for a teacher who was highly successful in creating a positive environment was attributed to the fact that he/she focused on developing students' interest and engagement. Fuhrman (2010) contended that students are motivated when they believe that their teachers show care for them academically and personally.

Effective teacher-student relationships are characterized by specific teacher behaviors: exhibiting appropriate levels of dominance, exhibiting appropriate levels of cooperation, and being aware of students' needs (R. J. Marzano & J. S. Marzano, 2003). Teachers who establish caring relationships by learning about their students' interests and strengths established a foundation that fostered a learning environment which engaged students. McLaughlin (1991) noted that most beginning teachers cited caring as the primary reason for

entering teaching profession (as cited in Alder, 2002). Beginning teachers often look at care and order as separate entities (Garrett, 2010). They are constantly striving to strike a balance between cultivating order in the classroom and developing a caring relationship with their students (Weinstein, 1998). Beginning teachers need to be able to merge these two concepts of care and order together in their classroom management approach. Ozdemir (2010) shown in his research that students are more likely to follow classroom rules and routines when they believe their teachers care about them (as cited in Garrett, 2010).

Garrett (2010) identified certain strategies that would enable teachers to create caring and orderly environment in the classrooms. Some of these strategies are: establishing rules and routines, teaching and demonstrating each rule explicitly, imposing clear limits, using explicit directives, etc.. Creating an environment where the students feel cared for helps in building this relationship further. Sending a welcome message, allowing students to get to know the teachers, participating in extracurricular activities, conducting community-building activities, etc., allow students to build a rapport with their teachers. Beginning teachers should understand that showing care and maintaining order in the classroom complement one another as components of effective classroom management. Cothran and Ennis (2000) asserted that students are more likely to cooperate with caring and respectful teachers.

Research by Wilson and Cameron (1996) found that beginning teachers begin their career espousing humanistic views and student-centered relationships before moving to more managerial behaviorist approaches which emphasize instructional outcomes and academic performance. Student teachers and beginning teachers have been found to value the personal development of children and the relationship between children and their teachers, value "caring" as an important attribute of an effective teacher, value "student-centred concerns", and enter pre-service with a humanistic drive (Wilson & Cameron, 1996).

Truly effective teachers develop positive pedagogic relationships with their students that are critical to student and teacher success (Hargreaves, 1998; 2001). In a reflective essay on his 40 years of teaching, Perrone (1997) stated that teaching is about knowing students well, both inside and outside the school. He asked, "How is it possible to teach students well without knowing them well?" (Perrone, 1997, p. 644). One of the critical lessons Perrone learned as a teacher was the importance of knowing his students well, what they care about, understanding their meanings, and connecting what is done in the classroom with their world outside of school (Perrone, 1997).

Student Diversity

The present and growing diversity of the student population in schools requires that teachers be better prepared. Teacher education researchers have highlighted the need to better understand how beginning teachers are effectively prepared to work with diverse student populations (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Hollins & Guzman, 2005). All students, according to federal legislation, are to be included in the classroom to the fullest extent possible. Teachers must also address this extensive variety of needs and abilities brought into the classroom by these students. Walker and Tedick (2000) posited that very little was known about how teachers approached issues of diversity in their classrooms.

Beginning teachers must understand how to teach students, whose gender, culture, background, learning style, and ethnicity are different than their own, by exploring their own biases and personal experiences with diversity and cultivating the tools needed to learn about students, their families, and communities as they build professional knowledge. Culturally responsive classroom teachers are aware of their own biases and values and

are cognizant of the fact that the key aim of teaching and learning is to provide all students with equitable opportunities of learning (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). Studies shown that the lack of this understanding could exacerbate the difficulties that beginning teachers (and more experienced teachers) have with their classroom management (Weinstein et al., 2004; Gay, 2000).

Today, schools cater to multilingual and multicultural learners and students with diverse learning needs and socioeconomic histories. To cater to this diversity, teachers must be creative with their knowledge and practice. Teachers need what is called as cultural competency to handle the increasing diversity in schools. Cultural incompetency exacerbates the difficulties related to novice teachers' classroom management skills (Weinstein et al., 2004). To be able to involve students in the classroom, teachers need to be aware of the individual differences among students. An effective teacher in general classroom setting dealing with academic diversity exhibits characteristics, such as continually assessing students' readiness levels, understandings, and misunderstandings; providing learning options that invite learners to enter the learning process at their own levels of readiness; having a wide range of instructional strategies and the know-how to match them to the nature of the learning task and the nature of the students; expecting and embracing student differences; and executing complex and flexible management routines (Tomlinson, Callahan, Tomchin, Eiss, Imbeau, & Landrum, 1997).

Tomlinson et al. (1997) stated that the skills listed above are higher-order skills that most beginning teachers are lacking in during their beginning years of teaching. Novice teachers should be provided with guidance from experienced teachers in order to develop awareness of these factors. In their study designed to facilitate understandings of ways in which pre-service and beginning teachers develop awareness of academic diversity in the classroom, Tomlinson et al. (1997) stressed the need for beginning teachers to acquire the pedagogical knowledge and skills to teach for understanding rather than coverage and to develop skills to engage students with learning tasks that are relevant, varied, and specifically designed to ensure that each student can grow everyday.

From the review of the literature, it would imply that teachers develop positive relationships with their students by showing care and concern to their students and accommodating their diversity. The latter also includes possessing a repertoire of strategies to engage and manage students well. Therefore, to assess teachers' perceptions of their pedagogical knowledge and skills in developing positive teacher-student relationships, this study examined their self-perceptions in the areas of how they engaged their students' learning, accommodated their diversity, managed their students' behaviours, and showed care and concern towards them.

Background

This study, which is longitudinal in nature, is situated at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. The study began by exploring student teachers' reasons for joining the teaching profession and their attitudes and perceptions of their levels of pedagogical knowledge and skills towards teaching at the beginning and at the end of the teacher education program. It continued to follow the beginning teachers into their first year and third year of teaching. For the purpose of this paper, only graduating teachers from the Post-graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programme were invited to participate in this study.

The PGDE programme admits candidates who already have at least a baccalaureate degree from local or recognized foreign universities. It prepares teachers for primary and secondary schools in Singapore. For teachers in the primary track, they are prepared to teach two to three curriculum subjects depending on their

specialisation, while those in the secondary track are trained to teach two curriculum subjects. All student teachers in the PGDE programme also read education studies courses covering topics, such as educational psychology, social context of education, classroom management, and information and communications technology. At the end of their one-year programme, they undergo a 10-week practicum to put into practice what they have learnt in their courses.

In this paper, the self-perceived pedagogical knowledge and skills in developing positive pedagogic teacher-student relationships of beginning teachers from the PGDE programme were investigated by adapting a validated Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills in Teaching (PKST) survey instrument (Choy, Lim, Chong, & Wong, 2012). Relevant data collected from the 37-item PKST survey during the following data collection points were analyzed to investigate the changes in their pedagogical knowledge and skills in developing positive pedagogic teacher-student relationships: (a) at the end of their teacher education programme; (b) at the end of the first year of teaching; and (c) at the end of the third year of teaching.

Methodology

Sample

The participants of this study were graduating beginning teachers who completed their one-year PGDE teacher education programme. They were invited to participate in the study voluntarily at the end of their program, at the end of their first year of teaching, and at the end of their third year of teaching. Of the 1,325 beginning teachers who were enrolled in the teacher education programme, 358 of them completed the PKST surveys at all three data collection points. The response rate was 27%. The beginning teachers were aged from 21 to 45. The response rate may look rather low as less than one third of the beginning teachers completed all three surveys. However, the research team believed that the response was acceptable as the length of the data collection period was long and the latest data collection was conducted three years after the participants graduated from the teacher education program.

Instrument

Based on the literature reviewed, only four out of the six factors in the PKST survey instrument were used to assess the beginning teachers' self-perceptions of the level of their pedagogical knowledge and skills in engaging and managing students with a view of developing positive pedagogic teacher-student relationships. The four factors which comprised 25 items were most relevant for assessing these perceptions of pedagogic teacher-student relationships. They are student learning, accommodating diversity, classroom management, and showing care and concern. Each factor comprised four to seven items. For the four factors selected in this study, each survey item had two 5-point Likert rating scales assessing the participants' perceptions of their level of pedagogical knowledge and skills separately. The Likert scale for pedagogical knowledge level ranged from 1—"No knowledge at all" to 5—"Highly knowledgeable" and from 1—"No confidence at all" to 5—"Extremely confident" for their skills level. Two other factors—lesson planning and instructional support—were excluded from this study. Although they are factors that related to beginning teachers' overall perception in teaching, they are not directly related to the development of their teacher-student relationship. As a result, they were excluded from this study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the instrument is 0.95, indicating that it has good reliability. The descriptions of the factors and some sample items are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Description of Factors and Sample Items

Factor	Description	Sample item
Student learning (7-item)	Using different strategies to capture students' interest and stimulate their thinking	SL1: Developing students' interest in learning; SL2: Arousing students' interest in the subject area; SL3: Infusing critical thinking appropriately in the lessons.
Accommodating diversity (7-item)	Catering to students' different needs	AD2: Teaching according to students' pace; AD3: Diagnosing students' learning difficulties; AD4: Responding sensitively to different student needs.
Classroom management (4-item)	Managing student behaviors and discipline	CM1: Applying appropriate classroom management techniques; CM2: Managing students with behavioral and learning problems.
Showing care and concern (6-item)	Supporting the holistic development of students	CC1: Managing co-curricular activities; CC5: Showing concern for the holistic development of students; CC6: Showing care and concern to students.

Data Analysis and Results

Statistic Package for Social Science Version 18.0 (SPSS 18.0) was used to analyze the data collected. Multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) for repeated measures was used to estimate the changes in pedagogical knowledge and skills for each factor from the end of teacher education to the end of the third year of teaching for the beginning teachers. This was followed up with *t*-tests for repeated measures to compare the means between the end of teacher education and the end of the first year of teaching, and between the end of the first year and third year of teaching.

The MANOVA results showed that there were significant increases in all four factors. In the "student learning" factor, the graduating teachers' level of pedagogical knowledge was at 3.72. It decreased to 3.67 at the end of first year and then increased to 3.82 at the end of their third year of teaching (Wilks' lambda = 19.86; *p*-value < 0.01). In "accommodating diversity", the means for the end of teacher education and the end of their first year of teaching remained unchanged at 3.71, but it increased to 3.84 at the end of their third year of teaching (Wilks' lambda = 31.13; *p*-value < 0.01). In "classroom management", the means increased from 3.60 at the end of teacher education to 3.66 and 3.82 at the end of their first year and third year of teaching respectively (Wilks' lambda = 40.03; *p*-value < 0.01). In "showing care and concern" to their students, the means increased from 3.74 at the end of teacher education to 3.82 at the end of their first year and further increased to 3.94 at the end of their third year of teaching (Wilks' lambda = 34.84; *p*-value < 0.01). All four factors showed significant increases from the end of teacher education to the end of the third year of teaching (see Table 2).

Table 2

Beginning Teachers' Self-perceptions of Pedagogical Knowledge at Three Time Points

Factor	At the end of teacher education	At the end of the first year of teaching	At the end of the third year of teaching	Wilks' lambda
Student learning	3.72	3.67	3.82	19.86**
Accommodating diversity	3.71	3.71	3.84	31.13**
Classroom management	3.60	3.66	3.82	40.03**
Showing care and concern	3.74	3.82	3.94	34.84**

Note. ** *p*-value < 0.01.

Though MANOVA results showed that there were significant increases in all four factors, additional statistical analyses were needed to determine if the changes in different data collection points were significant.

Further analyses of the beginning teachers' self-perceived pedagogical knowledge in managing students were conducted by using *t*-tests for repeated measures. The comparisons of means were performed after MANOVA results are obtained to prevent type-I errors.

The results from the *t*-tests for repeated measures showed that there was no significant difference in three factors (student learning, accommodating diversity, and showing care and concern) between the end of teacher education and first year of teaching. However, there was a significant increase in the beginning teachers' pedagogical knowledge in classroom management, from 3.60 to 3.66 ($t = -1.95$; p -value = 0.05). As a result, the changes of the beginning teachers' pedagogical knowledge between the end of teacher education and first year of teaching were not significant for all factors except "classroom management". Further investigations between the end of first year and third year of teaching showed different results. *T*-tests for repeated measures showed that the increases in means in pedagogical knowledge for all four factors between the end of first year and third year of teaching were statistically significant (see Table 3). The increases in "student learning" were from 3.67 to 3.82; "accommodating diversity" were from 3.71 to 3.84; "classroom management" were from 3.66 to 3.82; and "showing care and concern" were from 3.82 to 3.94 (p -values < 0.01).

Table 3

Pairwise Comparisons of Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Pedagogical Knowledge Between the End of Teacher Education Program and the First Year and Between the First Year and Third Year of Teaching

Factors	<i>T</i> (<i>p</i> -value)	<i>T</i> (<i>p</i> -value)	<i>T</i> (<i>p</i> -value)
	Graduating vs. first year	First year vs. third year	Graduating vs. third year
Student learning	1.75 (0.08)	-6.23 (< 0.01)**	-3.62 (< 0.01)**
Accommodating diversity	0.13 (0.89)	-6.94 (< 0.01)**	-6.15 (< 0.01)**
Classroom management	-1.95 (0.05)*	-6.83 (< 0.01)**	-7.89 (< 0.01)**
Showing care and concern	0.58 (0.57)	-5.50 (< 0.01)**	-7.96 (< 0.01)**

Notes. * p -value = 0.05; ** p -value < 0.01.

In the beginning teachers' self-perceived level of skills in engaging and managing their students in order to develop teacher-student relationships, the MANOVA results were similar to those for self-perceived knowledge from the end of teacher education to the end of their third year of teaching. There were significant increases in all three factors. In "student learning", their skills level showed a slight change from 3.51 to 3.53 at the end of the first year of teaching, and continued to increase to 3.71 at the end of the third year of teaching (Wilks' lambda = 33.18; p -value < 0.01). In all other factors, their skills level increased gradually from the end of teacher education to the end of third year of teaching. In "accommodating diversity", their skill level increased from 3.53 to 3.61 and then reached 3.77 at the end of the third year (Wilks' lambda = 53.90; p -value < 0.01). In "classroom management", their skill level increased from 3.30 to 3.53 from graduation to their first year, and then further increased to 3.73 at the end of their third year of teaching (Wilks' lambda = 114.22; p -value < 0.01). In "showing care and concern", the means increased from 3.66 to 3.72, and then, to 3.86 (Wilks' lambda = 31.73; p -value < 0.01) across the three time points (see Table 4).

T-tests for repeated measures for the beginning teachers' perceived skills in the four factors showed a slightly different pattern when compared with their perceived pedagogical knowledge. Student learning was the only factor that showed no significant difference in their skills from the end of teacher education to the end of first year of teaching (see Table 5). All the increases in other factors from the end of teacher education to the end of the first year were significant. In "accommodating diversity", the means increased from 3.53 at the end

of teacher education to 3.61 at the end of the first year of teaching ($t = -3.30$; p -value < 0.01). In “showing care and concern”, the increase in perceived skills is also significant, from 3.66 to 3.72 ($t = -2.36$; p -value = 0.02).

Table 4

Beginning Teachers' Self-perceptions of Skills at the Three Time Points

Factor	At the end of teacher education program	At the end of the first year of teaching	At the end of the third year of teaching	Wilks' lambda
Student learning	3.51	3.53	3.71	33.18**
Accommodating diversity	3.53	3.61	3.77	53.90**
Classroom management	3.30	3.53	3.73	114.22**
Showing care and concern	3.66	3.72	3.86	31.73**

Note. ** p -value < 0.01 .

Table 5

Pairwise Comparisons of Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Skills Between the End of Teacher Education Program and the First Year and Between the First Year and Third Year of Teaching

Factor	T (p -value) Graduating vs. first year	T (p -value) First year vs. third year	T (p -value) Graduating vs. third year
Student learning	-1.00 (0.32)	-6.94 (< 0.01)**	-7.18 (< 0.01)**
Accommodating diversity	-3.30 (< 0.01)**	-7.39 (< 0.01)**	-9.86 (< 0.01)**
Classroom management	-7.41 (< 0.01)**	-7.76 (< 0.01)**	-15.03 (< 0.01)**
Showing care and concern	-2.36 (0.02)*	-6.04 (< 0.01)**	-7.46 (< 0.01)**

Notes. * p -value < 0.05 ; ** p -value < 0.01 .

The comparisons between the end of the first year and third year of teaching in their perceived skills showed similar results as their perceived pedagogical knowledge, where all four factors increased significantly (see Table 5). The largest increase was found in “classroom management”, going from 3.72 to 3.86 ($t = -7.76$; p -value < 0.01).

Discussions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the development of beginning teachers' self-perceived pedagogical knowledge and skills in positive pedagogic teacher-student relationships. Previous studies have shown that teachers who were able to establish strong and positive teacher-student relationships tend to have less management issues in their classrooms (R. J. Marzano & J. S. Marzano, 2003). One of the results from this study was evidence that becoming a teacher is an ongoing process that is initiated, not completed, in the formal teacher education programme. The teacher-student relationships of beginning teachers not only influenced their progressions as teachers, but also that their relationships with students changed as they gained experience in teaching. All four factors showed significant increases from the end of teacher education to the end of their third year of teaching. The idea of learning and development is not new (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Perrone, 1997); teachers should continue their learning process during their careers.

However, taking a closer look at the analysis of findings, the t -tests for repeated measures showed that there was no significant difference between the end of teacher education and first year of teaching. Despite that, all factors increased significantly from the end of the first year to the end of the third year of teaching. The reason why the increases were not significant from exit to the first year could be due to the fact that the beginning teachers were trying hard to balance and manage all other teaching duties and responsibilities in this

initial year. Dart, Boulton-Lewis, Brownlee, and McCrindle (1998) noted that the beginning teachers tended to view theory as being unrelated to practice during their initial year of teaching. During teacher education programmes, student teachers were exposed to knowledge on generic classroom teaching skills. Then, in their first year of teaching, the beginning teacher will need to bridge the gap between pre-service teacher education and initial teaching experience by gaining local knowledge of the context—students, curriculum, and school community. Hence, it was not surprising to find that the first year teachers do not perceive an increase in the factors. However, the first year to third year of teaching analysis seems to imply that the beginning teachers, after their initial teaching year, managed to shift their concerns outwards from an initial pre-occupation with self to a focus on tasks and teaching situations, and finally to consideration of the impact of their teaching on their students (Burn, Hagger, Mutton, & Everton, 2003).

The analysis also showed that the factor “classroom management” posted the largest increase. According to Gee (2001), teachers are entering the profession with a lack of confidence in their classroom management skills. One of the beginning teachers’ biggest problems is how to stimulate acceptable behaviour in their students, so that a healthy learning atmosphere prevails and the teaching/learning process can take place. As the beginning teachers gained more experience in interacting with their students, they make sense of their experience and determine how they frame and develop student-teacher relationships in their own classes. As the first graduated from the teacher education programme, they did not have much experience in handling a class of 40 students by themselves, the hands-on experience in classrooms could have led to the vast increase in the development of classroom management knowledge and skills.

Overall, the factor “showing care and concern” has the highest means among all the factors and across the three time points. The results seem to imply that the beginning teachers in the space of their first year of teaching have managed to shift their concerns outwards from an initial pre-occupation with self to a focus on tasks and teaching situations, and finally to consideration of the impact of their teaching on their students (Burn et al., 2003). Although they aced personal concerns about acceptance, control, and adequacy, they seemed to have been able to resolve them and were able to move on to other professional considerations about showing care and concern to students (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

The relationships that teachers develop with their students are not static as teachers progress through their interactions with students. Rust (1999) observed this progression in beginning teachers and concluded that teacher-student relationships significantly impact the type of development of the beginning teacher as well as their longevity in the profession.

Conclusions

Psychological studies have noted the beginning three years as the average timespan for beginning teachers to develop into competent teachers. Huberman’s (1989) landmark study noted how beginning teachers mostly engage in survival-related concerns to engage in self-discovery and exploration to test their knowledge and skills before moving on to an advanced beginner stage at the end of the three years to re-create knowledge and handle other broader issues. A 2006 study by the National Bureau of Economics in the United States found that the change of teacher performance is the greatest during the first three years and there is little difference between teacher performance over the following years (Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2006). This suggests that the first three years is a significant period for tracking teacher development and performance. Kane and Russell (2005) conducted a study to better understand the concerns and needs in the first year of teaching. They found

that beginning teachers could be supported by a network comprising teacher educators, fellow beginning teachers, and experienced teachers.

Beginning teachers' experiences of teacher-student relationships are an important part of their experiential world and the process of being and becoming teachers. The ways in which these experiences change as the participants move from pre-service teacher education into classroom practice is also an educationally significant consideration. Educational stakeholders need to increase their awareness of the importance of teacher-student relationships as well as to identify and situate these relationships more centrally in the development of beginning teachers.

The first years of teaching are an intense and formative time in learning to teach, influencing not only whether people remain in teaching but also what kind of teacher they become. The initial years of teaching bring a shift in role orientation and an epistemological move from knowing about teaching through formal study to knowing how to teach by confronting the day-to-day challenges (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Kervin and Turbill (2003) emphasized that beginning teachers are exposed to significant change when they move from their pre-service teacher training to professional practice, and it is crucial that they are supported in this process. Indeed, for beginning teachers, it is imperative that support is provided so that they can build on their foundational knowledge and continue to develop their knowledge and skills during their initial years of teaching.

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