Novice Language Teachers
Insights and Perspectives for the First Year

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The first year of teaching has been characterized as a type of "reality shock" for many language teachers. This may be because the ideals that novice teachers formed during teacher training/education are often replaced by the reality of school life where much of their energy has shifted to learning how to adapt and survive in a new school culture. Although the first year of teaching has been well documented in general education research, not many detailed studies outlining the experiences of language teachers in their first year of teaching have been documented in the language education literature. This is surprising because as some scholars have suggested, in order to establish an effective knowledge-base for second/foreign language teacher education, language teacher educators must have some understanding of schools and schooling and the social and cultural contexts in which learning how to teach takes place. The purpose of this collection is to discuss the challenges and influences novice language teachers face when teaching in their first years. The volume outlines several detailed case studies of the experiences second/foreign language teachers during their first year of teaching in such diverse contexts as the USA, Canada, Singapore, Cambodia, the UK, Italy, southern Europe, Hong Kong, and Japan.

Reviews

The book is well organized, has a standardized format for each chapter … and is reader-friendly. It should be of use to curriculum developers in English language teacher education programs to tailor those programs to fit the needs of their students. Teacher educators and their students can examine the problems and solutions described by the teachers in this book and engage in what Farrell calls “anticipatory reflection” (p. 53). This book may also be useful for experienced teachers to help guide new teachers through the socialization process in their schools… Further research in this area will augment what Farrell and his colleagues have established with this fascinating volume.'

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Two English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers teaching in a government-owned highschool in the Philippines participated in the study: a novice (NLT) and an experienced language teacher (ELT). Both participants' reflective teaching practices were identified, compared, and analyzed using a standardized survey questionnaire that gauges English language teaching reflections of practitioners. Beginning teachers experience various challenges as they strive to develop their teaching in new environments. In this paper, we explore the challenges faced by novice language teachers and the support needed to address these. For this purpose, recent studies on the experiences of novice language teachers were reviewed. Three major themes were prevalent in research on this issue: support, identity and pedagogy. In the paper, we discuss each area and a selection of related studies. How the novice language teachers come to entextualize and recontextualize course material differs somewhat from the practices presented by the professor. Yet, despite these differences, similarities relating to being a professional within applied linguistics and language teaching emerge. The analyses of demonstration teaching sessions, called “What Works Reports,” in Chapter 6 further elucidates language socialization and the processes of entextualization and recontextualization for novice language teachers.