

What Do We Know about Beginning Teachers?

1. 30% of new teachers in the United States leave the profession during the first three years. Moreover, an astounding 50% leave during the first five years (Wolfe, 2005).
2. The conditions under which new teachers complete the first year of teaching are fairly predictive of success in their teaching career and of their retention in the profession.
3. Attrition rate among the most academically qualified teachers is attributed to working conditions within the school:
 - ❖ Larger classes
 - ❖ More difficult students
 - ❖ Floating classroom assignment
 - ❖ Too many preparations
 - ❖ Preparations not in area of training
 - ❖ Additional non-teaching duties
4. Conditions contributing to attrition in addition to the demands of teaching include unrealistic/unmet expectations, isolation and organizational “sink or swim” philosophy. Specific teaching concerns are:
 - ❖ Classroom management and discipline
 - ❖ Student motivation
 - ❖ Managing instructional tasks (organizing work, individualizing assessments and assignments, planning, instruction, and locating materials and resources.)
 - ❖ **Managing non-instructional demands of the position (establishing relationships with students, parents, and colleagues; managing extracurricular assignments; enlisting assistance of other staff members.)**
 - ❖ Adjusting to the physical demands of teaching
 - ❖ Sacrificing leisure time
5. Lack of supervision can contribute to the problems of the beginning teachers. Unaided new teachers make and repeat costly errors.

You are there to be a guide, steer, and be a pillar of strength

The 24 Most Frequently Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers

Rank Order	Problem
1	Classroom Discipline
2	Motivating Students
3	Dealing with individual differences
4	Assessing students' work
5	Relations with parents
6	Organization of class work
7	Insufficient materials and supplies
8	Dealing with problems of individual students
9	Heavy teaching load/insufficient prep time
10	Relations with colleagues
11	Planning of lessons and school days
12	Effective use of different teaching methods
13	Awareness of school policies and rules
14	Determining learning level of students
15	Knowledge of subject matter
16	Burden of clerical work
17	Relations with principals/administrators
18	Inadequate school equipment
19	Dealing with slow learners
20	Dealing with students of different cultures and deprived backgrounds
21	Effective use of textbooks and curricular guides
22	Lack of spare time
23	Inadequate guidance and support
24	Large class size

The 24 Most Frequently Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers (Veenman, 1983) was revisited in a recent study (Ganser, 1999). New teachers from Wisconsin (up to 2 years of teaching experience) and Baltimore City Public Schools' Beginning Teachers (up to 4-5 years of teaching experience) were asked to rank the problem areas in the order based on their current experiences and perceptions. Their results were as follows: