

Beginning Teacher Survey – 1998: Final Report

Georgia Professional Standards Commission
1454 Twin Tower East
Atlanta, Georgia

Prepared By

Winifred C. Nweke
Coordinator for Research

July 13, 1998

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of Superintendents and/or Personnel Officers of Georgia School Systems, and INSITE Inc. in this survey. We also thank PSC staff members for their collaboration in the collection and processing of data and in reviewing earlier drafts of this report.

Beginning Teachers' Levels of Readiness for Georgia Classrooms

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Preparing teachers for the 21st Century Classroom” invokes the idea of change, reform, different preparation from that currently offered. The critical question is: What should be done differently? To answer that question one needs knowledge of current practice, expectations, and results as well as information on how educational needs may change. One can then determine the gaps that need to be bridged. Some of these may be addressed by instituting changes in standards, teacher education programs, induction programs and alternative routes to teacher preparation. However, the best way to assess whether the appropriate changes have been made and the gaps bridged is to examine the “product “that emerges from the system: The beginning teacher.

This study was conducted to investigate how successfully teacher education programs approved by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) prepare teachers. Specifically, the study investigated not only how beginning teachers perceive their own readiness for the classroom but also how the principals for whom they teach perceive the same. In other words, do principals and beginning teachers’ assessment of the latter’s preparedness and readiness for the classroom match? The survey was also conducted to provide result measures for evaluating the attainment of some goals established by the PSC (Torrey, 1997). The survey addresses specifically Desired Result A of Strategic Objective 2. This Desired Result states that “First year teachers will be better prepared to enter the classroom and will be rated so by themselves and their principals” (Torrey, 1997, Page 4).

Questionnaires were sent to all 5525 beginning teachers and their principals (1673), as reported by Georgia Public School Systems. Beginning teachers completed the Teacher Questionnaire that elicited information regarding their level of preparedness to meet their

administrative, instructional, organizational and professional expectations. Principals, or their designees, completed the Principal Questionnaire on each beginning teacher in their schools. A total of 4201 Teacher and 4129 Principal questionnaires were completed and returned from 161 school districts. This yields a response rate of 76.0% for teachers and 90.4% for school systems. Also, 74.7% of Principal Questionnaires were returned.

Appropriate statistical analyses were performed. Major findings are that first, teachers rated themselves as ready for the classroom, and secondly, teachers' self-ratings on readiness correspond very closely to principals' ratings of the same, 93.2% and 88.7%, respectively. Thirdly, teachers and principals reported highest levels of non-readiness among beginning teachers certified in Mathematics (13.6% and 10.7%, respectively) and Science (11.9% and 9.9%, respectively). Fourthly, teachers and principals disagreed on the proportion of teachers certified in the middle grades who they rated not ready. Both teachers and principals identified classroom management and management of student behaviors as the two top areas in which beginning teachers had the most difficulty. These and other findings provide needed feedback to teacher education programs, and have policy implications for teacher education approval process and teacher induction programs. They also provide evidence that indicates that teacher preparation programs approved by the PSC do indeed prepare teachers who perceive themselves ready for the classroom and whose principals agree with that perception.

Beginning Teacher Survey – 1998: Levels of Readiness for Georgia Classrooms

“Recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers is central strategy for improving our schools” declares the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF, 1996). The importance of teachers and the quality of the teaching force in the attainment of GOALS 2000 was also acknowledged when the goals were expanded, in the 1994 revision, to include a goal on teaching and teacher education (National Education Goals Panel, 1994).

Integral with adequacy of training and beginning teachers’ readiness for the classroom are retention and attrition. Schools cannot maintain a well-prepared teaching force if they keep losing the teachers that they hire. Some authors argue that attrition is high because beginning teachers are not ready for the classroom. Even for a state like Georgia where the attrition rate has been on the decline, from 15.3% in 1992 to 11.4% in 1996 school year, the number is still alarming when one remembers that only about 50% of newly prepared teachers start teaching within one year after graduation (Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and Georgia Department of Education data). Thus, to lose 11% of what is already a low number is of great concern. Others posit that beginning teachers leave the profession because of the nature and context of the job. They claim that “new teachers are typically given the most challenging teaching assignments” (Bartell, 1995; Moir & Stobbe, 1995; NCTAF, 1996) “and left to sink or swim with little or no support. They are often placed in the most disadvantaged schools and assigned the most difficult-to-teach students, with the greatest number of class preparations and a slew of extracurricular duties” (National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, 1996, pp. 39-40). The National Commission’s report goes on to say that “the problem is not that we do not know how to support beginning teachers; it is that we have not yet developed the commitment to do so routinely.” The authors of the report, like many others in the field, see teaching as developmental and holistic (California Standards for the Teaching Profession, (CSTP) 1997).

Proponents of this viewpoint believe that “teachers’ knowledge, skills, and practices develop throughout their professional careers” (CSTP, 1997); that “teachers are never ‘finished’ as professional learners” and that “support, mentoring and assessment during the early years of teaching are essential to a beginning teacher’s development and success in the profession.” These conceptualizations of the beginning teacher form the rationale for many state induction programs around the nation (California, Kentucky, New Jersey, etc.). Such induction programs are designed as a second phase in a comprehensive teacher preparation, certification and retention program and, thus, are usually required for full certification.

Teaching has aptly been conceptualized as a highly complex and contextual activity (Shulman, 1989). This implies that teaching effectiveness is a function of the interaction between the teacher characteristics, on the one hand, and context variables, on the other. Teacher characteristics include personal variables as well as skills and knowledge learned through training. Contextual variables include student characteristics, colleagues, the school and its location, and the school district. Thus, two teachers who passed through the same preparation program and are teaching at different locations, personal variables held constant, may perform at very different levels because of the characteristics of contextual variables. This exacerbates the challenge for teacher preparation and argues for multiple placements and varied field experiences throughout a program. It also justifies the need for and existence of induction programs. Nevertheless, induction programs are based on the assumption that the teacher brings an adequate amount of skills, knowledge and training to the context. They can also be useful in other ways. Induction studies can provide new knowledge and best practice that can be used as feedback to enrich pre-service programs. An example is the developmental phases of a beginning teacher identified in the Santa Cruz County New Teacher Project (SCCNTP) (Moir & Stobbe, 1995). The beginning teacher should learn the

developmental stages of a teacher during pre-service preparation just as she/he learns the developmental stages of the children they are going to be teaching.

While induction may be very essential because of the complex and contextual nature of teaching, the importance of excellent pre-service training cannot be minimized. In Georgia, the new teacher is expected to bring some personal and demonstrated competencies, as verified by teacher education programs, and certified by the PSC, to the context of the job. Some critics argue that not enough beginning teachers do. According to What Matters Most (1996), one of the sources of the problems that face the beginning teacher is inadequate teacher preparation. Accrediting agencies or state agencies such as the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, try to ensure high quality preparation by establishing and judging teacher education programs against established standards. Even for programs that meet all the standards for approval, one additional and direct method of program evaluation is the examination of their product – the beginning teacher. In fact, one of the PSC standards requires that the program or unit engages in regular and systematic evaluations, including evaluations of recent graduates and uses information gathered to improve programs. It is expected that beginning teachers would be able, more than anyone else, to articulate some of the skills, knowledge or experiences that have helped them make the transition from being the student to being the teacher. It is also expected that they should be able to identify skills and knowledge the lack of which hampered their transition into the classroom. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to find out from the beginning teachers how well prepared for the classroom they feel and how ready they found themselves in the first few months in a classroom. Even though all approved teacher education programs in Georgia are judged on the same standards, each college decides the components of its program. This autonomy generates differences among programs. Information provided by the graduates of these programs will be very useful to teacher education colleges for program improvement. It

might also provide useful information for school systems that hire these new teachers, especially those that assume that “once a teacher received a license to teach, he or she was considered ready for practice, in need of no help” (NCTAF, 1996, p. 40).

In addition to providing information to teacher preparation programs for formative and summative evaluation, this survey provides result measures for the PSC to assess the attainment of one of its Strategic Objectives for the 1997-98 Fiscal Year. Desired Result A under Strategic Objective 2 states that “First year teachers will be better prepared to enter the classroom and will be rated so by themselves and their principals.” (Torrey, 1997, p. 4).

This report presents a comprehensive and final summary of the findings from the survey on how teachers and their principals rate the former’s level of preparedness on specific knowledge, skills and abilities required to discharge their administrative, instructional, organizational and professional responsibilities. It also presents information on how well one PSC objective for 1997-98 fiscal year has been met.

Method

Participants

Questionnaires were mailed to 178 school systems to be distributed to all beginning teachers (5525) and the principals (1673) under whom they served. The numbers of teachers and principals were obtained from the superintendents and personnel directors of school systems. Four thousand two hundred and one (4201) teachers from 161 school systems responded for a response rate of 76.0% for teachers and 90.4% for school systems. Also principals completed and returned The Principal Questionnaire for 4129 teachers. Questionnaires completed by veteran teachers who were new to Georgia, beginning, but non-teaching personnel, for example, counselors and principal questionnaires that had no matching teacher questionnaires were eliminated.

Materials

The Teacher Questionnaire and the Principal Questionnaire, developed by a contractor, were administered to teachers and principals, respectively. Each questionnaire was a 26-item four-point rating scale and three open-ended or constructed-response questions. The rating scales elicited respondents' level of agreement with the statements pertaining to beginning teachers' performance in and readiness for the classroom. The constructed-response items elicited information on areas or skills in which respondents believed the beginning teachers were best or least prepared, or could benefit from better grounding.

Procedure

A focus group, comprised of beginning teachers, principals, teacher education faculty, a director of an Induction Program, PSC staff and the contractor, was used to generate issues to be addressed in the questionnaire. Beginning teachers were asked to reflect on their preparation and their recent experience in the field and to identify areas to be addressed, the time line for the survey and the format for the survey. These formed the basis for the questionnaires and the survey procedures.

Many of the questionnaires were hand-delivered to personnel directors at the meeting of the Georgia Association of School Personnel Administrators. The remaining questionnaires were mailed to the Personnel Director in each school system. The directors distributed the questionnaires to the principals who in turn distributed teacher questionnaires to the teachers. The completed questionnaires were returned via the same routing. The channel of distribution and collection of questionnaires, coupled with follow-up by telephone and Fax, account for the considerably high response rates.

Result and Discussion

Data from 4187 Teacher and 4036 Principal questionnaires were analyzed. Table 1 shows the distribution of the beginning teachers according to colleges where they were prepared. Approximately 23% of the teachers received their preparation out-of-state. Table 2 shows a distribution of the beginning teachers according to areas of certification. Early Childhood Education has the highest representation in the population. Specifically, 36.2% of the beginning teachers in the survey were certified in Early Childhood, 18.6% in the Middle Grades and 4.9% in Social Studies, etc. Approximately 67% of the beginning teachers had baccalaureate degrees in education, 21% had master's degrees. The rest, 8.5%, underwent various non-degree programs that culminate in certification alone.

Table 1. Distribution of Beginning Teachers According to College of Preparation

Institution	Frequency	Percent
Agnes Scott	11	0.3
Albany State	48	1.1
Armstrong	104	2.5
Augusta	93	2.2
Berry College	67	1.6
Brenau University	107	2.6
Brewton-Parker	47	1.1
Clark Atlanta	63	1.5
Clayton	31	0.7
Columbus State	91	2.2
Covenant	3	0.1
Emmanuel	13	0.3
Emory University	18	0.4
Fort Valley	71	1.7
Georgia College	194	4.6
Georgia Southern	222	5.3
GA Southwestern	81	1.9
Georgia State University	274	6.5
Kennesaw	177	4.2
LaGrange	20	0.5
Mercer University	209	5.0
Morehouse	9	0.2
Morris Brown	19	0.5
North Georgia	119	2.8
Oglethorpe	15	0.4
Paine College	38	0.9
Piedmont College	36	0.9
Shorter	44	1.1
Spelman College	16	0.4
State University of West Georgia	363	8.7
Thomas College	13	0.3
Toccoa Falls	4	0.1
University of GA	386	9.2
Valdosta	206	4.9
Wesleyan	10	0.2
No Response	24	0.6
Out of State	941	22.5
Total	4,187	100

Table 2. Certification Areas of Beginning Teachers

Areas	Frequency	Percent
Agriculture	15	0.4
Art Education	50	1.2
Audiologist	2	0.0
Behavioral Disorders	63	1.5
Business Education	58	1.4
Chinese	2	0.0
Dance	2	0.5
Drama	8	0.2
Early Childhood	1,514	36.2
Educational Leadership	4	0.1
English	203	4.8
French	23	0.5
General Counseling	20	0.5
German	12	0.3
Health & Physical Education	164	3.9
Health Education	11	0.3
Interrelated Special Education	107	2.6
Latin	1	0.0
Learning Disabilities	56	1.3
Marketing Education	7	0.2
Mathematics	140	3.3
Media Specialist	7	0.2
Mental Retardation	180	4.3
Middle Grades	777	18.6
Music	96	2.3
Orthopedically Impaired	2	0.0
Reading Specialist	7	0.2
Russian	1	0.0
School Nutrition Director	3	0.1
School Social Worker	1	0.0
School Psychologist	6	0.1
Science	151	3.6
Social Science	206	4.9
Spanish	70	1.7
Speech & Lang. Pathology	54	1.3
Speech Education	2	0.0
Technology	21	0.5
Visually Impaired	4	0.1
Blank	58	1.4
Other Areas	79	1.9
Total	4,187	100

Table 3 shows an inter-item correlation table among the 26 items on Teacher Questionnaire. The coefficients range from zero (.001) to medium (0.605) in magnitude. A detailed evaluation of the survey instrument is presented in Appendix A of this Report. The rest of the findings will be organized under the following headings: Teachers' and Principals' Responses on the rating scale; Results According to Selected areas of Certification; Open-ended (constructed-response) Questions; In-State versus Out-of-state Preparation.

Table 3. Inter-correlation among the multiple choice questions on Teacher Questionnaire

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
1. ADMNDUTY	1																									
2. ASSTMONT	0.287	1																								
3. COMBGRDE	-0.27	-0.3	1																							
4. COMMPRNT	-0.16	-0.19	0.251	1																						
5. CLASSORG	0.409	0.313	-0.28	-0.19	1																					
6. CLSREADY	0.403	0.416	-0.33	-0.21	0.464	1																				
7. CONTKNWL	0.235	0.24	-0.25	-0.14	0.233	0.309	1																			
8. COVMATRL	0.39	0.37	-0.32	-0.2	0.367	0.404	0.276	1																		
9. INSTRGRP	0.308	0.333	-0.24	-0.18	0.364	0.394	0.217	0.325	1																	
10. INSTRND	326	0.331	-0.26	-0.16	0.374	0.406	0.277	0.373	0.35	1																
11. INTGTECH	0.208	0.256	-0.2	-0.15	0.242	0.256	0.124	0.228	0.24	0.236	1															
12. LGALRESP	0.36	0.279	-0.28	-0.18	0.352	0.369	0.224	0.327	0.27	0.266	0.215	1														
13. LNGENVT	0.412	0.341	-0.26	-0.22	0.564	0.49	0.246	0.39	0.36	0.397	0.231	0.315	1													
14. PLANUNIT	-0.2	-0.2	0.293	0.172	-0.24	-0.27	-0.2	-0.22	0.16	-0.25	-0.15	-0.19	-0.24	1												
15. POSATMOS	0.364	0.333	-0.24	-0.22	0.493	0.488	0.252	0.388	0.34	0.347	0.236	0.366	0.605	-0.22	1											
16. PROFSUPT	0.255	0.196	-0.16	-0.16	0.273	0.264	0.179	0.231	0.19	0.22	0.165	0.235	0.389	-0.18	0.316	1										
17. REGUSPND	0.159	0.194	-0.15	-0.12	0.149	0.232	0.128	0.143	0.17	0.176	0.172	0.352	0.154	-0.11	0.172	0.99	1									
18. RESUSAGE	0.356	0.357	-0.22	-0.19	0.434	0.36	0.232	0.368	0.29	0.344	0.273	0.33	0.408	-0.21	0.398	0.271	0.172	1								
19. SLVPROBLM	0.368	0.354	-0.28	-0.21	0.417	0.509	0.258	0.401	0.37	0.365	0.218	0.306	0.465	-0.18	0.485	0.242	0.146	0.328	1							
20. STDTEST	0.165	0.173	-0.08	-0.09	0.194	0.186	0.056	0.129	0.2	0.135	0.144	0.185	0.16	-0.11	0.148	0.091	0.177	0.168	0.121	1						
21. STRTGYND	0.286	0.37	-0.23	-0.17	0.282	0.371	0.157	0.294	0.4	0.313	0.241	0.299	0.315	-0.14	0.293	0.149	0.363	0.288	0.317	0.244	1					
22. STUBEHAV	0.289	0.267	-0.2	-0.18	0.396	0.472	0.153	0.281	0.32	0.287	0.165	0.256	0.483	-0.16	0.456	0.202	0.164	0.242	0.525	0.162	0.302	1				
23. STUDMOTV	0.329	0.36	-0.22	-0.19	0.376	0.406	0.231	0.342	0.39	0.356	0.247	0.238	0.438	-0.17	0.417	0.193	0.146	0.325	0.379	0.177	0.366	0.371	1			
24. TIMEMGT	0.465	0.324	-0.33	-0.18	0.424	0.445	0.314	0.418	0.32	0.364	0.185	0.309	0.4	-0.24	0.37	0.198	0.155	0.368	0.449	0.147	0.297	0.31	0.354	1		
25. TXTBASED	0.013	-0.06	0.014	0.047	-0.03	-0.05	-0	0.028	0.04	-0.04	-0.05	-0	-0.05	0.028	-0.05	0.044	-0.08	-0.06	-0.01	0.035	-0.1	-0.04	-0.06	0.04	1	
26. WIDRNGND	-0.24	-0.24	0.274	0.171	-0.22	-0.3	-0.18	-0.24	0.27	-0.27	-0.16	-0.21	-0.23	0.189	-0.22	0.092	-0.19	-0.19	-0.27	-0.06	-0.26	-0.25	-0.25	0.26	0.07	1

Teachers and Principals Responses on the Rating Scale

Teachers were asked to rate their level of readiness for the classroom on a scale of 1 to 4, by indicating to what extent they agreed (4) or disagreed (1) with 25 statements regarding skills, knowledge and abilities that a classroom teacher should have. They also rated themselves on the statement “Overall, I was ready for the classroom as a beginning teacher.” Similarly, principals or their designees rated beginning teachers’ level of readiness on items that corresponded to those on the teacher survey. Table 4 presents teachers’ and principals’ patterns of responses on each item and also the average rating score for each item. As can be seen, teachers and principals’ response patterns match very closely except on four items. Thus, only responses to the overall readiness item as well as items on which teachers’ and principals’ responses do not agree will be discussed.

Principals’ and teachers’ patterns of rating as well as the mean ratings differed significantly in items T5, T23 and T24. See Table 4. In T5, more principals than teachers reported that teachers used results of standardized tests to adjust instruction to meet the needs of students ($t = 25.96$, $df = 3492$, $p = 0.0$). This finding is curious and contrary to expectation because teachers should have a more accurate knowledge of their own behaviors in the classroom. In item T23, more teachers than principals felt that the teachers were overwhelmed with the wide range of instructional levels and student needs in the classroom ($t = 18.27$, $df = 4009$, $p = 0.0$). Finally, more principals than teachers felt that teachers had successful strategies for handling special learning situations such as special needs, giftedness and nonreaders ($t = 20.65$, $df = 3962$, $p = 0.0$). These responses may suggest that the teachers are doing a better job than they themselves perceive and/or perhaps that principals’ responses are based on broader view with more basis for comparison.

On item 26, the summary item, which elicited level of overall readiness, most of the teachers indicated that they were ready by agreeing (61.6%) or strongly agreeing (32.8%). This yields an overall agreement rate of 94.4%. Similarly, as shown in Table 4, principals agreed (57.7%) or strongly agreed (35.2%), for a total of 92.7%, that the teachers were ready for the classroom.

Table 4. Teachers' and Principals' Responses to Multiple-Choice Questions

Questionnaire Item	Rating (N=4187)					
	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Item Average Rating
	No.	1	2	3	4	
I was able to effectively manage student behavior in my classroom	T 1	53	340	2348	1394	3.23
	P 25	94	438	2375	1072	3.11
I was knowledgeable about state and federal regulations concerning instructing students with special needs	T 2	142	885	2443	666	2.88
	P 24	42	784	2629	420	2.89
I was not sure how to plan units of instruction	T 3	1861	1724	445	114	1.71
	P 23	1289	2126	494	67	1.83
I could accommodate the instructional needs of most of my students	T 4	40	176	2670	1254	3.24
	P 22	21	228	2907	819	3.14
I used standardized test results (e.g., Iowa tests of Basic Skills) to adjust instruction to meet the needs of the learner *	T 5	673	1440	1485	334	2.38
	P 21	82	857	2355	362	2.82
I was able to establish a professional, supportive relationship with the other teachers at my school	T 6	11	71	1294	2787	3.65
	P 20	18	115	2102	1755	3.40
I was able to create a productive environment in my classroom	T 7	8	96	2002	2049	3.47
	P 19	25	210	2290	1449	3.30
I completed administrative duties, paperwork, and my classroom instruction with ease	T 8	92	804	2317	936	2.99
	P 18	27	350	2449	1157	3.19
I used resources available to me to help me do a better job of teaching my students	T 9	4	136	2288	1731	3.38
	P 17	12	148	2629	1195	3.26
I was able to effectively organize my classroom environment for instruction	T 10	32	215	2283	1610	3.32
	P 16	19	245	2452	1271	3.25
I knew my legal responsibilities as a teacher (e.g., documenting discipline problems, absentees, etc.)	T 11	42	482	2354	1280	3.17
	P 15	39	452	2747	771	3.06
The atmosphere in my classroom was positive	T 12	8	95	1923	2129	3.49
	P 14	34	188	1963	1843	3.39
I could make decisions related to covering instructional content in the time allocated	T 13	25	235	2577	1286	3.24
	P 13	11	183	3082	741	3.13
My teaching was based primarily on the textbook and teacher's guide	T 14	583	1429	1783	314	2.44
	P 12	478	1597	1713	202	2.41
I was able to use a variety of classroom assessment strategies to monitor and adjust my instruction	T15	26	372	2796	947	3.13
	P11	31	414	2746	819	3.09
I was not able to communicate effectively with parents	T16	1661	1963	381	138	1.76
	P10	1337	1863	620	201	1.92

Table 4. Teachers' and Principals' Responses to Multiple-Choice Questions (Continued)

Questionnaire Item	Rating					
	Item No.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4	Item Average Rating
I was successful in motivating students to achieve at high levels	T 17	37	473	2923	706	3.04
	P 9	28	409	2588	979	3.13
I was able to integrate technology, including the internet, computers, and available software, in my instruction (or could have if available)	T 18	274	884	2149	821	2.85
	P 8	56	594	2553	710	3.00
I was not sure how to combine homework, quizzes, projects, etc., into a grade that reflected student performance	T 19	1301	2098	558	91	1.86
	P 7	1014	2789	122	14	1.78
I knew the content for the subject area(s) I was assigned to teach	T 20	34	245	1969	1893	3.38
	P 6	14	119	2199	1686	3.38
I managed my time effectively	T 21	28	424	2605	1091	3.15
	P 5	32	332	2394	1268	3.22
I was able to solve most classroom management & instructional problems encountered during my teaching day	T 22	25	180	2581	1367	3.27
	P 4	65	399	2471	1090	3.14
I was overwhelmed with the wide range of instructional levels and student needs in my classroom *	T 23	413	1888	1287	565	2.48
	P 3	784	2002	1002	239	2.17
I had successful strategies for handling special learning situations (e.g., special needs, gifted, nonreader) *	T 24	78	998	2627	429	2.82
	P 2	46	520	2441	994	3.10
I was able to group my students effectively for instruction	T 25	41	462	2894	724	3.04
	P 1	28	225	2555	1201	3.23
Overall I was ready for the classroom as a beginning teacher	T 26	24	205	2547	1357	3.27
	P 26	43	245	2306	1406	3.27

* These items show considerable differences of opinion between teachers and principals

T = Questions from Teacher Questionnaire

P = Questions from Principal Questionnaire

A Chi-Square test of Independence showed a significant association between teachers' and principals' ratings ($\chi^2 = 304.4$, $p < .05$) on the level of beginning teachers' overall readiness for the classroom. See Table 5.

Table 5. Principals and Beginning Teachers Ratings on Teachers' Overall Readiness for the Classroom

		PRINCIPALS' RATINGS				
TEACHERS' RATINGS		1*	2	3	4	Total
	1	2	4	10	6	22
	2	16	34	113	36	199
	3	19	169	1518	725	2431
	4	6	35	642	626	1309
		43	242	2283	1393	3961

- 1=Strongly Disagree
- 2=Disagree
- 3=Agree
- 4=Strongly Agree

Chi Square =304.41, $p < 0.05$, $df = 9$

Item Responded to:

Teachers: "Overall I was ready for the classroom as a beginning teacher"

Principals: "Overall, was ready for the classroom as a beginning teacher"

Table 6 shows the result of collapsing the rating scale into two: 'ready' and 'not ready'. Specifically, teachers and principals agree that 3,511 (83.9%) were ready while 56 (1.3%) were not ready for the classroom.

Table 6. A Cross-tabulation of Teachers' and Principals Ratings on Overall Readiness of Teachers Collapsed into a Two-Point Scale

		Principals' Responses (On P26)			Total
		No Response	Not Ready	Ready	
Teachers' Responses (On T26)	No Response	15	3	36	54
	Not Ready	8	56 (1.3%)	165 (3.9%)	229 (5.5%)
	Ready	164	229 (5.5%)	3511 (83.9%)	3904 (93.2%)
Total		187	288 (6.9%)	3712 (88.7%)	4187

Principals and teachers disagreed on 229 teachers who felt they were ready for the classroom but whom their principals thought otherwise, and 165 teachers who felt they were not ready for the classroom but who the principals felt were ready. Overall, 5.5% of the teachers reported that they were not ready for the classroom while principals felt that 6.9% of teachers were not ready.

Tables 7 and 8 present teachers' level of readiness distributed according to areas of certification. Tables 7 and 8 show that both teachers and principals report highest levels of non-readiness among beginning teachers certified in Math (13.6%, 10.7%) and Science (11.9%, 9.9%).

Table 7. Self-Rating on Readiness for the Classroom by Beginning Teachers According to Certification Areas

Certification Areas	Readiness Rating						Total #
	Not Specified		Not Ready		Ready		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Early Childhood	8	0.5	64	4.2	1,442	95.2	1,514
English	3	1.5	14	6.9	186	91.6	203
Math	0	0	19	13.6	121	86.4	140
Middle Grades	8	1	28	3.6	741	95.4	777
Science	1	0.7	18	11.9	132	87.4	151
Social Science	2	1	13	6.3	191	92.7	206
Special Education	7	1.7	28	6.8	379	91.5	414
Others	25	3.2	45	5.8	712	91.0	782
Total	54		229		3,904		4,187

Table 8. Principals' Perception of Beginning Teachers' Readiness for the Classroom by Certification Area

Certification Areas	Readiness Rating						Total #
	Not Specified		Not Ready		Ready		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Early Childhood	63	4.2	72	4.8	1,379	91.1	1,514
English	8	3.9	13	6.4	182	89.7	203
Math	7	5	15	10.7	118	84.3	140
Middle Grades	20	2.6	63	8.1	694	89.3	777
Science	9	6	15	9.9	127	84.1	151
Social Science	11	5.3	12	5.8	183	88.8	206
Special Education	19	4.6	34	8.2	361	87.2	414
Others	50	6.4	64	8.2	668	85.4	782
Total	187		288		3,712		4,187

Nevertheless, overall, both beginning teachers and their principals, 93.2% and 88.7%, respectively, rate beginning teachers ready for the classroom.

Teachers' and Principals' Responses to the Constructed-Response Questions

Beginning teachers and their principals were also asked to respond to three open-ended or constructed-response questions. The first one for teachers was: "What did you get from your teacher preparation that you most needed, i.e., in which areas were you well prepared?" Teachers responded to this item by either specifying a course or subject area by name e.g. English, or they listed some skills, knowledge or ability e.g. accommodating student needs. No subject area was listed by more than 1% of the teachers. 96.8% did not list any areas. In terms of skills 1.7% listed Planning Units of Instruction, 1.5% listed Classroom Management and Organization, 1.2% listed Field Experiences while 91.6% did not list any.

Question two asked: "Which areas of study, classes, projects, etc, did you complete in your teacher preparation but did not need, i.e., which could have been left out?" No subject area or skill was listed by as much as 1%. This could be interpreted to mean that most beginning teachers found all their experiences in teacher preparation to be useful.

Question 3 reads: “What did you need in your teacher preparation that you did not get, i.e., which area(s) need to be added?” Table 9 shows areas and/or skills that teachers indicated they needed in their “teacher preparation but did not get.” To facilitate comparisons, Table 9 also shows in which areas and skills the principals thought the beginning teachers were least prepared. Teachers and principals show a high degree of agreement on what teachers seem to need. Specifically, teachers and principals named classroom management and managing student behavior in that order, as the two most important skills that teachers lacked. Additionally, teachers felt they could use longer and more varied field experiences (4.9%); more courses in the content areas they are teaching (4.4%); better preparation in fulfilling administrative duties (4.0%); the teaching of reading (2.8%); and strategies for accommodating student needs in the classroom (2.1%). On the other hand, principals felt that the teachers were least prepared in these additional areas: strategies for accommodating needs in the classroom (3.6%); fulfilling administrative duties (3.6%); integrating technology into the classroom (3.0%); communicating with parents (2.6%) and understanding legal responsibilities of a teacher (2.4%). It should be mentioned that 54% of the teachers, according to teachers themselves, and 48%, according to their principals, lacked nothing and did not list any areas of weaknesses in their preparation.

Table 9. Seven Top Areas and Skills that Beginning Teachers Need But Did not Get Or In Which They Were Least Prepared

Identified by Teachers			Identified by Principals	
Area of Need	%	Rank	Areas of Least Preparation	%
Classroom Management	7.6	1	Classroom Management	9.9
Managing Student Behavior	5.9	2	Managing Student Behavior	7.2
Field Experiences	4.9	3	Fulfilling administrative duties e.g. paper work	3.6
Understanding Content of Subject Area Assigned to Teach	4.4	4	Accommodating Students Needs in the Classroom	3.6
Fulfilling administrative duties e.g. paper work	4.0	5	Integrating Technology into Instruction	3.0
Need More Training in Teaching Reading	2.8	6	Communicating with Parents	2.6
Accommodating Students Needs in the Classroom	2.1	7	Understanding Legal Responsibilities of a Teacher	2.4

Note: About 50% of all beginning teachers were so well prepared that they were not lacking in any areas according to teachers (54%) and principal (48%).

In terms of subject areas, teachers reported that they needed additional help in Behavioral Disorders (5.1%); Learning Disabilities (4.0%); Reading (3.9%); Science (2.4%); Technology (2.2%); Interrelated Special Education (1.7%); English (1.6%); Social Studies (1.1%). Sixty-seven percent (66.9%) did not report any needs. These course or subject area requests become more meaningful when classified according to certification areas of the teachers responding.

Table 10 presents information on the certification areas of beginning teachers and the subject areas in which they would have liked more preparation. This information is important because it can assist individual preparation programs see where their graduates think they need additional help. For instance, 59% of the requests for more preparation in Reading were made by teachers certified in Early Childhood. Similarly, 42.5% of request for Math, 47.1 in Special Education, 46.2% for Technology, and 42.2% for Writing were made by beginning teachers certified in Early Childhood. Requests from teachers certified in the Middle Grades constitute the specified percentages for the following areas: English (42.4%), Mathematics (31.3%),

Technology (22%), and Special Education (12.2%). Also noteworthy is the finding that for teachers certified in Social Studies, requests for better grounding in Economics constitutes the highest area of concern followed by requests for Special Education. It should be remembered that, as shown on Table 10, as many as 2802 or 66.9% of the beginning teachers did not indicate that they needed any additional help.

For teacher preparation programs to benefit from feedback provided by beginning teachers, each program needs to know the specific areas of concern or weakness of its own graduates. Tables 11 and 12 present a cross-tabulation of teachers not considered ready for the classroom according to their college of preparation and areas of certification. An in-depth and separate institutional report has been prepared for and made available to each college that is represented in the survey.

Table 10. Content Area Requests by Certification Groupings

Content Areas Needed	Certification Area								
	Other Areas	Early Childhood	English	Math	Middle Grades	Science	Social Studies	Special Education	TOTAL
Agriculture	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Algebra	2	0	0	0	5	1	0	2	10
Art Education	2	10	1	0	2	0	1	0	16
Biology	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	4
Business Education	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Business Math	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Calculus & Trigonometry	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Chemistry	0	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	7
Dance	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	6
Drama	3	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	7
Early Childhood	5	6	1	0	5	0	0	6	23
Earth/Space Science	2	2	3	0	5	3	1	2	18
Economics	2	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	16
English	6	13	5	0	28	1	1	9	63
French	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	6
Geography	1	7	0	0	7	1	6	1	23
Geometry	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	5
Greek	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
Health & Physical Education	5	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	11
Health Education	5	4	0	0	3	0	0	1	13
History	2	2	0	0	4	0	4	2	14
Japanese	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Latin	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Math	5	34	1	1	25	1	2	11	80
Marketing Education	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Music	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Physics	1	2	0	0	4	7	0	0	14
Political Science	1	3	0	0	2	0	2	0	8
Reading	12	90	6	0	30	2	5	20	165
Science	9	29	1	1	35	2	1	23	101
Social Science	0	19	2	0	19	0	1	7	48
Special Education	81	227	17	7	59	7	13	71	482
Speech & Language Pathology	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Speech Education*	4	13	0	1	3	0	0	1	22
Spanish	6	19	1	0	7	0	1	2	36
Technology	15	42	1	1	20	2	2	8	91
Writing	5	19	8	0	7	0	1	5	45
Other	4	7	0	0	6	3	2	1	23
No Request	588	951	152	121	493	114	147	236	2802
Total	782	1514	203	140	777	151	206	414	4187

* Special Education includes Audiology, Behavior Disorders, Interrelated Special Education, Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, Orthopedically and Visually Impaired.

For teacher preparation programs to benefit from feedback provided by beginning teachers, each program needs to know the specific areas of concern or weakness of its own graduates. This information has been provided in a separate institutional report to every college that is represented in the survey. Tables 11 and 12 present a cross-tabulation of teachers not considered ready for the classroom according to whether or not they were prepared in the State of Georgia and areas of certification.

The greatest discrepancy between Tables 11 and 12 is that the principals rated 63 Middle Grades as not ready (22%) while only 28 beginning teachers rated themselves not ready (12%). This information in Tables 11 and 12 will help teacher education units to identify and focus on the specific programs which showed high incidence of beginning teachers that did not feel confident or ready for the classroom. Additional analyses at the institutional level will isolate the specific areas of need or weakness in those programs.

Table 11. Certification Area for Teachers Who Did Not Consider Themselves Ready for the Classroom

	Certification Areas								
	Not Specified	Early Childhood	English	Math	Middle Grades	Science	Social Science	Special Education	TOTAL
Prepared in the State of Georgia	27	45	11	14	26	18	12	17	170
Out-of-State	18	19	3	5	2	0	1	11	59
Total	45	64	14	19	28	18	13	28	229

Table 12. Certification Areas of teachers Who Were Not Considered Ready by Their Principals

	Certification Areas								TOTAL
	Not Specified	Early Childhood	English	Math	Middle Grades	Science	Social Science	Special Education	
Prepared in the State of Georgia	36	53	9	14	57	13	9	27	218
No Response	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Out-of-State	26	19	4	1	6	2	3	6	67
Total	64	72	13	15	63	15	12	34	288

In-State Versus Out-of-state Preparation

Tables 13 and 14 compare the readiness of teachers prepared outside of the state of Georgia with those prepared in Georgia Colleges of Education. As the data and result of χ^2 test of significance show, there are no differences between the two groups.

Table 13. Self-Perceived Readiness of Beginning Teachers Prepared Out-of state Compared to Those Prepared in Georgia

Readiness					
Trained	1	2	3	4	Total
In Georgia	16 (0.5%)	154 (4.8%)	1960 (61.2%)	1073 (33.5%)	3203
Out of State	8 (0.9%)	51 (5.5%)	587 (63.1%)	284 (30.5%)	930
Total	24	205	2547	1357	4133

$\chi^2 = 4.64$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.2$, Non-significant

Table 14. Principals' Ratings Level of Readiness for the Classroom of Beginning Teachers Prepared Out-of-State Compared to Those Prepared in Georgia

Readiness					
Trained	1	2	3	4	Total
In Georgia	28 (0.9%)	193 (6.2%)	1781 (57.4%)	1099 (35.4%)	3101
Out of State	15 (1.7%)	52 (5.8%)	525 (58.4%)	307 (34.1%)	899
Total	43	245	2306	1406	4000

$\chi^2 = 4.46$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.216$, Non-significant

A Chi-Square analysis showed a non-significant association between the state where teachers were prepared and their level of readiness for the classroom either as rated by teachers themselves or as perceived by their principals. In other words, beginning teachers' level of readiness did not differ on the basis of whether they were prepared in the state of Georgia or out-of-state.

Summary and Conclusion

The survey shows that as much as 93.2 to 94.4% of the beginning teachers consider themselves ready for the classroom and that their principals also perceive them as ready. This is an evidence of the attainment of PSC Strategic Objective 2, Desired Result A (Torrey, 1997). This is especially important since principals' ratings of teachers' readiness match very closely teachers' self-ratings. More importantly both principals and beginning teachers identify the same areas of concern in beginning teachers' preparation: management of the classroom as well as student behavior, fulfilling administrative duties and strategies for accommodating student needs in the classroom. These areas will become even more critical as classrooms become more inclusive and diverse. Beginning teachers also indicated their concern about the nature and length of their field experiences. Many of their comments confirm the need for multiple placements in diversified environments, experience working with students that have diverse needs and starting field experiences as early in one's program as possible.

The survey also shows that beginning teachers' greatest concern or weakness is not inadequate skills for teaching reading. Only a small percentage of teachers (2.8 –3.9%) felt they could use some help in that area. Most of the concerns (54.5%), on how to teach reading, were expressed by 5.9% of Early Childhood majors. In fact, more Early Childhood certificate holders asked for help in Special Education areas (15.1%) than in Reading (5.9%). Finally, when

beginning teachers are classified according to areas of certification, highest proportions of non-readiness are found in Mathematics and Science areas.

References

- Bartell, C. A. (1995, Fall). Shaping teacher induction policy in California. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 27-43.
- Boothe, D. (1997). What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future. A Review. *Current Issues in Middle Level Education*, 6 (1), 88-92.
- California Standards for the Teaching Profession. California.
- Georgia Department of Education. Certified Personnel Information (CPI). 1992-1996.
Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. (1992). Model standards of beginning teacher licensing and development: A resource for state dialogue. Washington, DC.: Council of Chief State School Officers.
- Little, J. W. (1989). District policy choices and teachers' professional development opportunities. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(2), 165-179.
- Moir, E. and Stobbe, C. (1995, Fall). Professional growth for new teachers: Support and assessment through collegial partnerships. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 83-91.
- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996). What matters most: Teaching for America's future. Summary Report. New York, NY: Columbia University.
- National Education Goals Panel (1994). Goals Report: Data Volume for the national education. Vol. 1: National Data. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4-14.
- Shulman, L. S. (1989). The paradox of teacher assessment. *New Directions for Teacher Assessment: Forty-ninth ETS Invitational Conference Proceedings*, pp. 13-27. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Torrey, M. (1997). Georgia Professional Standards Commission Strategic Plan, July 1997, pp. 1-12.

APPENDIX A

The Rating Scale

Evaluation of the Instrument

An inter-item correlation among the multiple-choice items showed zero (0.001) to medium (0.605) correlations. See Table 3. Using Principal Component Analysis method for extraction and Oblimin method for rotation in an exploratory factor analysis, five interpretable factors were identified. The most dominant factor could be described as Classroom Management and Organizational Skills and Ability, as seen in Table A-1. The items with the highest loadings on this factor are: ability to create a productive learning environment; ability to solve most classroom management and instructional problems; ability to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom; ability to manage student behavior in the classroom; ability to effectively organize the classroom environment for instruction; ability to motivate students to achieve at high levels; ability to manage time effectively; ability to effectively group students for instruction; ability to complete administrative duties; ability to accommodate instructional needs of most students; ability to cover scheduled content; and ability to use available resources to teach.

The second factor could be described as knowledge of rules, regulations and strategies on how to deal with students with special or learning needs. The items that load highly on this factor are: knowledge about state and federal regulations concerning teaching students with special needs; knowledge of teachers' legal responsibilities; successful strategies for handling special learning situations; and use of standardized test results to adjust instruction to meet the needs of the learner.

Table A-1. Rotated Component Structure Matrix

Questionnaire Item	Components					
	Item	1	2	3	4	5
I was able to create a productive environment in my classroom	7	.765	-*	-	-	-
I was able to solve most classroom management & instructional problems encountered during my teaching day	22	.739	-	-	+	+
The atmosphere in my classroom was positive	12	.732	-	-	-	-
I was able to effectively manage student behavior in my classroom	1	.714	-	-	-	+
I was able to effectively organize my classroom environment for instruction	10	.683	-	-	+	-
I was successful in motivating students to achieve at high levels	17	.651	-	-	-	+
I managed my time effectively	21	.592	-	-	+	+
I was able to group my students effectively for instruction	25	.578	-	-	+	+
I completed administrative duties, paperwork, and my classroom instruction with ease	8	.550	-	-	+	-
I could accommodate the instructional needs of most of my students	4	.548	-	-	+	+
I could make decisions related to covering instructional content in the time allocated	13	.546	-	-	+	-
I used resources available to me to help me do a better job of teaching my students	9	.511	-	-	-	-
I was knowledgeable about state and federal regulations concerning instructing students with special needs	2	+	-.707	-	-	+
I had successful strategies for handling special learning situations (e.g., special needs, gifted, nonreader)	24	+	-.673	-	-	+
I used standardized test results (e.g., Iowa tests of Basic Skills) to adjust instruction to meet the needs of the learner	5	+	-.601	+	+	-
I knew my legal responsibilities as a teacher (e.g., documenting discipline problems, absentees, etc.)	11	+	-.587	-	+	-

* Component loadings that are less than 0.5 are not listed but the signs are retained

Table A-1. Contd. Rotated Component Structure Matrix

Questionnaire Item	Item	1	2	3	4	5
I was not sure how to combine homework, quizzes, projects, etc., into a grade that reflected student performance	19	-	+	.706	+	+
I was not sure how to plan units of instruction	3	-	+	.589	+	+
I knew the content for the subject area(s) I was assigned to teach	20	+	-	-.583	+	-
I managed my time effectively	21	+	-	-.566	+	+
I could make decisions related to covering instructional content in the time allocated	13	+	-	-.552	+	-
My teaching was based primarily on the textbook and teacher's guide	14	-	+	+	.829	-
I was able to establish a professional, supportive relationship with the other teachers at my school	6	+	-	-	+	-.649

The third factor could be called teachers' technical knowledge in Curriculum and Assessment. Items that have high loadings on the third factor are: knowledge of how to combine homework, quizzes, projects, etc., into a grade that reflects student performance; knowledge of unit planning; knowledge of content that teacher was assigned to teach; time management; and ability to make decisions regarding coverage of content in the time allotted. The fourth factor is dependence on or using textbook or existing material as opposed to knowledge and ability to create one's own. The main item that loaded on the factor is the item that elicited whether or not teaching was primarily based on textbooks and teachers' guides. The last factor elicited interpersonal and professional relationships. The main item that loaded on the factor is ability to establish professional supportive relationship with other teachers.

All the factors conceptually appear to be important components of beginning teachers' repertoire. However, the critical question is: are the relative weights, as reflected by the number of items on the questionnaire to measure each appropriate or defensible?

Interestingly, the second, third and fifth factors are negatively correlated to the first factor. See Table A-2. This suggests that teachers, and maybe programs, that paid a great deal of attention to classroom management and organization, tended not to rate so highly on technical knowledge that the teacher should have in curriculum development, assessment and knowledge of how to deal with special needs and vice versa. On the other hand, knowledge of curriculum and assessment issues is positively related to knowledge of how to handle special instructional needs. The fourth component, dependence on existing textbooks and materials has a zero correlation with classroom management and organization and teachers' knowledge of Curriculum Development and Delivery and Assessment. This is not surprising given the tendency in the field for teachers to follow prescribed preplanned curriculum, textbooks, guides and workbooks irrespective of their ability to plan and make their own curricular decisions.

Table A-2. Component Correlation Matrix

Components	1	2	3	4	5
1	1.00				
2	-.407	1.00			
3	-.449	.306	1.00		
4	.013	.041	0.055	1.00	
5	-.084	.058	0.106	-0.0	1.00

Noteworthy too is the fact that the five main factors extracted account for less than 48% of the variance in the items. This suggests that many items are measuring many disparate

variables/concepts. This is not surprising given the zero to medium correlation observed among the items.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to see which variables best predicted overall classroom readiness. Seventeen of the 25 items were included in a final regression model that accounted for 47.8% ($R = 0.692$) of the variance in overall readiness. The following variables were excluded: ability to communicate with parent, covering instructional content in the time allocated, ability to integrate technology into instruction, ability to establish a professional and supportive relationship with other teachers, ability to use resources available to teach better, ability to use results of standardized tests to adjust instruction to meet students' needs, motivating students to achieve high standards, and basing teaching on textbook and teachers' guides. Covering instructional content in time allocated was excluded because it is related ($r = .418$) to ability to manage time which was included already. Similarly, motivating students to achieve high standards was excluded because it is related to ability to create a productive learning environment ($r = .438$) which was already included in the regression model. In other words these two items did not contribute much unique variance towards overall classroom readiness beyond that contributed by time management and creating a productive environment.

The exclusion of the rest of the listed variables is bothersome because it raises questions as to what beginning teachers define or understand as readiness for the classroom. Given correlation of 0.05 to 0.329 between the excluded variables and overall readiness, beginning teachers appear not to consider ability to integrate technology into one's instruction, ability to communicate with parents, good professional and supportive relationships with other teachers or being able to use results of standardized tests to adjust instructions very relevant to classroom readiness. Interestingly, inter-correlation coefficients among the variables are higher when

principals' responses are used than when teachers responses are used. For example, using teachers' rating, correlation coefficients between overall classroom readiness and the other 25 items on the rating scale range from -0.05 (teaching is based on textbook or teachers' guides) to 0.509 (ability to solve classroom problems). On the other hand, using principals' ratings the coefficients go from -0.235 (teaching is based on textbook and teacher guides) to 0.705 between overall readiness and ability to manage student behavior in the classroom and the ability to create a productive learning environment in the classroom. Also a factor analysis on principals' responses extracted three factors which accounted for 54.7% of the variance in the rating items.