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CASE STUDIES OF FIRST-YEAR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS
ON ST. CROIX
TO DEVELOP A MODEL FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP

by

Ruth Harrigan Beagles

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of San Diego

1990

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**CASE STUDIES OF FIRST-YEAR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS
ON ST. CROIX
TO DEVELOP A MODEL FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

Abstract

First-year teachers in the St. Croix School District represent an infusion of new blood into the profession whose retention, personal and professional growth are of paramount importance to the future of the profession. The purposes of this research were: (1) to examine the assumptions, concerns, beliefs, and perceptions of first-year teachers about their entry into the teaching profession; (2) to investigate the beliefs, concerns, perceptions, and assumptions of central office administrators, a teacher educator, a member of the Board of Education, experienced teachers, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, secretaries, parents, and paraprofessionals have about support needs for first-year teachers; (3) to explore the need for teacher leadership at the classroom level where effective teachers will be prepared to support each other through empowerment, communication, trust, vision, and generative; and (4) to design a model for teacher leadership which will promote the concept that teachers at the classroom level can exert leadership in providing support for first-year teachers. A phenomenological and ethnographic approach in the naturalistic setting of the St. Croix School District determined the perceived assistance and support needed by

first-year teachers. Data for case studies of five first-year teachers were collected from classroom observations, group meetings, journals, audiotapes, and videotapes. In varying degrees, a first-year teacher in the St. Croix School District had major concerns about receiving the initial paycheck on time, isolation, classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences among students, assessing students' work, relationship with parents, organizing classwork, lack of communication with administrators, being assigned as substitute teachers, and, having insufficient materials and supplies. Naturalistic research methods were used to collect information from 30 key participants whose role in the educational system impacts on the success or failure of a first-year teacher. The teacher leadership preparation model includes five essential themes of leadership: (1) empowerment, (2) vision, (3) communication, (4) trust, and (5) generativity. This model will aid experienced teachers in articulating their teaching expertise to others and raising first-year teachers and themselves to higher levels of professionalism.

To
My Mother
Mildred F. Harrigan
and
My Children
Edith and John

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

The St. Croix School District

The Virgin Islands school district is comprised of two local school districts, St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix, which has the larger school enrollment. Quality education is the ultimate goal of members of the Virgin Islands society who are concerned about the high rate of functional illiteracy, drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, school dropouts and single parenting among teenagers. More than 85% of public school students are reading below grade level and a similar percentage of high school graduates fail the placement examination for entrance to the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI). These startling figures send many messages, one of which is the need for a larger number of qualified classroom teachers. The residents of the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) express their concern about the lack of educational leadership on radio and television talk shows and in the newspapers. A letter to the editor of The Virgin Islands Daily News by a concerned citizen states, "It is now 1988, and our schools have a shortage of teachers and supplies...Teacher pay is delayed and student achievement tests are well below average. Our children are being shortchanged" (1988, p. 6). In February of 1988, the

Commissioner of Education stated on public television that, "our students are at risk" (WTJX, Channel 12). The vision school leaders generate for their schools must focus on quality, the crying demand coming from the environment (Faidley & Musser, 1989). American society expresses skepticism about whether or not our schools are succeeding in preparing tomorrow's leaders. Pressure for educational change most often comes from the business community and institutions of higher education concerned with poorly prepared graduates in the workplace and in college and university classrooms. In trying to relieve this pressure school districts tend to react with bandaid solutions instead of taking a proactive position.

A central theme in the educational reform literature is the need to strengthen the teaching profession. One of the four purposes of the Carnegie Task Force was to reaffirm that the teaching profession is the best hope for establishing new standards for excellence (The Report of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy [CFEE], 1986). The American educational system has been viewed as the foundation of society's economic growth, productivity and equal opportunity. To accomplish this end, the public school environment should foster the development of leadership role models. The Carnegie Task Force recommended the transformation of the teaching environment and the replacement of bureaucratic authority in schools with authority grounded in the

professional competence of teachers (CFEE, 1986).

One of the conceptual foundations of a leadership role is mentoring. In Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, Odysseus entrusted his son to his friend and advisor, Mentor, while he was off fighting the Trojan War. This account of Mentor leads educators to draw several conclusions about the activity of "mentoring." Anderson and Shannon (1988) view mentoring as an intentional, nurturing, insightful, supportive and protective process which has to take place in relationships with another. They say that "role modeling is the central quality of mentoring". (p. 38)

March & Olsen (1976), and Weick (1976), convey the message that "schools tend to be 'loosely coupled' systems in which the work of teachers is less than adequately supervised" (as cited in Rogus, 1988, p. 47). Many first-year teachers feel isolated, become discouraged and do not have ample support for improving teaching competence in order to maximize student learning, and promote personal and professional self-direction. It is necessary to have straightforward discussion of ideas with first-year teachers related to the positive role of the mentor (Godley & Wilson, 1986; Thies-Sprinthall, 1986; Brandt, 1987; Sparks & Bruder, 1987; Glatthorn, 1987). Mentors, in relationship with first-year teachers, can demonstrate effective leadership by articulating a realistic, credible future that is better than what exists in school systems at present.

There is no formal first-year teacher support system in

the St. Croix School District. Information derived from the current literature suggests that the present organizational structure is such that first-year elementary teachers primarily rely on support and assistance from the administrative hierarchy. A teacher support system at the classroom level can meet the serious personal and professional adjustment problems faced by beginning teachers who feel isolated and disillusioned with the reality of life in the classroom. Therefore this study will explore the need for teacher leadership at the classroom level where effective teachers will be trained to support each other through empowerment, communication, trust, vision and generativity.

In order to promote shared leadership by teachers, this study will examine the needs of first-year teachers and the support system necessary to raise the teaching profession to higher levels of competence. Rowley (1988) identifies four elements in terms of their implications for teachers as leaders at all levels of the school community:

create better places for teaching and learning by inviting a spirit of cooperation; promoting high levels of engagement; accepting the dissonance that always accompanies change; and searching for the common ground on which a shared vision can be built. (p.16)

The United States Virgin Islands is an unincorporated territory of the United States and may be considered a part of the "Third World" (Huritz, Menacker, & Weldon, 1987). The educational system follows the same pattern as that of the

continental United States although set in a Caribbean cultural environment. For this reason, the literature review which concentrates on support needs of first-year teachers in the continental United States may or may not apply to the USVI. The three main islands are divided into two school districts, St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John. As of December 19, 1988, the total number of elementary classroom teachers in the Virgin Islands school system was 799 (414 of these were in the St. Croix School District). The student population in the Virgin Islands public school system as of December 5, 1988 was 23,320. The total student population in the St. Croix school District is 12,218, of which 6,811 are elementary school students. (L. Romain, personal communication, June 21, 1989). On St. Croix there are ten elementary schools, three junior highs, one senior high, and one school complex designated for special education students not served in the special education classes of the above mentioned public schools. The vertical organization pattern of the schools begins with compulsory kindergarten for children nearest their fifth birthday and follows the 6-3-3-plan. The upper limit of compulsory attendance is age 16. The horizontal organization of the elementary school is primarily self-contained and is departmentalized at the junior and senior high levels.

The Government Reorganization and Consolidation Act of 1987 created "state-level" and "local-level" functions. It is the first attempt to delineate clear structural lines

between state and local level functions which existed prior to this act but were vague and indistinct. The day-to-day operation of the public school system and delivery of services falls under the purview of the Insular Superintendents. Prior to 1987, the Office of the District Superintendent of Education was responsible for conducting orientation of new teachers and in-service workshops annually for all teachers. During school year 1987-88, the Commissioner of Education directed the Office of Staff Development to expand orientation to include all professional personnel in a conference prior to the opening of school. Subject area coordinators conduct workshops for teachers in their particular disciplines throughout the academic year. Teachers and para-professionals are involved in in-service workshops sponsored by the St. Croix Federation of Teachers (SCFT). These workshops are called QuEST; an acronym for Quality Educational Standards in Teaching.

While these staff development in-service agenda are meaningful to the professional growth of educational personnel, they do not meet specific needs and concerns of first-year teachers. In 1982, the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDOE), entered into an agreement with UVI to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the public school system of the USVI. Most specifically the intent is to ensure that all non-degreed teachers satisfy bachelor's degree requirements and become certified (Clark, 1982). This was accomplished through the federally funded Territorial

Teacher Training Assistance Program (TTTAP). During the 1988-89 school year there were 79 non-degreed elementary teachers in the public schools in the St. Croix School District, which was 20% of all elementary public school teachers in this district. There were a total of 17 elementary teachers in TTTAP enrolled at UVI: 13 pursuing bachelor degrees and 4 pursuing board certification (A. Andrews, personal communication, June 22, 1989). This program thus far has focused attention on academic preparation, maintenance and survival skills of all teachers, but not specifically on teacher leadership to assure the personal and professional growth of first-year teachers. Of importance to the development of teacher leaders is the involvement of support staff in issues such as selection, induction and inservice, to guarantee the success of first-year teachers as professionals.

An annual two-day teacher orientation merely introduces first-year teachers to the organizational structure, the teacher's union, school policy issues, and a flavor of the culture (language, foods and music) of the Virgin Islands. This practice does not address the critical needs of first-year teachers as they make a major transition from student teacher to professional.

There is no mentor-protégé program in place in the St. Croix district of the USVI public school system, where "during the 1988-89 school year 101 new teachers were hired, 34 of whom were hired from off-island. The anticipated

number of teachers to be hired for the 1989-90 school year as of this date is 65" (M. Biggs, personal communication, June 21, 1989). If the first-year teacher is to be retained in the profession, develop self-direction, and leadership, there is a need for some type of mentor-protégé program to be in place in the St. Croix School District. In most professions it is not expected that the novice on the first day of employment will assume the same responsibilities as the 20-year veteran (Brooks, 1987). Yet in education assuming this responsibility is precisely the case (Newberry, cited in Brooks, 1987). A growing body of research supports the need for successful mentor-protégé relationships, causing increased interest in first-year teacher induction programs (Gehrke & Kay, 1984; Thies-Sprinthall, 1986; Glatthorn, 1987; Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986; Lowney, 1986; Brandt, 1987; Moffett & Isken, 1987; Godley & Others, 1986). Therefore, this naturalistic research study will explore the needs and concerns of first year teachers in order to design a teacher leadership model for the St. Croix School District.

Purposes of the Study

Inasmuch as local cultural mores and customs impact on the St. Croix School District, the researcher collected data through phenomenological and ethnographic approaches in order to design a teacher leadership model that would meet the support needs of first-year teachers in this cultural setting.

The purposes of this research study were:

1. To examine the assumptions, concerns, beliefs, and perceptions of selected first-year teachers;
2. To investigate the beliefs, concerns, perceptions, and assumptions that central office administrators, a teacher educator, a member of the Board of Education, experienced teachers, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, secretaries, parents and paraprofessionals have about support needs for first-year teachers;
3. To explore the need for teacher leadership at the classroom level where effective teachers will be prepared to support each other through empowerment, communication, trust, vision, and generativity; and
4. To design a model for teacher leadership which will promote the concept that teachers at the classroom level can exert leadership in providing support for first-year teachers.

This study uses naturalistic research techniques to explore needs and concerns of first-year teachers, to describe key participants' attitudes about support for first-year teachers and to design a model of teacher leadership. "In naturalistic inquiry, the researcher does not search for data to fit a theory but develops a theory to explain the data" (Madeus, Scriven & Stufflebeam, 1987). The data collected from the case studies of the five first-year teachers and the interviews with 25-30 key participants are the basis for modifying the present theoretical framework of support which now rests primarily with the administrative

hierarchy.

In generating a teacher leadership program, the researcher envisions training effective experienced teachers to be leaders in their individual schools. First-year teachers should benefit from the support of experienced teachers beyond mentoring, peer coaching, career ladder programs, collegiality or teacher centers. Teacher leadership is conceived in a broader sense to encompass the attributes of empowerment, communication, vision, trust, nurturing, and generativity. Teacher leadership is intended to embody the morally uplifting relationship that occurs in meaningful support systems from which transforming leaders emerge as change agents. First-year teachers who experience leadership can be models of leadership for their students.

The basic objective of the questions put forth in this study is to provide the researcher with "thick description". The following set of research questions will be examined:

1. What kind of support system is in place in the St. Croix School District to enable first-year teachers to succeed?
2. What is it like being a first-year teacher?
3. What are the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and underlying assumptions of first-year teachers regarding their professional experience?
4. What coping strategies are employed by first-year teachers as they deal with their problems and concerns?
5. What attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and underlying

assumptions do key participants have about the support needs of first-year teachers?

6. What teacher leadership model would best meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix School District?

Relevance of the Study to Leadership

It was important to study the needs and concerns of first-year teachers before attempting to build a teacher leadership model since "teacher leaders are first effective teachers " (Rogus, 1988). An analysis of this case study should provide education policy-makers in the Virgin Islands school system with descriptive information about the needs and concerns of first-year teachers.

The design of a teacher leadership strategy is beneficial to educational administrators as they collaborate in efforts to foster the personal and professional growth of first-year teachers. Burns (1978) advises that the first step a leader must take if he/she hopes to influence others is to clarify his/her own goals. It is impossible for an educational system to remain focused on its vision and values unless its leaders are certain of what the vision and values entail (DuFour & Eaker, 1987). The public's demand for quality education should prod the Virgin Islands school system into realizing "the importance of directly involving our teachers in reaching the vision of excellence" (Faidley & Musser, 1989, p.13).

Definition of terms

For the purposes of this study the following terms are used throughout this research.

First-year teacher - a university graduate employed as an elementary classroom teacher in the St. Croix Public School District who is teaching for the first time. In this study the first-year teacher will also be referred to as novice, protégé or beginning teacher.

Leadership - a morally uplifting relationship committed to a vision of real, intended change for the common good.

Mentor - experienced teacher who is trained to assume a teacher leadership relationship in the professional development of first-year teachers.

Professional growth - a time-consuming, complex process of incremental change for first-year teachers including conditions which offer freedom for self-direction and collaboration with a support system.

Vision - imaginative insight in creating a better future for the organization than now exists.

Teacher leadership model - a conceptual design intended to depict an effective support relationship between beginning and experienced teachers.

Limitations of the Study

Many students enrolled in the degree program at UVI are non-degreed veteran teachers. In preparation for the September opening of the 1988-89 school year, five of the 16 elementary teachers hired by the Division of Personnel were

first year teachers. Two first-year teachers were hired in the public elementary schools in January, 1989 bringing the total to seven. Two of these first-year teachers were hired as full time substitute teachers and another as a primary Spanish teacher. Other limitations of this study may be researcher bias, effectiveness of interview questions and accuracy of interpretation of data collected.

Generalizations give us certain "laws," "rules," or "explanations." When we know these rules or explanations, we can use them as guidelines for our actions. Generalizations, however, are severely limited: they apply only to the average case (Tesch, 1984). The generalizability of findings in a phenomenological and ethnographic research in a local setting such as an island community is limited. The sample population in this study reflects the limitations of the entire population of St. Croix. The study is not designed to produce a set of generalizations and recommendations regarding needs and concerns of elementary first-year teachers beyond the geographic boundaries of the St. Croix School District.

Confidentiality and Human Subjects Protection

The subjects' participation took place over a period of nineteen weeks during the fall semester of the 1988-89 school year. There were no reasonable, anticipated risks or discomfort to the subjects whose participation in this study was voluntary. The observations and interviews took place during the regular course of their employment. Keeping

journals and participating in group meetings might have caused minor inconvenience because of the additional time required. Each human subject in this study was asked to sign an informed consent form which included the basic considerations detailed in the Requirements for Consent Form (Form C) of the University of San Diego. The subjects were also guaranteed confidentiality of records or reports (see Appendices C-3 and C-4 for copies of consent forms). Potential benefits to all subjects will be the satisfaction of participating in the vision of a teacher leadership model. It should be rewarding to realize that leadership is shared power that will enable teachers to raise each other to higher levels of professional competence. There was no expense to either the first-year teachers or the key participants. Approval was obtained from the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at the University of San Diego.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In reviewing the literature, there are three areas that impact upon this study: (1) first-year teacher's needs and concerns, (2) mentor teacher, buddy teacher and peer coach's role, and (3) teacher leadership. All three subtopics are interdependent in examining the leadership commitment to the needs of the first-year teacher.

A number of states have instituted programs to provide support for teachers. The programs which have received the most national attention are the California Mentor Teacher Program, Georgia Teacher Certification Program, Virginia Beginning Teacher Assistance Program, and the Career Development Program of Charlotte-Mecklenberg, North Carolina (Brooks, 1987). Since the mid-1970s, the available literature on mentor-protégé programs has created a great amount of interest, but there is still an enormous amount to be done and learned.

In looking at the larger picture, the commitment of all educators to the need for teacher leadership programs is just a first step. The Virgin Islands Department of Education must educate the general public and the legislature about the importance of strong leadership programs in professional

development. Unless long held traditional attitudes are changed and the *sink or swim* mentality is replaced by other models, little change will occur (Johnston, 1981).

Needs and Concerns of First-Year Teachers

First-year teachers' professional and personal needs and concerns are unique. Lortie (1975), Veenman (1984), Pataniczek & Isaacson (1981), Stone (1987), and Glassberg (1979) are some of the many authors who have concluded that serious problems of personal and professional adjustment are incurred by those entering the teaching profession. Many studies have proven that the transition from college student to teacher is a difficult experience and first-year teachers should have help and support.

Students assigned to practicums in language arts, reading and mathematics in the undergraduate elementary education program at UVI share their personal and professional adjustment problems with professors. These adjustment problems are still experienced during their student teaching internship in public school classrooms. Thies-Sprinthall (1986) indicated that, "even in the best of times, it would be difficult to believe that a few weeks of student teaching was adequate preparation" (p. 19). Ryan (1986) states that student teaching is a reality test, but it is a sheltered reality because the student teacher enters a classroom where the cooperating teacher has already established a classroom culture. The student teacher simply maintains the already established system and in the final analysis, "the student

teacher is simply not the teacher" (p.12).

"No matter how excellent the new teacher's training, no training simulation accurately represents the reality of full-time teaching" (Brooks, 1987, p. 70). Veenman (1984), reporting on the perceived problems of beginning teachers, lists their most frequently cited concerns as:

- Classroom discipline
- Student motivation
- Dealing with individual differences
- Testing and assessment
- Communication with parents
- Organization of classwork
- Insufficient materials and supplies
- Dealing with problems of individual students (as cited in Manley & Others, 1989, p. 16).

First-year teachers are still expressing anxiety about testing, student motivation, administrators' expectations, discipline and classroom management, isolation, evaluation of student work, and the use of appropriate materials (Varah, Theune & Parker 1986). Beginning teachers are often assigned to low-ability or unmotivated/disruptive students, are given numerous class preparations, and are responsible for time consuming extracurricular activities. A number of physical conditions in the workplace also contribute to the problems of first-year teachers and their increasing dissatisfaction, such as leaky roofs, moldy carpets and malfunctioning air conditioners.

Teacher isolation is another major factor negatively affecting the novice. The cellular structure of the public schools prevents teachers from collaborating with their peers and reduces possibilities for them to reflect on experiences and engage in dialogue leading to personal and professional growth. In this setting first-year teachers have little opportunity to discuss either their successes or needs and concerns (Glassberg, 1979; Ryan & Others, 1980). In other professions new graduates learn much from their experienced colleagues. In the field of education, teacher isolation is one condition within the workplace that is in dire need of being addressed if the personal and professional needs of first-year teachers are to be met (Brooks, 1987).

Corcoran (1981) explores the element which he refers to as "the condition of not knowing" after it emerged as the most common finding in his long-term study of what it is like to make the shift from student to public school classroom teacher. Although gripped by the shock of not knowing, the first-year teacher is pressured by the need to appear assured and competent. The implications of the role of teacher is the notion of being knowledgeable, which contradicts the very nature of being a beginner. One common effect of this paradox "is that it renders the beginner unable to transfer previously mastered concepts and skills from university to public school classroom" (p.20).

Findings suggest that a large percentage of first-year teachers are disillusioned with the reality of life in

classrooms and have been unable to find satisfactory ways to manage the demands of the profession (Mason, 1961 & Charters, 1956, as cited in Glassberg, 1979, p.115). Fuller & Bown (1975) refined Fuller's (1969) conceptualization of a three-phase developmental theory of teacher's concerns: the first stage focuses on *survival* as a teacher; the second stage is *mastery*, which deals with concerns about mastering teaching tasks; the focus of the third stage is *impact* on students (Pataniczek & Isaacson, 1981).

Sacks and Brady (1985), in a study of 602 first-year teachers in New York City, cited the following breakdown of needs of beginning teachers:

mentor help for moral support, guidance, and feedback (24 percent); discipline and management (20 percent); curriculum and lesson planning (18 percent); school routines and scheduling (15 percent); motivation techniques (6 percent); and individualized instruction (2 percent) [as cited in Gray & Gray, 1985, p. 39].

The preceding study suggests that with a national teacher shortage near at hand in the United States, the need for mentor help is an urgent priority. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that the demand for new teachers between 1986 and 1990 should reach 197,000 per year. Schlecty & Vance (1983) indicate that beginning teachers who are the most academically talented leave in the largest numbers (as cited in Brooks, 1987). To guarantee attraction of and the retention of the most academically talented, a

program of teacher leadership cannot be left to chance.

Role of a Mentor, Buddy and Peer Coach

The concept and practice of mentoring has existed for centuries, but the movement toward institutionalizing mentor support programs is a recent occurrence. While mentoring programs differ in emphasis, the central purpose is to provide the beginning teachers with a helper-friend who is not part of the school administration and who has the time and personal qualities to be of assistance (Ryan, 1986).

Educational reform efforts range from raising standards for admission to teacher education programs and establishing state and national examinations to organizing elaborate programs of mentoring "because the most important learning and socialization can occur only in the workplace" (Shulman, L. 1987, p.19).

The Virgin Islands Department of Education, like most school districts, conducts in-service programs for teachers. The topics on these programs do not always deal directly with issues and problems specifically experienced by first-year teachers. For example, the orientation program for the 1988-89 school year included the following general topics: "Student Performance and Increased Productivity;" "Leadership of the Principal and His [sic] Role in the Instructional Program;" and "Education as a Collaborative Effort."

Several states and boards of education use some type of mentor program to assist first-year teachers. Ryan (1986)

recommends that ongoing training sessions become support groups for first-year teachers:

Not only should they provide beginners with nuts-and-bolts ideas for coping with their problems, but they should serve a social and psychological function as well. They should help the struggling new teacher to realize that they are not the only ones who are discouraged, have discipline problems, or are totally confused by the attendance records they are supposed to be keeping. The group becomes a place where beginning teachers not only can get answers but also unbend and unburden themselves. (p. 34)

The Ann Arbor, Michigan Public School study focused on whether peer coaching would improve collegiality in the schools and enhance teaching effectiveness (Sparks & Bruder, 1987). The Lennox School District, California, developed a training and coaching program after discerning the difficult adjustment beginning teachers were experiencing as they moved from the university to the real world of the classroom (Moffett, St. John, & Isken, 1987). The Teacher Advisor Project of the Marin County, California, Office of Education has a successful program of teachers assisting teachers (Kent, 1985). The New York City Board of Education Bureau of Staff Development, the City University of New York Center for Advanced Studies in Education, and Barnard College, Columbia University sponsored the Mentor/New Teacher project. Retired New York City public school teachers were recruited, selected

and trained to serve as mentors in a unique approach to support first-year teachers (Sacks & Wilcox, 1988). Although these and other programs have experienced success, there is no doubt that more research on teacher leader programs is needed to enhance personal and professional growth of teachers and provide for more effective classroom instruction in a Caribbean cultural setting.

In designing teacher leadership programs it is essential to identify individuals who will deliver the support services to first-year teachers. The selection of support personnel is usually the responsibility of local school district administrators, most specifically principals. "Yet, studies at the Institute for Research on Teaching and elsewhere have shown principals' judgments to be quite unreliable in identifying the most effective teachers" (Rauth & Bowers, 1986, p.39). Support teachers chosen by the principal may not receive the endorsement of their peer experienced teachers as being uniquely qualified for a role as mentor. However, if the experienced teachers are involved in the selection process, it may enhance their professional status.

Exemplary teaching performance is the benchmark by which mentor teachers are selected. Huling-Austin, Putman, and Galvez-Hjornevik (1986) suggest the following factors that can greatly contribute to the selecting and matching of mentors and protégés:

1. A highly competent, experienced teacher
2. Both teachers in the same discipline

3. Classrooms in close proximity
4. A common planning period
5. Teachers with compatible professional ideologies; and
6. Teachers with compatible personalities (as cited in Brooks, 1987, p. 14).

A key issue is whether support teachers will offer assistance and/or assessment of first-year teacher performance. There is an advantage of having assistance separate from assessment in that it allows first-year teachers to confide in the mentor who is not evaluating their progress. First-year teachers are reluctant to confide in support personnel who are responsible for assessment. As long as experienced teachers were not viewed in a formal evaluative role, first-year teachers recognized the "beneficial feedback" they received from support teachers (Huffman & Leak, 1986).

Mentor teachers who assume the role of assistance demonstrate Erik Erikson's generative stage of caring, nurture and support for first-year teachers as well as establish a healthy ego identity for themselves (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986). This leadership characteristic gives the mentor teacher the opportunity to make a significant professional contribution to the future generation. Gehrke & Kay (1984) believe that mentor-protégé relationships are good for both persons and should be fostered. (p.24) Similarly, teacher consultants assisting entry year teachers to obtain their Oklahoma teaching certificates expressed personal

satisfaction in seeing first year teachers grow in their teaching skills and work towards successful completion of the program (Godley & Wilson, 1986).

Beginning teachers often feel that requesting help with problems might result in negative evaluation and deny themselves the assistance they need. If a mentor is available who is not a part of the evaluation function, first-year teachers can receive assistance that will help them form a solid foundation for future career development. Unless beginning teachers are given access to mentors who are outside the evaluation process, they may well move toward rather than away from Lortie's "Robinson Crusoe syndrome" (Johnston & James, 1986). Similar to Defoe's hero, beginning teachers work in isolation both in the frustrations and joys of their first-year experience. First-year teachers entering the St. Croix school district have to make a cultural as well as professional adjustment. Mentors can provide beginning teachers with a better understanding of the expectations of the school administration, parents, language, foods, legends, folklore and superstitions.

Gehrke & Kay (1984) interviewed 41 teachers to find what comprised mentoring from the point of view of first-year teachers. Their comments were categorized into eight possible mentor roles as identified by Schein, (1978). The most frequently filled roles were the following: teacher (reported 25 times), confidant (17), role model (13), developer of talents (11), sponsor (11), door opener (4),

protector (2). No one described the role as successful leader. A successful leader was defined by Schein as a person whose own success insures the success of those who follow or support. (p. 22) The study concluded that only 13 of the interviewed teachers experienced a clear mentor-protégé relationship.

The role of the mentor is a complex one which requires "higher order" ability to observe, demonstrate and coach. In selecting mentors, caution should be taken not to assume that "minimally trained classroom teachers can achieve a level of competence to provide differentiated intensive supervision" (Thies-Sprinthall, 1986, p. 18). For this reason, analysis of the data collected in stage one will assist in formulating a level of competence to be demonstrated by support staff in teacher leadership roles.

Three examples of basic mentoring activities are: demonstrating teaching techniques; observing classroom teaching and providing feedback; and holding support meetings with the protégé. Three dispositions that are essential to the concept of mentoring are: first, the openness to allow the protégés to observe them in action and clarify reasons for the observed performance and decisions; second, mentors should lead their protégés gradually in positive change over the period of the first year; and third, mentors should express care and concern for the personal and professional well-being of their protégés (Anderson & Shannon, 1988).

Gray and Gray (1985), in their synthesis of research on

mentoring beginning teachers, conclude that

first, beginning teachers report needing help with discipline and classroom management, curriculum and lesson planning, and school routines. Most of all, they feel a need for moral support, guidance and feedback. Second, effective mentors are secure; they have power and expertise. They are people oriented; they like and trust their protégés. Third, successful mentors take a personal interest in the careers of their protégés, encourage their ideas, and help them gain confidence in becoming self-directed professionals (as cited in Lowney, 1986, p. 16).

If mentoring is implemented, it can meet the specific needs of first-year teachers, provide increased professional satisfaction to mentors and improve student growth and achievement. A caveat expressed by Thies-Sprinthall (1986) is that effective mentoring is not the single answer to the needs of first-year teachers. (p.19)

There is a less costly, more basic form of assistance available to first-year teachers--the "support teacher" or "buddy" which is less formal than the mentor program. The buddy system is more economical and equally effective because few school districts can afford the cost to train mentors. The buddy needs to be a willing, successful teacher with good listening skills, knowledge of school procedures, available resources, and awareness of the problems, needs and concerns of first-year teachers. The buddy teacher can help the

first-year teacher to conduct parent conferences, set up a grade book, group for reading, set positive classroom rules, meet individual needs of students, and set expectations for student behavior. The buddy can share those "unwritten rules" that are important to the first-year teacher's fit into the school culture (Hamlin, K. & Hering, K. 1988).

Observation by peers is described as challenging, rewarding, and a positive experience that provided a new perspective on teaching. The three positive aspects of peer coaching reported in a study conducted by Far West Laboratory were collegial interaction, feedback opportunities, and time to share expertise. After participating in the peer coaching project, teachers showed evidence of improved teaching strategies and appreciated the opportunities for peer interaction which reduced the feeling of isolation (Galbo, 1987).

The results of the study of the peer coaching project in two Ann Arbor schools are summarized in five main areas followed by teachers' comments for each factor:

- *Observation, advice, and feedback from others.* "It's been great opening up to another member of the staff; I had never before explored teaching with another teacher, nor had I gone into depth regarding improving teaching."
- *Collegiality.* "...having a professional colleague as a partner." "The most important part is getting the chance to get into another teacher's room. My doors are now open and will remain so."

- *Experimentation.* "Before the project, using lesson design was a conscious, deliberate effort. Now the concepts are much more a part of my daily teaching."
- *Student learning.* "The evidence of the effectiveness of these techniques is in the success level of tests I gave after I taught something using lesson design..."
and
- *Concerns and comfort with peer coaching.* "There is no pressure." (Sparks & Bruder, 1987, pp. 55-56)

The Lennox School District faced two staff development issues: the difficult adjustment of beginning teachers to the real world of the classroom, and the need to retain a capable staff. One of the premises from which this district worked was that when teachers coach each other it is possible to build in a support system to allow first-year teachers to improve their skills. Their coaching program for first-year teachers was built on six elements: new teacher training; recruitment and training of peer coaches; release time or pay for training; practice and application; pairing coaches and new teachers; and observations. Without exception first-year teachers viewed coaches as helpful, understanding and available. The first-year teacher experienced little stress since coaches do not supervise. One teacher summed up the Lennox District training and coaching project in this way:

The coaching idea is great! I like having another teacher available as a resource. My coach is terrific. For one thing, she's modeled some lessons for me. It

was extremely helpful to see her in action; it gave me a new viewpoint from which to present lessons. (Moffett et al. 1987, pp.35-36)

As this research seeks to investigate various collaborative methods of support for the professional growth of first-year teachers, it is appropriate to include Beverly Showers' five major functions of peer coaching. Her training manual identifies the following functions:

1. Providing companionship.
2. Giving each other objective, not evaluative, feedback.
3. Analyzing and internalizing the application of a new model of teaching in a flexible manner.
4. Helping the first-year teacher adapt and modify the teaching model to the special needs of students.
5. Facilitating early trials of the model by providing support. (Glatthorn, 1987, pp. 33-34)

The peer coaching projects have been advantageous in facilitating professional growth of first-year teachers in several ways. Although all the goals of peer coaching have not been met, there is a growing body of evidence that peer coaching is "making teaching less a job and more a profession." (Glatthorn, 1987, p. 35)

Mello's (1984) descriptive report states that the peer-centered coaching model has two major components--peer observation and peer support. It is teacher initiated, teacher directed, and a model for professional growth. Some

of the underlying assumptions on which the peer-centered coaching model is based:

1. Teachers are the primary experts in providing instruction.
2. Teachers are most credible with one another with respect to instructional improvement.
3. Teachers are the best source of help for each other in terms of increasing effectiveness as classroom instructors.
4. Feedback is necessary to change, it allows the first-year teacher to recognize a starting point and adjust behavior toward the desired outcome.
5. The more support first-year teachers receive from others about improved teaching behaviors, the more likely they are to continue these behaviors.
6. Change and instructional improvement best takes place in an environment of mutual trust. (p. 5)

Teacher Leadership

It is apparent that the greatest shortcoming of our school system today is our concept of leadership. The roles of mentor, buddy and peer coach have been implemented by many states and school districts "in an effort to create more teacher-leadership opportunities and to recognize the expertise of particularly talented teachers" (Duke, 1987, p.50). If the proposed reforms of the National Commission on Excellence in Education are to be achieved, it is recommended

that school boards develop leadership roles for teachers to prevent the mass exodus of gifted and talented teachers (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Howey (1988) defines teacher leadership as "a natural and necessary outgrowth of the increased demands for excellence being placed on schools" (p. 28). He further argues that teachers must assume leadership positions that will enable them to model methods of teaching, as well as coach and mentor colleagues. The role of teacher leadership programs must be clearly defined. Tucker and Mandel (1986) acknowledge the problem of role definition but urge that the reform effort not be "led astray in the quest for the unassailably perfect model of leadership" (p.27). "Perfection" is perhaps neither critical nor expected at this time (Mertens & Yarger, 1988). Research on teacher leadership still lacks a rationale for, and clarity in, defining its responsibilities.

Leadership is characterized by more than knowing the needs and concerns of first-year teachers and acting on these needs through mentoring. The leadership effort of mentor-protégé relationships should move beyond a narrow scope of discipline, classroom management, lesson planning and school routine to support developing curriculum, model methods of teaching, strengthen home-school relationships and develop instructional materials (Howey, 1988).

The advocacy for teacher leadership emanates from the suggestion that the competent leaders must reside in the

schools in close proximity to first-year teachers. These leaders have the advantage of addressing the needs and concerns in a continuing and collective manner which are reflected in improved teaching (Howey, 1988). The motivating force of any leadership plan to strengthen teaching as a profession should focus on the value of self-enhancement in correlation with improving instruction and schools. School leaders "must be willing to empower teachers to engage in creative problem solving and to be courageous enough to remove obstacles to flexibility" (Faidley & Musser, 1989, p. 11).

Plans for strengthening teaching as a profession must address improved instruction for students by emphasizing the empowerment of first-year teachers. Organizations need transforming leadership to engage mentors and first-year teachers in such a way that they will raise one another to higher levels of professional competence. Leaders must build a commitment to a vision. The most effective way to build commitment to a vision is to involve teachers in the process of determining how to help first-year teachers to reach higher levels of professional competence (Faidley & Musser, 1989). Transforming leadership is dynamic in the sense that "leaders throw themselves into a relationship with followers who feel elevated by it and often become more active themselves, thereby creating new cadres of leaders" (Peters & Waterman 1982, p. 83).

If strengthening teaching as a profession is a

theoretical base for developing a teacher leadership model, then the St. Croix school district must ensure that "teachers are empowered with the authority to teach in accordance with the professional standards that pertain to their work" (Mertens & Yarger, 1988, p.35). If teachers are empowered with the authority to teach and receive commensurate rewards there would be fewer teachers in competition for the small number of available administrative positions. Some elementary administrators on St. Croix prefer classroom teaching to administration but due to lack of motivation, challenge, diversity, or lateral or vertical mobility and because of substantial salary increases they opt for administration to satisfy these wants and needs. An effective leadership program could satisfy an experienced teacher's preference for the classroom by combining a substantial salary increase with classroom teaching and leadership opportunities.

In June 1989, the Governor of the Virgin Islands and the St. Croix Federation of Teachers Local 1826, AFT/AFL-CIO signed an agreement to establish a Peer Review Committee under Educational Reform Initiatives *sans* input from the Department of Education (September 1, 1987-August 31, 1991, p.57). This committee will review records of all first-year teachers at the end of their first year and either recommend them for tenure, a second year of probation, or dismissal. If a second year of probation is recommended, these first-year teachers may be referred to a new intervention-

internship program to be in place at the beginning of the 1989-90 school year. Five master teachers will be hired for the opening of the 1989-90 school year, to teach one-half day and perform intervention-internship duties the other one-half day with a stipend of \$2500 the first year and \$3000 the second year. In contrast the Tennessee's career ladder plan, selection of "master teachers" includes demonstrated skill in supervising, evaluating and improving the professional performance of other teachers (Busching & Rowls, 1985).

Larry Cuban (1984), in alluding to the flawed assumptions embedded in the California's reform bill, SB 813, stated that policymakers assume that state mandates can reform schools. He continues by referring to most school reform initiatives as "school reform by remote control." A reform package which depends only on external accountability measures and superficial quality indicators, without bottom-up school improvement strategies, can only fail (Busching & Rowls, 1985). Remote control of schools and classrooms has failed in the past; it is a design for failure and a recipe for future dissatisfaction with teachers and school administrators (Cuban, 1984).

With a few exceptions, the reports on school reform show little tendency toward giving workers in education more control over their own destinies. They frequently recommend external control from the top down. Cross (1984) sends a strong message to the educational community that we are in danger of losing our opportunity to reform education if we

depend on external control from the top. Sizer (1984) echoes Cross's warning when he advises those who want excellent schools to "trust teachers and principals-- and believe that the more trust one places in them, the more the response will justify that trust" (p.214). He also suggests that heavy external monitoring will only drive out of education the teachers the system wants to attract.

Many first-year teachers at the survival stage require assistance in helping to fine-tune instructional techniques and management problems in their classrooms. Teacher leaders can assume the role of helping to improve instruction rather than document failure. In this role they can be instrumental in making recommendations that result in better teaching and increased job satisfaction. (Busching & Rowls, 1985, p. 21)

The trend in the Virgin Islands public school system, as in other school districts, is toward decentralization. Teachers are expected to serve on endless committees (curriculum review, textbook selection, report card, etc.), review panels and task forces. However, they do not move into significant decision-making roles within the St. Croix school district. One exception is the National Writing Project because teacher-leadership is at the heart of this project.

Teachers have very little impact upon the structures of schools or educational programs beyond the confines of the classroom (Busching & Rowls, 1985). Formalizing teacher leader roles can help to bring educational reform initiatives

to reality. Policy in the USVI is mandated top-down, mechanical arrangements are made in response to the cry for quality education, teachers are reassigned, and political patronage positions continue to be created. It is time to retrain our best teachers for lifetime careers in teaching and use their expertise to improve the educational system for our children by creating and supporting *teacher leaders*. This type of support is another mode of circumventing the rigidity and inflexibility that first-year teachers are known to experience (Busching & Rowls, 1985, p. 20).

Bennis and Nanus (1985) identified several categories of competency that distinguish effective leaders: (a) self-deployment, (b) empowerment, (c) attention through vision, (d) meaning through communication; and (e) trust through positioning (as cited in Rogus, 1988, p.48). These categories form the process focus of Rogus' framework for teacher leader program outcomes. The leadership focus will serve as stimulators for identifying the content focus which is school improvement and teacher effectiveness.

Rost (1985), in developing a clear understanding of transforming leadership and describing how transforming leaders operate in a school setting, concludes:

If the schools in the State of California and the nation are to achieve academic excellence... develop quality courses taught by highly developed and professionally committed teachers who raise student expectations... then we need to train, develop, encourage, and even

demand that our schools be populated with some transforming leaders. We need school principals and mentor teachers who are transforming leaders, not managers or transactional leaders. (p. 12)

With a teacher leader program in place, mentors can keep a perspective on the importance of (1) raising the professional level of the first-year teacher; (2) articulating a vision to improve their present condition; (3) developing a sense of shared meaning; and (4) earning the trust that binds mentor and protégé together in the desired commitment (Rogus, 1988). One of the most important elements of transforming leadership is trust. Bennis and Nanus (1985) note that "trust is the glue that binds followers and leaders together [and]... the lubrication that maintains the organization..."(p.153).

The federal Teacher Centers Program funded a wide range of inservice education programs from 1978 through 1981 (Mertens & Yarger, 1981). This program provided a framework for teachers to improve their professional practice by developing inservice programs and controlling the dollars. Teachers were empowered and involved in addressing their concrete, specific needs, which is an example of a strategy utilizing "internal" resources to provide leadership. Mertens and Yarger (1988) also point out that "many teacher leaders emerged in teacher centers as a natural outcome of being involved in important and valued activities beyond the classroom" (p. 36).

During 1978 to 1981 the Virgin Islands Teacher Corps Project (VITCP) involved members of the Teacher Education Division at the college, parents, students, and community members. They participated in three training and demonstration programs designed to heighten achievement of students in the site schools by improving the learning environment in their schools, homes and communities. These programs included (1) an inservice program (master's concentration in special education) for Teacher Corps interns and other qualified applicants, (2) an inservice program based on assessed needs of all educational personnel in the six site schools and (3) a community based program (parent education, extended -day, volunteer, and other parental involvement activities) (Staff, 1980, pp. 1 & 8).

The Center utilized various service delivery systems to provide diagnostic-prescriptive experiences for teachers. In addition, the programs provided field-based college courses, seminars, resource teachers or consultants and community-based educational activities aimed at fulfilling initial needs of educational personnel in site schools, shadow schools and community members. Plans for extending services to other educational personnel within the Virgin Islands school system did not materialize because the funding cycle ended (Staff, 1981, pp. 1 & 3).

A Planning Team Model for a Client Specific Education Personnel Development System (EPOS) was introduced by VITCP in the fall of 1979. As a result of this model, several

workshops, seminars, lectures as well as regular and mini-courses were conducted. Although each planning team was very effective in its own school, the annual evaluation of EPOS revealed that joint planning between the different planning teams was missing (Staff, 1981, p. 2).

The brief literature on the St. Croix school district from VITCP, TTTAP and SCFT emphasizes professional growth of educational personnel and the community through inservice programs to improve the learning environment of students. There has been no scholarly examination of the impact of teacher leadership on first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district. A first-year teacher's peer in a mentor relationship can be a more effective leader than a school administrator, therefore serious thought should be given to the empowerment and involvement of peers in the improvement of the learning environment. The postscript which concludes Rogus' (1988) teacher leader program recommendations states: "Until a body of knowledge is available on what works in leader preparation, the profession will be limited in its ability to facilitate school improvement" (p. 50).

The refrain that the structure of schools causes classroom teacher isolation, lingers on. One of the few shared leadership programs in response to the national outcry for school improvement is NEA's Mastery in Learning Project. This project is assisting teachers and administrators to conquer the isolation of their traditional roles in order to enhance their role as professional collaborators. For two

years the 26 participating schools moved through nine stages in the development of collegiality testing, exhilaration, commitment, dispiritedness; regeneration, seeking small successes, using research, experimentation, and comprehensiveness (McClure, 1988). In many of the 26 participating schools, the Mastery in Learning Project faculty perceive leadership as a shared responsibility to the benefit of students, teachers and the profession.

Sergiovanni (1987) outlines new leadership values that support teacher leadership within a school culture which are different from the practice of ordinary leaders. *Leadership by Purpose* - when shared meanings and significance are important to what is communicated in the peer relationship. *Leadership by Empowerment* - when classroom teachers are given the necessary responsibility they can demonstrate their potential and use their talents as they grow professionally. *Leadership as Power to Accomplish* - when teacher-leaders show concern by helping first-year teachers become more successful and experience a greater sense of efficacy. *Leadership Density* - when teachers assume a great deal of responsibility. They exercise leadership to the extent that roles are shared and broadly exercised. *Leadership and Quality Control* - what teachers believe, their commitment to quality, their sense of pride, the ownership they feel for what they are doing and the intrinsic satisfaction they derive from their work with first-year teachers. *Leadership by Outrage* - when teacher-leaders expect adherence to common

values and see these common core values violated. Teachers enjoy wide discretion provided their decisions embody the values in the practice of teaching within the school culture. "From an educational point of view, teaching and learning unfold best when teachers are free to make decisions that are important to them" (Sergiovanni, 1987, p.125).

Summary

This review of the literature does not disclose examples of the social realities of first-year teachers' experiences in a Caribbean cultural setting. It is necessary in naturalistic research to derive the theory by a grounding in real-world data from the start (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). For this reason, this study will attempt to build on the growing core of literature by examining as closely as possible what first-year teachers feel, what they know and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions and understandings are (Wolf & Tymitz, 1976-1977 as cited in Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

The literature attests that the needs and concerns of first-year teachers are different from those of experienced teachers and require special support. The reform literature reaffirms that the success or failure of our schools rests on the shoulders of classroom teachers and requires that first-year teachers be raised to higher levels of commitment and performance.

The fields of literature reviewed in this chapter help to illuminate the needs and concerns of first-year teachers. The need for a more in depth understanding of the attitudes,

beliefs, perceptions and underlying assumptions of first-year teachers is viewed as crucial to the development of professional teachers.

An understanding of the interrelatedness of these three key factors: (1) needs and concerns of first-year teachers; (2) roles of mentors, buddies, and peer coaches; and (3) a focus on teacher leadership provides the researcher with the basic ingredients for the design of a teacher leadership model. The three key factors are intricately interwoven and provide a foundation for a conceptual framework for data collection and analysis as discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Rationale

The purpose of this study was to examine the assumptions, concerns, beliefs and perceptions of selected first-year teachers on St. Croix. The case study approach was employed and the findings analyzed to develop a teacher leadership support system for first-year teachers. The qualitative research questions provided the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and underlying assumptions of first-year teachers. Rist's (1975) definition of qualitative research is "direct observation of human activity and interaction in an on-going, naturalistic fashion" (as cited in Rogers, 1984, p. 86). This research is viewed as a qualitative case study incorporating phenomenological and ethnographic approaches aimed at interpretive understanding. As Tesch (1984) reports,

phenomenology and ethnography are alike in that they describe not external events, but subjective experience. They are different in that ethnography seeks to depict a culture ... while the focus of phenomenological research is on individual experience which does not necessarily need a social

context to be meaningful to the individual. (p.26)
Tesch (1984) summarizes that a distinction exists where ethnography describes and phenomenology explores.

The researcher drew from these two approaches to explore the needs and concerns of first-year teachers. Phenomenological research deals with inner experiences of individuals and the way people give meaning to their life-world. First-year teachers have personalities and bring different experiences to the natural setting of the classroom.

In order to understand first-year teachers' inner experiences in the school setting, the observer conducted phenomenological research. As Tesch (1984) notes, these interviews are not merely a question and answer exercise but "an experience of immersion in the phenomenon of intense reflection" (p. 29). Group meetings, classroom observations, videotaping, and journals were means of gathering data for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. In stage one the researcher explored the perceived problems, anxieties, and coping techniques or strategies being experienced by first-year teachers.

In seeking to depict a culture, the ethnographic approach is used to describe the relationship of the subjects in the case study to the organization and societal environment. MacDonald & Walker (1977) suggest that a case study is "an examination of an instance in action" (as cited in Guba & Lincoln, 1981 p. 371). With the knowledge that the nature of

culture (rites, rituals and symbols) is ever-changing, the ethnographer has defined the case study as "a snapshot of reality".

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) identify five features which distinguish qualitative research. First, the natural setting serves as the direct source of the data and the researcher as the main instrument. Qualitative researchers believe that the context within which actions occur influences human behavior. Second, qualitative research is descriptive rather than numerical, drawing upon interview transcripts, field notes, documents and audio-visuals for data. Third, the research focuses on process rather than on outcomes and products. Fourth, data are analyzed inductively, with theory emerging from the process. Finally, qualitative researchers are concerned with how people make sense out of their world. By understanding the individual perspectives of people within a setting, the researcher can provide greater meaning about the setting and the processes governing the setting (pp. 27-30).

The nature of such a critical issue as raising the professional level of teachers suggests the use of a case study approach-- to explore the feelings, concerns and attitudes of first-year teachers. This approach was supplemented by key-participant interviews with central staff administrators, a teacher educator, a member of the Board of Education , experienced teachers, principals, coordinators, parents and paraprofessionals.

Guba and Lincoln (1981), in a discussion of different types of reports appropriate for naturalistic studies, propose that the case study is the best because it provides both description and judgments while striving for completeness and robustness (p. 370). They identify a number of advantages of the case study. It provides "thick description," is ideal for presenting grounded data which emerge from the context of the study, provides a lifelike and holistic representation, presents essential information in an understandable form, brings out meanings, and builds on the "tacit knowledge" of its readers (pp.375-6).

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) would categorize this study as an "observational case study" in which the "major data-gathering technique is participant observation and the focus of the study is on a particular organization... or some aspect of the organization" (p. 59). Guba and Lincoln propose a matrix of types of case studies (i.e., to chronicle, render, teach, and test) with three levels (i.e., factual, interpretive, and evaluative) yielding twelve types. They generalize that most research case studies would be classified in one or more cells of the matrix but do not normally fall under "evaluative" nor do they have "to teach" as a purpose (pp.371-74). This particular study chronicled and rendered an account of the experiences of five first-year elementary teachers, to develop in Guba and Lincoln's words, "a register of facts or events in the order (more or less) in which they happen" and "to depict or characterize" these

events in a way to lend meaning (p. 371).

The purposes of this research study were:

1. To examine the assumptions, concerns, beliefs, and perceptions of selected first-year teachers;
2. To investigate the beliefs, concerns, perceptions, and assumptions that central office administrators, a teacher educator, a member of the Board of Education, experienced teachers, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, secretaries, parents and paraprofessionals have about support needs for first-year teachers;
3. To explore the need for teacher leadership at the classroom level where effective teachers will be prepared to support each other through empowerment, communication, trust, vision, and generativity; and
4. To design a model for teacher leadership which will promote the concept that teachers at the classroom level can exert leadership in providing support for first-year teachers.

The following set of research questions were examined:

1. What kind of support system is in place in the St. Croix School District to enable first-year teachers to succeed?
2. What is it like being a first-year teacher?
3. What are the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and underlying assumptions of first-year teachers regarding their professional experience?
4. What coping strategies are employed by first-year

teachers as they deal with their problems and concerns?

5. What attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and underlying assumptions do key participants have about the support needs of first-year teachers?

6. What teacher leadership model would best meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix School District?

Scope of Research

In order to gather the pertinent data for this study of first-year teachers, it was necessary to identify key participants who impact on the success or failure of a first-year teacher. The professional educators were asked to describe their perceptions and underlying assumptions concerning the degree of support necessary to retain highly qualified teachers. By interviewing parents the researcher was interested in obtaining information about their attitudes concerning positive and negative effects first-year teachers have on their children (i.e. "lack of experience," "lack of support," "fresh, innovative ideas"). Secretaries and paraprofessionals were queried about how they perceive support of beginning teachers at their job levels. The central office administrators were asked if the St. Croix school district has a clear statement of performance expectations for first-year teachers entering the system and what plan the superintendent's office had for empowering teachers to create and implement a support program for first-year teachers. (Sample questions for key participant groups

are included in Appendix A)

Chapter I of this dissertation presents a background of the St. Croix school district set in a Caribbean cultural environment and states that there is no formal first-year teacher support system in this school district. The following research agenda was used to guide the collection of descriptive data in stage one:

- conducted one-hour taped group meetings with five first-year elementary teacher subjects;
- conducted one-half hour audiotaped interviews with key participants;
- videotaped one class session of each of the five first-year elementary teachers;
- observed classroom teaching of five first-year teachers in one subject area;
- conducted focused interviews with the central office administrators and staff development coordinator;
- collected journals that described feelings, concerns, problems and coping strategies of the five first-year teachers;
- gathered recommendations from the five first-year teachers about the type of support they feel is necessary upon entering the profession.

Gaining Entrance and Sampling Process

In November of 1988, permission to conduct this study in the St. Croix School District was requested from the Insular

Superintendent. (See Appendix B-1) The request was granted and a copy of the superintendent's memorandum was sent to key personnel, principals and coordinators within the Department of Education. (See Appendices B-2 and B-3) Prior to the study, the researcher was a public elementary school principal and is presently a university supervisor of student teaching. The relationship established with the Department of Education while holding these positions facilitated access to the system for data collection. The researcher signed a statement assuring the office of the superintendent that none of the information gathered will be published or used in any manner which could be construed as derogatory. (See Appendix B-4)

Once initial entrance was gained, sampling began. The researcher received a list of five first-year teachers and a 1988-1989 list of all Department of Education employees from the Personnel Administrative Assistant. In November 1988, the five first-year teachers hired in September were invited to participate. (See Appendix C-1) One refused the invitation because the idea of keeping a journal, being observed and videotaped seemed like an extension of her student teaching experience. She preferred to use her energies to organize the class assigned to her which was made up of repeaters with major discipline problems. A sixth first-year teacher hired in January agreed to participate. In mid-February one of the first-year teachers, who had originally consented, was hospitalized and after her return

to the classroom decided to withdraw for health reasons. The seventh first-year teacher hired in February as a substitute teacher agreed to participate in the study. The researcher finally had five first-year teacher subjects.

The two sampling techniques described in Borg and Gall (1983) were used to obtain a sample of the key participants. The simple random sample is a procedure in which all the individuals in the defined population have an *equal* and *independent* chance of being selected. The technique of systematic sampling was used because all members in the defined populations - principal, assistant principal, secretary, experienced teacher, coordinator, and paraprofessional- were already on a list in random order.

Prior to the start of observations, the case study subjects were asked to respond briefly and candidly to the following questions: (1) list problems and successes faced during your student teaching experience and (2) list problems and successes you anticipate(d) in your first year of teaching. Group meetings were held with first-year teachers, journals collected in three sections, classes observed and videotaped, and recommendations submitted about the type of support needed.

In selecting the key participants for this study the following sampling procedures were used:

- a simple random sample for each of these populations-- principals, assistant principals, administrative secretaries, and the Board of Education member were selected by placing a

slip of paper with the name of each individual in a container, mixing the slips thoroughly, and then drawing the required number of names.

- a systematic sampling combined with a simple random sampling was used with the defined populations of the paraprofessionals and experienced teachers. The researcher selected a sample of 10 paraprofessionals from a census list of 101 paraprofessionals, divided the population by 10, then chose the first and every tenth name. These names were placed on slips of paper and three names were drawn. The defined population of experienced teachers consisted of teachers with five or more years of teaching experience (Step 06), and a baccalaureate degree, Education Specialist, or Master's degree (Grade 5+). The researcher selected a sample of 20 experienced teachers from a census list of 266 experienced teachers, divided the population by 20, then chose the seventh and every fourteenth name. These names were placed on slips of paper and five names were drawn.

- a random selection was used with the defined population of parents of an elementary school farthest east, center island, and farthest west. The researcher selected one parent from each of the three designated schools. Grade level designations (K-6), grade sections (1-4), and all letters of the alphabet (A-Z) were placed on slips of paper and one each was drawn to narrow the choice to one parent from each school.

- a convenience sampling was used with the defined

populations of the coordinators, the teacher educator, and the central office administrators.

All key participants selected for the study were contacted by telephone to invite their participation. This was followed by letters of invitation, with enclosed consent forms and demographic information questionnaires. (See Appendices C-2, C-4 and C-5) A second telephone contact was made to arrange a time and place at their convenience for the interview. The introductory conversation usually followed this pattern: "Good-day, I am happy that you have agreed to this one-half hour interview. Do you have any questions you'd like to ask me before we get started?"

In summary, initial permission to conduct this study was granted by the Department of Education. Through systematic, simple random, and convenience sampling techniques, case study and key participants were selected from the St. Croix school district. At the end of the sampling process five case study subjects were selected for the phenomenological exploration. Five elementary principals, five elementary assistant principals, five experienced elementary teachers, three administrative secretaries, three paraprofessionals, three parents, two subject area coordinators, one teacher educator, one staff development coordinator, one Board of Education member, and two central office administrators were selected to be interviewed for the ethnographic description.

Data Collection

Naturalistic or qualitative research techniques were

employed during stage one of the process to develop a teacher leadership model in order to gather data about beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and underlying assumptions of the first-year teachers and key participants. While observation and interviewing have become the two most widely used strategies for data collection, a variety of other techniques is employed by qualitative researchers including collection of personal and official records and documents, audio and video recordings, photographs, nonverbal communication, and unobtrusive measures (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The backbone of the data collection remains the researcher's fieldnotes or "the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 74).

Guba and Lincoln (1981) emphasize the need for multiple operations research or triangulation of methods to enable researchers to make sense of data from interviews (p. 155). With this in mind, observation, interviewing and documentation were methods used for gathering data. Observation, interpreted by many to mean participant observation, actually represents a continuum ranging from the "pure" observer to the "pure" participant. While either extreme is difficult to achieve, the first represents looking at the setting with no interference by the researcher, while the latter completely involves the researcher in the setting. In between, the role of participant observer exists where the

researcher plays two distinct roles, one as an outsider observing and the other as an insider participating as a group member (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 190-1).

For this investigation, the initial design described the researcher as mostly an observer. As the interviews progressed the role shifted to that of participant-observer. Observations of the five case study subjects occurred during group meetings, videotaping and classroom visits. Field notes were written during observations and expanded afterwards. During the group meetings tape recordings were used to provide accuracy and detail.

Interviews are used to "gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 135). As with participant observation, interview formats vary along a continuum. They range from structured (interviewer formulates questions ahead of time based upon a preconceived framework and definition of the problem) to unstructured (the interviewer converses with the respondent who provides the content of the interview as well as the structure and definition of the problem) (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

While Guba and Lincoln (1981) believe that the nonstandardized interview best supports the purpose of naturalistic research (p. 157), Bogdan & Biklen (1982) believe that the purpose or goal of the research dictates the type of interview. They state:

Even when an interview guide is employed, qualitative interviews offer the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview.... Some people debate which approach is more effective, the structured or the unstructured. With semi-structured interviews you are confident of getting comparable data across to subjects, but you lose the opportunity to understand how the subjects themselves structure the topic at hand.... From our perspective you do not have to choose sides. You choose a particular type to employ depending on your research goal. (p. 136)

The use of open-ended questions allowed the respondents to structure ideas within the topic and to pursue other topics of interest to them. Open-ended questions are most appropriate "when the issue is complex, the relevant dimensions are unknown, or the interest of the research lies in the description of the phenomenon, the exploration of a process, or the individual's formulation of an issue" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 177-8).

Interview questions were based upon research questions and the review of the literature. While the basic set of questions remained the same throughout the interviews, individual questions were added or deleted based upon increasing understanding of the process. Although basic sets

of questions were developed for three categories of key participants (see Appendix A), modifications were made depending on each interviewee's background assumptions. The greatest variation resulted at the state level with the staff development coordinator and the central office administrators.

Interview procedures were fairly standard. All interviews were conducted in person. Most sessions averaged 45 minutes in length but ranged from 30 to 90 minutes. While some notes were taken during the sessions, all interviews were tape-recorded in person and transcribed using bracketing to express the researcher's meanings and interpretation.

Finally, documentation involved the collection of all material that appeared to have relevance for the study including audiotapes of group meetings, policy documents, teacher evaluation forms, journals, orientation programs, inservice agenda, and articles in magazines. These types of documents can provide confirmation of information gained from other sources, additional information otherwise unattainable, different perspectives on similar information, and contextual clues and insights (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In addition, a calendar and checklist were developed for first-year teacher subjects (see Appendices C-6 and C-8) as reminders of the scheduled activities and due dates.

Foundations for Designing a Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework explains either graphically or in narrative form the key factors and the presumed relationship

among them (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 28). Selecting the first-year teacher subjects and key participants, and determining the appropriate data gathering techniques are fruitless without knowing what to observe and what observations and experiences constitute potential data.

The intent of this research is not to prove or disprove all or part of a specific theory but to look at the whole and the pieces, as well as for what might be missing, in order to guide observation and begin to make meaning out of the data gathered. The data gathered is to be used as a basis for the formulation of a teacher leadership model to meet the support needs of first-year teachers in their professional development.

In developing this conceptual framework, the theories, models and findings discussed in the literature review were envisioned as links of "exploration" and "description" to enhance the implementation of the design. This conceptual framework served as a starting point, guiding but not limiting the study. During observation, the framework directed attention to potentially significant underlying assumptions and helped to sort out unrelated or marginal data. It provided different conceptual filters through which to observe beliefs, attitudes and perceptions--first from the perspective of the first-year teacher then from the key participant's perspective. During interviewing, it guided the question selection for each person and assisted in probing respondents' answers to help make meaning, to help

make connections with other people and other data. During the collection of documents, it served as a filter through which materials flowed, sifting and confirming information that furnished meaning from those with less potential. This conceptual framework guided initial data analysis.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data, in the form of typed transcripts, field notes, and relevant documents, began during data collection to let the fieldworker "cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new--often better quality--data" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p.49). Field notes provided the most useful strategy for accomplishing this. In addition to straightforward "objective" accounting of what was recorded in observation notes, field notes also contained various reflective comments pertaining to feelings, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, reactions, methodology, and emerging theories and patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The researcher selected, focused and simplified the data collected by bracketing during the transcription of the interviews. The process of evaluating the videotapes and the first-year teacher's journals were also a form of analysis that organized the information during the data reduction phase. The technique of "memoing," (i.e. to make deeper and more general sense of what is happening) was used to flesh out ideas and tie together emerging theories and patterns (Miles

and Huberman, 1984).

This phase also involved the task of organizing volumes of data to provide easy access and retrieval during later analysis, conclusion drawing and verification. All transcriptions of group meetings, classroom observations, journal entries, evaluation of videotapes, and recommendations were filed alphabetically by names of case study subjects. All transcriptions of interviews were filed by positions and classification of key participants (e.g., principals, parents) in indexed file folders.

After data collection, analysis occurred at the micro level involving the analysis of individual units of meaning, and then at the macro level to get a sense of the whole--a gestalt. The three simultaneous flows of analysis used were data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. Miles and Huberman (1984) explicitly suggest the use of contact summary sheets and document summary sheets (pp. 50-54). They also advocate the use of *displays*, or a "spatial format that presents information systematically to the user" because the traditional narrative text of the qualitative researcher used by itself is "an extremely weak and cumbersome form of display" (p. 79). Demographic information forms for primary and secondary subjects were filed separately in order to organize this collection of information into possible types of displays including matrices, checklists, tables, charts, or figures. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were used to classify

regularities, patterns, topics and themes emerging from data (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Analysis began with the interviews since they represented half of the data collected in stage one and would provide an overview of the kind of support system to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers. First, each interview was transcribed, read, and bracketed to capsulize the main ideas and themes in the interview. Then the answers given by each key participant were analyzed in a display form question by question. While the essence of the display varied from question to question, it allowed for the analysis of each individual response as well as an analytic summary of all respondents' answers to the same question. A similar strategy of conclusion drawing, displays and comparisons was used for analysis of group meetings, evaluation of videotapes, and examination of journals of case study subjects.

The three judges involved in cross-checking and interpretation of data were not participants in the study. They consisted of a university professor, an elementary school principal, and an elementary classroom teacher who has had experience as a cooperating teacher. Criteria for the selection of judges were based on their supervisory experience, understanding of the need for objectivity and confidentiality, and willingness to assist in the research. Judges participated in the data reduction activity. They validated, invalidated, or modified the relevance of the data

reduction process. For validity checks, they were asked to review certain aspects of the data collected in stage one with specific emphasis on the researcher's interpretation of findings by checking for observer bias and contamination.

Qualitative data analysis is a continual, detailed undertaking. The three areas of (1) data reduction, (2) data display and (3) conclusion drawing/verification were used to analyze the concrete, descriptive data collected in stage one of this research. Analysis of the descriptive data concluded stage one and formed the basis for the design of a teacher leadership model in stage two.

Rigor

While researchers strive for results that others would consider rigorous and trustworthy, different authors address the fact that criteria for assessing naturalistic and scientific approaches to qualitative research differ. For example, Eisner (1981) identified dimensions that address the difference between the artistic and scientific approaches to qualitative research. They are focus, appraisal, generalization, form, prediction and control, sources of data, knowing, and ultimate aims (pp. 5-9). Guba and Lincoln (1981) offer different terms which may be more applicable and therefore attempt to develop and apply naturalistic parallel to the four major criteria of rigor commonly used by scientific inquirers. They suggest that the following terms within the naturalistic paradigm compared to the scientific paradigm are concerned with: (1) *credibility* (internal

validity) of their findings; (2) *fittingness* (external validity/generalizability) or how well their working hypotheses would "fit" in another context; (3) *auditability* (reliability) or testing for consistency by a second evaluator, and (4) *confirmability* (objectivity) of the data.

Although researchers use different terminology, they agree that adequate procedures exist to guarantee the quality of the research and the findings. Some of the strategies suggested by Miles & Huberman (1984) and Guba & Lincoln (1981) which were used in this study to achieve credibility and confirmability were: *triangulation*, which involved cross-checking data and interpretations by drawing upon different data sources, methods and perspectives; *representativeness*, in which the researcher strived to investigate the widest range and diversity of events and people possible within the study; and *member checks*, which entail asking others if the data are accurate and if the interpretations are plausible.

In discussing the fittingness (external validity/generalizability) of a study, Guba & Lincoln (1981) suggest that the naturalistic researcher is concerned with how well propositions from one study fit into the context of another. The case study provides the "thick description" which makes it possible for persons in other settings interested in the possible worth of the entity to make a rapid determination about fittingness (pp. 375-376). Eisner (1981) agrees in stating that the researcher's task is to

make "the particular vivid so that its qualities can be experienced and because he believes that the particular has a contribution to make to the comprehension of what is general" (p.7). This entails the collection of rich, thick data and the reporting of that data in a form which meaningfully brings it to life for the reader who can in turn make generalizations to other contexts.

Finally, pertaining to auditability, Miles & Huberman (1984) support the practice of "describing one's procedures clearly enough so that others can reconstruct them and, further down the line, corroborate them and do secondary analysis" (p. 244). Guba & Lincoln (1981), using the metaphor of an "audit," emphasize the necessity of the researcher documenting the decision trail (i.e., the audit trail) so that a second researcher has a record upon which to base the audit which includes "the nature of each decision, the data upon which it is based, and the reasoning that entered into it" (p. 122). In this study, taking notes, bracketing and memoing during data collection and analysis provided the decision trail necessary to establish fittingness.

Summary

In order to investigate in detail the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and underlying assumptions of first-year teachers, naturalistic research methods were used to develop a teacher leadership support system. Permission to conduct the research was granted by the insular superintendent's

office. Five primary and 30 secondary subjects accepted the invitation to participate and willingly cooperated. Data were gathered through the use of participant observation, interviewing and documentation, and were analyzed through data reduction, displays and verification to assure rigor and trustworthiness.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Overview of Analysis

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of concerns, beliefs, perceptions and underlying assumptions of first-year teachers, this chapter will present portraits of five first-year teachers, describe attitudes and perceptions of key participants about support for first-year teachers, and will conclude with a composite summary of first-year teachers in the St. Croix School district. There is no shortage of research literature about first-year teachers, but there has been no study of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district. The first year is a very critical year for a teacher because it often determines whether or not that person will stay in the teaching profession beyond the initial stages of survival and coping.

Information displayed in this chapter was gathered from observations, group meetings, videotaping, journals, and audiotaped interviews. These five portraits focus on the phenomenological research which deals with the inner experiences of these five individuals giving meaning to their life-world as first-year teachers in the order which they happen. Eight of the common problems cited by beginning teachers listed in descending order by Veenman (1984) are

used to describe some aspects about their entry into the profession. All schools and persons are identified by pseudonyms. Pertinent descriptive information about the first-year teacher subjects is listed in Table 1. This chapter will present portraits of each of the five subjects. Each subject, with the exception of one, will be discussed under eight headings: classroom discipline; motivating students; individual differences among students; assessing student's work; relationship with parents; organization of classwork; insufficient materials and supplies; and dealing with problems of individual students.

Table 1

Overview of First-Year Teacher Subjects

Name	Sex	Age	Place of Birth	Coll/Univ	Grade	School
Yesha	F	25	St. Croix	UVI	Kg.	Caruso Park
Manasha	F	24	St. Croix	UVI	Sub*	Reggae Pl.
John	M	37	Pennsylvania	Moravian	Kg.	Melody Rd.
Danika	F	24	St. Croix	UVI	K-3	Calypso Ave.
Maria	F	34	St. Croix	UVI	Sub*	Melody Rd.

* hired as a full time substitute teacher who is available at the school site to supervise the class of an absent teacher.

Portrait of Yesha

Yesha, a 25 year-old mother of three, completed the requirements for a baccalaureate degree in elementary

education in December 1988 and was hired as a first-year teacher at the Caruso Park Elementary School in January 1989. When asked to list the problems and successes faced during her student teaching experience, she listed two major problems:

1. The majority of the third grade students did not grasp the concept of 'subject and verb,' and she had to reteach the lesson.

2. Trying to find progress reports that the students could complete independently at the language arts and mathematics learning centers.

Her two outstanding successes were the organization of the integrated language arts block and the individualized mathematics program. She explained that students were highly motivated and enjoyed working independently. The principal visited her classroom and was so pleased with Yesha's contributions to the instructional program that he asked the cooperating teacher to submit a proposal outlining the integrated language arts block. There is a possibility that he will share this information with other teachers in an effort to implement the language arts approach in other elementary classrooms.

What did she anticipate? She was anxious to transfer her integrated language arts and individualized mathematics successes experienced in student teaching to her first class as a professional. She was also anxious to know about rules, regulations and procedures of the school and how to set up

her classroom. Her anticipation included the hopes of being assigned to a third, fourth, or fifth grade.

She was ecstatic when the Department of Education called her to report for an interview because her student teaching experience gave her the confidence to be a good teacher. When she reported to the Caruso Park Elementary School during the Christmas holidays to be interviewed, she realized that the principal had not been notified that she was coming for an interview. Disappointed Yesha said, "Entering a situation like this one greatly reduces the high expectations that I built up during student teaching." While contemplating the teaching position she mused that, "My cooperating teacher guided me, but I had to get the practical experiences by trial and error with the students."

During a group meeting with the five first-year teacher subjects on January 28, 1989, Yesha beamed about the fact that she was introduced to all teachers before being taken to her classroom. The other kindergarten teachers asked how they could be of help to her. The big disappointment came when she entered the kindergarten classroom to find that the teacher she was replacing had left no lesson plans, roll book, report cards, or teacher's editions for the textbooks. The initial introduction to her first job was to receive a classroom key and a mathematics curriculum guide.

Classroom Discipline

Yesha was aware from her classroom management course that thorough organization and preparation at the beginning of the

year is a most important time for students to learn behavior, attitudes and work habits. Entering this kindergarten class in January 1989 did not permit her this opportunity because organization had already been established by someone else. In her journal, she describes entering the classroom for the first time, familiarizing herself with the surroundings, getting to know the names of her students and just having fun. The next day, when she established and enforced classroom rules, she noticed a particular student who many of the employees had labeled as a "behavior problem." "I decided not to place a label on her, but to use what I learned in my preservice classes about motivation." Her first two weeks in the classroom with this student whom we will call Vi, "was pure terror." Vi tried her best to make Yesha dislike her. Whenever Vi was corrected, she would throw a temper tantrum. At times her erratic behavior made Yesha want to scream, but Yesha found a number of ways to reward her and give her love and attention, and Vi's behavior improved by the end of March. Students derive great satisfaction from being positively regarded.

Teachers make potent statements about children by what they say and how they say it. Words express the content of the message; the voice and the body convey the feelings (Froyen, 1988, p. 150). In her journal entry for April Yesha commented,

Handling disciplinary problems in my classroom has not been an easy task. However, I try several means

of establishing control among my students, I realize that shouting or spanking are ineffective ways of disciplining a child. When the students get too loud, I turn off the lights and the class becomes silent. I, too would sit for a few minutes without saying anything.

During the group meeting, she shared her experience about one of the students, a class clown, whom she placed in the corner as one way of embarrassing him. Yesha realized that approach "does not work with every child." Good management was observed throughout the researcher's visit. Students raced in after recess and headed straight for the toys. Yesha in a soft, but firm voice asked them to put away the toys and get ready for math. Interestingly enough while some students were still playing with the toys, her physical presence was established when she organized one table of students by putting them to work on Basic Math worksheets which included cut-and-paste activities. A few minutes later she organized a second table with different worksheets, then tables 3 and 4 gradually settled down. Within three or four minutes all students were settled and began their addition assignment using the idea of apples in a tree added to apples under a tree. The students assisted each other with the worksheet assignments.

The first group that she settled down is evidently ahead of the others because they had four activity sheets at their table and knew what to do, where to get scissors, and where

to place their completed papers. Yesha moved from one group to another assisting students with the concept. It is fascinating to observe how a teacher's body and voice are utilized as disciplinary tools (Bullough, 1989). The students got restless and, after questioning three or four students who came to show me their papers, I realized that the addition concept had not been clearly understood. Yesha will need some assistance in checking for understanding and identifying the overall level of understanding of the students.

In viewing the videotape, Yesha did not demonstrate "with-it-ness" when she sat with her back to the remainder of the class while teacher-directing one reading group. Kounin (1970) describes "with-it-ness" as having students within sight at all times, scanning the classroom whenever attending to a small group of students and being fully aware of what is happening in the classroom (cited in Wolfgang & Glickman, 1986).

Motivating Students

In her journal entry for early March , Yesha wrote: "I use many ways of motivation such as; a hug, a smile, a pat on the shoulder, a star, a candy and more." She received high marks from the assistant principal and other staff members for having survived the discipline and class management problems faced at mid-year.

Yesha, in the initial section of her journal, expressed the joy, pride and enthusiasm of "finally becoming a

teacher." There is no question that she loves teaching for as she interacts with the students individually, in small groups or as a class; nurturing and caring are very visible qualities. She asked questions of other teachers in seeking ways to identify appropriate activities in an effort to motivate her students. Moving students toward achieving goals set for kindergarten students was foremost in her mind as she strived to accomplish this through fun and varied activities.

The videotape captured the success Yesha experienced with motivating the students throughout the 45 minute language arts lesson. At the beginning of the lesson students were encouraged to talk about activities they participated in yesterday. About one-half of the students contributed to the discussion and before they tired of this activity a smooth transition was made to organize the day's plans followed by the language arts lesson. Full class participation preceded grouping for reading and independent activities. Motivational strategies learned in her preservice courses were evident in her concern for arousing and maintaining the interest of students.

Individual Differences Among Students

Not having received any lesson plans, teacher's editions, lists of reading ability groups, achievement level of individual students, material introduced and concepts mastered, Yesha tested the students and started from scratch to meet their individual needs. She relied on her student

teaching learning experiences in dealing with differences. After viewing the videotape, she asked, "Did I give my students too many writing assignments during the language arts lesson?" and "How long should I conduct teacher directed reading groups?"

Goodlad (1984) conveys the idea that if education in schools is to be effective, it is essential to make provisions for individual student differences such as more time for students who take longer, experiential activities to aid understanding of abstractions and summaries and review of work covered through use of different instructional approaches (p. 280). Yesha was very puzzled about how to deal with individual differences. As she organized the reading groups, she had the nagging feeling that kindergarten students were "too young to work on their own while I work with another group."

Assessing Students' Work

With no lesson plans, roll book, grade book or policy guidelines for grading, Yesha was very frustrated. She recalls:

As my first set of report cards was due, I became a bit nervous about how to grade my students. Nevertheless, I knew it had to be done. I questioned several of the kindergarten teachers about how to grade the students. They all told me to grade the students according to their abilities.

In her journal she detailed the grading standards for kindergartners: **O**= outstanding; **S**= satisfactory; and **N**= needs improvement. She decided to take a close look at the report card, which indicated exactly what kindergarten students should know. For example, one question listed was, "Can the students tie their shoelaces?" If the students can tie their shoelaces without any problems, they will receive an **O**. If the students can tie their shoelaces but have a little trouble doing so they will receive an **S**. If the students are unable to tie their shoelaces they receive an **N**. Another example is the recognition of words. Those students who are able to recognize and decode words easily receive an **O**. Those who take a little longer receive an **S** and those who are not ready or able will receive an **N**. In her conclusion about reporting students' work, Yesha wrote "Using the grading system of **O**, **S**, and **N** was not an easy task. As I began preparing the report cards I had to remember exactly which students knew what."

Relationship With Parents

Yesha, as a parent of a kindergartner attending a non-public school, shows an interest in her son's progress by visiting his teacher and being knowledgeable and involved with his assignments. She has the advantage of utilizing some of the techniques used by her son's teacher in her classroom. Probably as a result of her parent relationship, she did not feel threatened by the parents of her students.

Her comments about her relationship with parents included the following:

My relationship with parents has been a good one so far. However I find that some parents do not assist their children with homework. I have spoken with those parents. I have seen some improvement with some student's work and none with others.

Yesha decided that when she begins the new school year, she will do a better job of informing parents about how their children are doing. She plans to contact each parent during the first marking period in order to improve student behavior and performance.

Organization of Class Work

Yesha decided to get herself organized inasmuch as she had no lesson plans or guidelines on which to base her plans for the second semester. She was very puzzled about how to organize the reading groups because she thought her students were too young to work independently. First-year teachers often know a lot about their content areas, but not always the appropriate content for the grade level they are expected to teach (Shulman & Colbert, 1988, p. 5). She decided to organize the language arts and math activities similarly to the pattern she used during student teaching.

I used one filing cabinet to file students' work and another to place extra work. For example, if one group is working on the letter 'M m' the first day the students will complete their skilpak pages that

teach that concept. The next day the students would complete the worksheet reviewing the letter 'M m' as extra handwriting practice.

During the classroom observation, good organization of the mathematics worksheets, scissors, glue and crayons were signs of her effort to organize the classwork of her students. After viewing the videotape, Yesha posed some interesting questions:

1. How can I begin teaching the vocabulary words to such young students?
2. How can I effectively teach reading?
3. Was my approach to teaching the initial letter sounds effective?

In her final journal entry written in June, she reiterated her bewilderment about organizing the language arts block and her decision to assign each group its own independent activities while she teacher-directs a single reading group.

This arrangement has worked very well. I am proud to say that my students who were reading on Level 2 (Ginn 720) passed the Mastery Test with flying colors and are now in Level 3. Those students who were in Level 1 are now in Level 2.

In the second group meeting, she expressed her amazement at the response when she asked other kindergarten teachers what reading level kindergarten students should have completed before being promoted to first grade. Yesha was informed by more than one kindergarten teacher that they have

a stack of Level 1 books in their classroom which they do not use. "I've looked into other rooms and all I see them doing is coloring, painting, copying or playing. They do not use the readers." At this point she boasted about the fact that one of her reading groups took the mastery test for Level 2 and got perfect scores. When the researcher asked how she felt about herself, unhesitatingly, her response was, "I felt **great.**"

Insufficient Materials and Supplies

This did not seem to be a problem area for Yesha. In her journal she tells how she enjoys working at the Caruso Park Elementary School because the staff is helpful and "I have been given sufficient materials and supplies whenever needed."

Dealing With Problems of Individual Students

Vi, who was discussed in the classroom discipline section, is a lonely child who lives in a church and government run home for abused and abandoned children. She throws herself on the floor, pulls out her shoe laces and makes loud noises. In discussing Vi's behavior problems, Yesha remarked:

Although Vi has shown some improvement, this is definitely an area in which I could use some advice on how to cope. There is also a male student, whom I will refer to as "B". He was isolated in a desk by himself apart from the other students when I took over the class. I did not change this seating

arrangement due to the fact that "B" has been referred and is being tested. He never completes any assignments, daydreams, dawdles and very often places unfinished assignments in the Completed basket.

During the viewing of the videotape, Yesha reflected on the scenes showing "B's" sad face, isolation, and lack of attention by her compared to the other students. "I feel badly about not including him in a group. What can I do to keep his attention on independent activities while I'm working with small groups?" This comment and question expressed her concern about not experiencing success with the problems of this individual student.

Yesha's Recommendations

1. A workshop should be designed with actual demonstrations to help first-year teachers become more prepared in the classroom.
2. More information and explanation about the rules, regulations, and expectations of the department of education should be available to first-year teachers when they are hired.
3. Special workshops especially for kindergarten teachers to initiate them on the "how-to" of beginning the year with kindergartners and preparing them to meet the standards for promotion to first grade.

If assigned to the kindergarten next school year Yesha is most anxious and yet nervous about how to start the year off

on the right foot.

Summary

Yesha expressed concerns about her effectiveness in handling discipline problems and dealing with problems of individual students, especially "B" whom she had not successfully involved in group activities. She was nervous about how to assess the work of kindergartners and puzzled about how to deal with individual differences among students as she tried to be successful in their academic achievement. Yesha was pleased with her relationship with parents and she credited the preservice program for the success of her reading groups. This gave her a great feeling about the organization of her classwork. Materials and supplies were sufficient for her to achieve the goals set for her kindergartners. The motivational strategies she used aroused and maintained the interest of her students.

Portrait of Manasha

Manasha, a 24 year-old mother of one child, graduated with a baccalaureate degree in elementary education in spring 1988 and was hired as an elementary teacher in August 1988 at Reggae Place Elementary School. According to Manasha, her love of children prompted the choice of a teaching career. When asked to list the problems and successes faced during her student teaching experience, she listed two major ones:

1. She had to change schools because the cooperating teacher to whom she was assigned did not feel she had enough experience to supervise a student teacher; and

2. At the second school her grade preference was not available therefore she had to student teach in a first instead of a third grade.

The positive aspects of her student teaching included an outstanding cooperating teacher who assisted her as much as possible, teaching materials which were always available, and other teachers who were willing to give help and support where needed. She found the first graders fun and enjoyed working with them although she would have preferred the third grade level.

What did she anticipate? Looking forward to being assigned her own class, she collected material for preparing bulletin boards. She most certainly did not anticipate being hired as a substitute teacher. She accepted the position just to get into the system and will work toward getting her own classroom. At the beginning of the school year her frustration was caused by being assigned as a substitute in a primary classroom after she had prepared lesson plans for a sixth grade reading group. This discouraged her from planning ahead.

During the group meeting with the four other first-year teacher subjects on January 28, 1989, Manasha said that her first shock was being called by the Department of Education for an interview because she expected a long, long wait. Her second shock was being hired as a substitute teacher and paid as a full time elementary teacher. She continued her conversation:

As a degreed teacher, I am concerned about being assigned as a substitute teacher when there are non-degreed teachers in permanent teaching positions. I have been made to understand that the principal could have requested that I be put in a permanent teaching position, but that non-degreed teachers argue with administrators in order to remain in the classrooms.

When she was assigned to a third grade for one week and a non-degreed substitute was placed in the same room in a senior position, other teachers found it odd because Manasha has a degree and the "teacher" she was assigned to assist does not. Not letting the situation get her down, she said, I was happy to be in a third grade. I asked myself, "Where must I get supplies?" and answered myself, "I have no idea!" Again I had to ask the paraprofessional who was very helpful, but she was sent to cover other classes and I was stranded. Feeling shuffled like a deck of cards, I was shifted from this position to that of assisting an English teacher with a reading group in a departmentalized program on the sixth grade level while "subbing" on the primary level whenever a teacher was absent.

Classroom Discipline

Manasha, as a hired full time substitute teacher assigned to different classes daily except for brief stints with the sixth grade and the special education class, had continuous

classroom problems normally faced by a substitute teacher. Two of the major problems were discipline and lack of adequate respect for anyone who was not their regular teacher.

The presence of the researcher, or what is referred to as "observer effect," might have been the reason why no discipline problems were discerned during the classroom observation and videotaping. However, discipline was expressed as a major concern in the group meetings and journal entries. Ryan (1974) stated that "there is probably no single thing that causes beginning teachers more trouble and more anxiety than discipline problems" (as cited in Varah, Theune & Parker, 1986, p. 30).

Manasha was called to the office one Friday morning in March and informed that she would be assigned to the Special Education class on Monday because the classroom teacher would be on maternity leave. In discussing enduring scars of first-year teachers, Helen Featherstone notes that many get the jobs of teachers who are out on temporary leave, and warns that novices who face the largest problems in their first job--unruly students, unreasonable administrators, inadequate materials--may never develop into the teachers they could have been (Featherstone, 1989).

Manasha reported to the special education classroom located in the basement (which has been nicknamed *Hades*) and wrote in her journal:

The students were not expecting me. They did not

even know my name. I feel that since the principal planned to assign me to this class the students should have been informed that I was coming.

Although I was promised by the principal to be accompanied on the first day and to date (three weeks later) no one has come to find out how things are...

She found these eight students difficult to handle. Because she did not follow the classroom teacher's routine, they did not do anything the first couple of days. When told to say the pledge of allegiance as a part of the morning exercise, they whooped, hollered and downright refused by saying, "We don't do that. Ms --- don't let us do it". At this point Manasha decided to take charge and set her own rules and regulations by informing the special education students that "I am not Ms.-- I am the teacher here and what I say goes or else up to the office." This stance evoked an interesting reaction when to her surprise she found out that they knew the pledge of allegiance and participated in the morning exercises.

Manasha was upset by their unbelievable behavior. The kinds of things they said in her presence were shocking and they seemed not to care. One male student told her, "I hate you because you always give us work and no break." The types of punishment that these eight students were accustomed to included kneeling and "beating." She left the "beating" to the paraprofessional because in her words, "I am trying my

best not to hit them. I don't want a lawsuit." A boy who will be called "J", told her in no uncertain terms, "You ain't my mother, so don't hit me."

Motivating Students

In a conversation with Manasha, the researcher asked about the lack of motivational activities during both the classroom observation in the sixth grade reading class and the videotaping in the special education class. Not being a permanent teacher with an assigned class, Manasha had a very frustrating year because she could not make daily plans for achieving goals and objectives or utilize techniques and ideas learned in her preservice program. Motivational activities are a major component in lesson planning, but "since I never knew whether I'd remain with this class from day to day or be assigned to another room, plans for motivating students are non-existent." She was aware that motivation activities must arouse students interest in preparation for the concept or generalization to be introduced. Our conversation concerning the lack of observed motivation activities resulted in her reminding me that she could not make plans in her present position as a substitute teacher. Therefore, motivating students in either of these classrooms was extremely difficult due to lack of planning. She talked about the fact that students in the special education class needed "a lot of motivation to get them started made it difficult to accomplish expectations set for the day."

Individual Differences Among Students

Manasha's disappointing first year made it difficult for her to concentrate on individual differences among students even though she spent about eight weeks with the special education class. The students in the sixth grade English class were already grouped according to their reading levels, so Manasha had no opportunity to give diagnostic tests to determine placement.

The researcher entered the sixth grade classroom at Reggae Place Elementary School at 8:10 AM, and observed students arranged into four reading groups. One student was doing assignments in a Ginn English Workbook, one student was reading on the Level 5 (first grade), nine on Level 7 (second grade), four on Level 8 (first semester of third grade) and eight on Level 9 (second semester of third grade). Manasha appeared to perform a monitoring rather than a teaching role. The only group she interacted with was Level 9 by administering a reading criterion test. Other students worked on their own except for a few times that Manasha walked around, told two students who complained to "shut up," or sucked her teeth in apparent disgust with the entire scene. The classroom teacher was absent during this classroom observation.

Assessing Students' Work

The principal told Manasha to report to the sixth grade English teacher who gave her a warm welcome. In her journal, Manasha wrote: "She introduced me to her students and I was

immediately put to work correcting the students' spelling assignment."

The closest Manasha came to assessing students' work could be paralleled to the role a paraprofessional plays in a classroom, correcting papers/workbooks and reporting grades to the English teacher.

When she took over the special education class while the regular teacher was on maternity leave, no one gave her a clue about how to grade the student's work. When report cards were due no one supplied her with the students' report cards or gave her any directions about how to record grades or make appropriate comments. Manasha found herself in a very embarrassing position when the students asked for their cards on the day report cards were to be distributed. To her amazement, when the teacher returned from maternity leave on May 15th, Manasha learned that the teacher had the grade book and report cards at home. "I continue to feel that communication is lacking between and among the administrators and the teachers. Sometimes I feel that I'm not important because I am in a substitute teacher's position."

She felt that it would have been much easier for her to assess students' work if she had been allowed to spend at least two weeks with the teacher prior to her departure for maternity leave. In this way she would have gotten ideas about each student's ability, grading standards and directions for completing and distributing report cards.

Relationship With Parents

In her rotating assignment, Manasha had little opportunity to establish relationships with parents. According to Manasha, her only encounter with a parent took place in the administration office during her assignment to the special education class when she went to the office to check her mailbox. She overheard a parent of one of the special education students inquiring about her child's report card. Since the secretary did not have an answer, she introduced herself as the substitute teacher of that class and informed the parent that no report card had been prepared. The parent left without any further questions.

Organization of Class Work

"Haphazard" seems to be a good descriptor for Manasha's organization of class work with the sixth grade English class, the special education students, and the myriad of classrooms in which she substituted. The bare chalkboards and students' apparent unsupervised reading activities in the sixth grade class during the researcher's observation indicated a lack of planning for this day's lesson.

Her assignment to the special education classroom with no opportunity to form a bridge with the regular teacher's routine was evident in the spelling list she assigned the first week. This was a disaster. The paraprofessional advised her that their word list should consist of only three-letter words. She firmly believed that organization and planning for the special education students would have

been easier if she had more support and prior conferences and observations with the special education teacher. For example, the administration knew when the teacher's maternity leave was to commence and should have permitted her to spend two weeks to learn the routine before being left on her own. By having a formal induction period, "I would have gotten a better idea of the academic ability of each student and how to organize meaningful learning experiences for the diverse levels in this room."

Insufficient Materials and Supplies

In her journal and in our discussions, it was realized that Manasha was in a unique position to talk about materials and supplies at Reggae Place Elementary. As a substitute she "taught" in many classrooms with long-term stints in two classrooms, an experience which afforded her the opportunity to assess the availability of materials and supplies in various classrooms. She comments, "Insufficient materials and supplies are very sickening. Simple things such as staples, scotch and masking tape, tacks and paper are always out of stock."

Dealing With Problems of Individual Students

Manasha, who entered the teaching profession because of her love for children, discovered that dealing with the myriad of problems of individual students was a major challenge.

During the observed reading lesson in the sixth grade, Lincoln, a male student reading on the first grade level, who

sat alone struggling over a page in his reader, finally succumbed probably to boredom, frustration or illness and fell asleep. Another student spied Lincoln and called the attention of the entire class who laughed uproariously at the sleeping student. Manasha walked over, shook Lincoln and continued to administer the criterion test with Level 9 students. One of the nine students reading on the second grade level obtained the teacher's edition from the teacher's desk and copied all the answers in her skilpak. Another boy seated across from her in turn copied her answers in his workbook. Manasha was not aware of this.

When assigned to the special education class, she sent one of the students to the principal's office because he constantly said, "I ain't doing no work. I don't feel like doing no work." The principal returned to the classroom with him and discussed with the entire class the significance of respecting and obeying Manasha because she was sent there to carry-out the academic program until the return of their teacher.

Manasha tells a story of her first three days with the special education students.

The school bell rang at 8:05 am. Five special education students enter the classroom and the remaining three decide to play a game of 'run and hide'. The paraprofessional assigned to this class told me that they were hiding. So, for two consecutive days I went to look for them and

brought them to class. On the third day I got smart and informed them that beginning the next day the game was over. I would call the roll and send their names to the office.

This approach corrected that situation.

Manasha's Recommendations

1. The Department of Education should hold a series of workshops for first-year teachers to familiarize them with the policies and expectations of the school system. The administrators of the schools to which the first-year teachers are assigned should participate in workshops for the purpose of informing first-year teachers of available assistance and support at the school site.

2. Improved communication is needed between school administrators and faculty.

3. The Department of Education should stay in contact with the University of the Virgin Islands to know the number of available teacher education graduates who plan to apply for a teaching position. The department should never hire a degreed teacher in a substitute position.

She did not think it was fair for her to have been placed in a substitute teacher's position when she has earned a degree in elementary education.

For me, all my anxiety or enthusiasm for getting my own classroom, setting up learning centers, bulletin boards, etc. were dashed to pieces during my first year. Fortunately, I will be teaching fourth grade

next year. I plan to try my best to teach the children to the best of my ability with the limited materials available. Overall my first year wasn't that bad. I adapted to the situation after a few frustrating weeks.

On her return to the sixth grade class she spent the last few weeks reviewing for final examinations and practicing for graduation. "These last few weeks were a learning experience for me as I completed cumulative records, reading cards and classroom inventory." Her concluding statement about her first-year teaching experience was, "I did learn something new."

Summary

Manasha's experience as a substitute teacher verifies all eight common problems as major concerns. Discipline was difficult to maintain when dealing with students on a short term basis. Not being assigned to a classroom for any length of time, motivation of students and concentration on individual differences among students posed a critical problem. When assigned to correct student papers and workbooks by the experienced teacher she was assisting, she felt reduced to the role of a paraprofessional instead of a first-year teacher. She had minimal contact with parents, assessed her organization of classwork as haphazard and complained bitterly about lack of the basic essentials such as staples, paper, and scotch tape. On her short stints in different classrooms she found dealing with problems of

individual students to be a major challenge.

Portrait of John

John , at 37 years old, is married with no children and is six feet two inches tall. A graduate of Moravian College in Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education, John was hired in August to teach kindergarten at the Melody Road Elementary School. When asked to list the problems and successes faced during his student teaching experience of 15 years ago, he listed:

1. No significant problems;
2. Good cooperation and assistance; and
3. Satisfaction with the results of student teaching.

In a quest for problems and successes he anticipated in his first year of teaching, he listed only anticipated problems and no successes:

1. Lack of materials;
2. Unclear goals and objectives;
3. Uncertain about personal acceptance; and
4. No "game plan".

What did he anticipate? After earning a degree in elementary education, John was in charge of a large manufacturing company for 15 years. He assumed that teaching would be different from anything he had experienced so he came with an open mind and no significant concerns.

During the first group meeting, John shared with other first-year teachers that he did not intend to consider teaching a long-term second career. Since he moved here for

health reasons, he took the teaching job because it is something he was trained for and was available. John remarked, "I really don't plan to be a classroom teacher for longer than a year or two. I want to stay in the education field and do consider pursuing a degree in administration." He honestly did not find the teacher orientation at the beginning of the school year advantageous. As a newcomer to the island, he would have preferred to get a better flavor of the island culture and an understanding of the Creole language in order to better instruct the students. Too much time was spent talking about contract negotiations. "I was bitter about talk of a possible job action because no one informed me that a new contract was being negotiated." He was extremely upset at the thought of opening his first year of teaching involved in a teacher's strike after quitting his job on the U.S. mainland. He received no curriculum guides and was asked to review a copy of a kindergarten math text in January only after all kindergarten teachers asked for a meeting with the principal and assistant principal.

Classroom Discipline

His good rapport with students was expressed during the group meeting and was evident in both the classroom observation and videotaping. In his journal entries he recorded that he handled behavior by trial and error because he did not have a clear understanding of what disciplinary procedures were acceptable or unacceptable. As the year progressed, John felt that discipline became more of a

problem although the administrators and other teachers were impressed with the behavior of his students. Two methods he found more successful than others he had tried were isolating those students who disturbed others and rewarding the ones who behaved with stickers, special tasks and preferential seating. While viewing the video taken on April 26th, he conveyed the feeling of joy and satisfaction with his classroom discipline. He felt that the year "was generally a success in this area."

Motivating Students

In our discussion after viewing the videotape, John said that he used letter grades as a means of motivating the students. "At this grade level, children seem to be very self-motivated." His biggest problem was motivating the repeaters who needed a greater challenge than the first-timers.

Motivation involves (1) establishing a student commitment to the desired appropriate behavior and (2) having the teacher acknowledge support for the student's trying (Medland & Vitale, 1984, p. 91). A youngster who will be referred to as Joshua seemed to be constantly out of line, seeking attention or finding it difficult to settle down. Joshua entered the classroom with his shirt-tail out on the day of the videotaping. In an attempt to have Joshua conform to the school's dress code, John said to Joshua, "Please put your shirt in. Mrs. B. won't take a movie of any boys with their shirts out." The response to the desired appropriate

behavior was immediate as Joshua kept his eyes on the camera while he tucked in his shirt. Two other boys also tucked in their shirts and checked their appearances.

The daily routine in John's classroom started with the direction, "right hands over hearts" in preparation for the pledge of allegiance to the flag. This was followed by the question, "Did anybody bring any books today?" Three students brought books while John called students one at a time to form the circle in readiness for storytime. He found that storytelling at the beginning of the day sets a positive mood in addition to improving classroom control.

Motivating his kindergartners became easier as the students began to realize success. He introduced them to the letter grades as a motivating technique, but stressed neatness and completeness. In his trial-and-error approach combined with close observation of his students, John noted that students seemed to be much more motivated when working in groups of three or less where success was more a reflection of their skills than when they worked in a large group.

Individual Differences Among Students

Teaching for the first time since completing his preservice education 15 years ago, John finds coping with individual differences very difficult. At the beginning of the year John asked, "What should each kindergarten student be able to do at the end of the kindergarten year?" He was not satisfied with the vague

answer he received and did not feel it was a fair response to a first-year teacher's inquiry. Well into the second semester of the school year, he still did not have any idea of the cognitive and affective expectations for kindergartners. John decided to use individual workbooks and one-on-one tutoring after school as one way of addressing individual differences. "I believe I must try to establish more individual learning centers in my classroom next year." Dealing with individual differences is a problem that John has experienced throughout his first year.

Assessing Students' Work

At the beginning of the year when John inquired about clearly defined goals and objectives for kindergartners, the answer he received from the school administrators was, "If a child can satisfy all the areas on the report card, you've done a good job." John thought,

Maybe that's all there is, but it does not seem to be what should be presented to a first-year teacher. As a first-year teacher, I have no specific idea of the school's expectations for kindergartners. Generally, I have some idea that they should be able to start to read and do some addition and subtraction.

He found that assessing student's performance on a day to day, worksheet by worksheet basis was not very difficult. He continues to express dismay about not knowing the school

district's standards for measurement and evaluation of students on this grade level.

Educational goals by grade level seem to be arbitrary in that there is nothing published. As far as measuring performance, tests are out of date and simply not used. I need to know what is expected of my children when they leave my class.

As a result of feeling directionless in the area of assessing students' performance, he said he introduced the letter grading system (A,B,C,D,F). "I emphasized that speed had little impact but that neatness, completeness and accuracy were the important measures."

Relationship With Parents

Many parents are a significant source of the new teacher's satisfaction and sense of worth. However, parents can also be a great source of discomfort for beginning teachers for a number of reasons (Ryan, 1986, p. 22). John relates to both of these viewpoints. In the first group meeting he shared the fact that he has a good rapport with his students but, not being a very outgoing person, he finds it difficult to talk to parents he does not know too well. In his management position in a large manufacturing company for 15 years, he worked with adults only. Although he is comfortable with the students, he is uncomfortable reporting their progress or lack of progress to the adults. Melody Road Elementary School conducted an Open House or a Get-Acquainted Night and required parents to come to school at

the end of each marking period to get their children's report cards. I observed that only parents of students who are doing well attended these school activities. At the end of the year, John wrote in his journal:

I kept the parents well informed of successes and weaknesses of their children. I provided aids for the interested parents to use at home with instructions and recommendations. Parental participation was disappointing but consistent with the entire school. The children of concerned and active parents performed much better in all areas.

Organization of Class Work

Without any detailed expectations or guidelines for kindergartners in their preparation for first grade, John started each day with storytelling. Their math, reading/language arts, social studies and science followed throughout the day as they showed readiness for the particular academic area. Art, physical education and music rounded out their curricula offerings. In his journal entry in March, John wrote:

Organization of class work is another area I've found difficult. Planning and providing enough work to keep the children's interest without overloading them and turning them off to the process has been difficult. Another problem I've had to date is planning my daily class work around a paraprofessional who is not present 50-60% of the

time. This requires me to constantly have two game plans.

Yet, during both the classroom observation and the videotaping, the math and language lessons which followed the storytelling were apparently well organized with good transition from one activity to another. In his journal entry at the end of the school year, he reflects, "I felt unorganized at times but feel this year's experience will assist me in planning for a much more organized year next year."

Insufficient Materials and Supplies

The classroom is neat, clean and colorfully decorated. Charts of shapes, colors, numbers and a calendar dot the walls of John's room. There was also a phonograph, tape recorder, a housekeeping corner, sleep mats, toys, math manipulatives, phonics games, and building blocks.

John wondered why math books were being kept in the storage room when his students did not have any. He guessed that the principal was holding back on the books so that he would have new books to distribute at the beginning of next year. He speculated that the administrators were testing their ability to be creative. These books were distributed to the kindergarten teachers at mid-year in January.

I was warned that insufficient materials and supplies would be a problem but I never dreamed it could be so serious. Many teachers had been without textbooks, paper, art supplies, quality ditto

materials, access to the copy machine and other necessary materials.

Other major concerns enumerated in his first journal entry in January were the wet and unusable classroom after it rained, unsatisfactory janitorial services, lack of personal hygiene supplies for students and faculty, and no napkins available in the lunchroom.

In his end-of-the-year journal entry, John reported:

Insufficient materials and supplies are a real problem that got worse as the year moved on. At the end of the year, when materials should be ordered for the following year, I was informed by my peers that it would be a waste of time to requisition materials. **This is very encouraging news!!!** Our materials are old and worn out. Many are shared between three or four classes. Many supplies essential for early childhood development ran out around Christmas never to be re-stocked.

Dealing With Problems of Individual Students

Although John did not enter the teaching profession until 15 years after his preservice preparation, the students were obviously very comfortable with him. Joshua, who was referred to earlier, sat in the storytelling circle and started crying. Other students told the teacher that Joshua had pinched his finger. John continued reading the story, but interjected as an aside that Joshua's finger was not where it belonged. A few minutes later John directed his

attention to the crying Joshua by asking, "Can you sing like an Indian?" John continued reading the story and the ignored Joshua stopped crying. When storytime was over and students were returning to their tables in an orderly manner, Joshua, who was very restless, got a back scratch from the teacher. Shortly after this bit of attention, Joshua sat at the teacher's desk instead of going to his own chair. John announced that Joshua is the teacher. A few moments later Joshua did not respond to the teacher's request for him to return to his seat, so John while maintaining his quiet charm, physically transferred Joshua from the teacher's desk to his own and restrained him for a few minutes before continuing the distribution of math books.

In April, during the storytelling time, a boy whom I will call G placed his head on the table while John called students one at a time to the circle. G, called to the circle, kept his head on the desk and did not move. The teacher urged G by saying, "G wake up. I have some ice-cream". John heard grumbling from other students about G's lack of response, so he told the other students to, "Let him sleep." G sat up when students were selecting which story they wanted to listen to and when the teacher started reading he placed his head on the desk again. He watched and listened but never moved from his seat. John ignored him throughout the storytelling period. The game, "Simon Says," was used to move students back to their tables in preparation for the language arts lesson. Interestingly enough, G joined

in the game without any urging. This observation was one example of John's commendable manner of dealing with the individual problems of these students.

John's Recommendations

1. New teachers should be provided with an approved option or options for dealing with various types of unacceptable behavior. They should also be permitted to remain creative.

2. The Department of Education must provide more learning aids that are interesting to children. Many of the aids are old, dirty, damaged and out of date. Money must be allocated, particularly for early childhood development materials.

3. Goals and objectives must be developed and clearly stated for each grade level. I felt I operated on hearsay and the word of my peers this year.

4. The school should develop an active parent teacher association. This must be encouraged and supported by the Department of Education.

5. More casual classroom observations and discussions including recommendations by the administration would be helpful.

6. The children of St. Croix can never meet the expectations of the United States Federal Department of Education unless a commitment is made to purchase materials and repair facilities.

7. I believe the elected Board of Education should

develop a budget, establish goals and objectives, and have complete control over the system. It is time to get the system out of the hands of top government officials.

Next year I plan to sit in on first grade classes to see how well my last year's students are meeting first grade expectations. This will help me to determine whether my first year was successful or not.

Summary

John handled discipline problems and motivation of students by trial and error but found that motivation became easier as the students experienced success. Not being informed about academic expectations of kindergartners, individual differences among students was also a major concern. On his own initiative he used letter grades therefore overcoming the problem of assessing student's work. He found organization of classwork very difficult and insufficient materials and supplies a real problem that got worse during the year. John did experience success in dealing with problems of individual students and keeping parents informed of their children's achievements.

Portrait of Maria

This portrait of Maria will not be presented in the format of the other four case study subjects using the eight common problems cited by first-year teachers. Maria's portrait is uniquely different because she was a permanent substitute who was not assigned to one class for any period of time but held classes of absent teachers on a day-by-day

basis.

Maria, a 34 year-old mother of four children, completed the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education from UVI in December of 1988. She was hired in January 1989 as a permanent substitute at the Melody Road Elementary School. When asked to list the problems and successes faced during her student teaching experience, she recalled:

During my student teaching experience I felt that I was successful in creating an atmosphere conducive for learning. I also felt I was successful with writing and implementing my lesson plans. However, I did have some problems with my teaching strategies. I felt I did not have the opportunity to control the class because of the cooperating teacher's presence. I felt that the students were well-disciplined only because the teacher was in the room at all times.

What problems and successes did she anticipate in her first year of teaching? She anticipated being successful with organizing her class, setting long and short term goals for her students, writing and implementing lesson plans, and testing and evaluating her students. She expected to have some problems with her co-workers because experienced teachers seem reluctant to accept first-year teachers and their ideas. Maria also felt she might have some problems with discipline since first-year teachers tend to be placed

in remedial classes with behavioral problem students.

Maria received a call from the Division of Personnel to inform her she had been hired, but she was "not truly happy." Why would a recent graduate not be happy with her first job at mid-year? Disappointedly she remarked:

The job I got was that of a substitute teacher and I had my heart set on becoming a regular teacher right away. My mind was filled with so many ideas for my classroom, but I pushed them aside and accepted the job that was offered me. I was thankful for having a job and decided to do my best.

During the survival stage, beginning teachers face major challenges and crises, but for some this period is indeed a "fight for life" where personal beliefs, attitudes, and philosophies are thoroughly tested (Knowles, 1988, p. 702). Although she reported to work in high spirits, Maria's initial experience was indeed a major disappointment.

I remembered I got disillusioned that first morning because I thought that someone would have spoken to me about my job specifications and introduced me to the staff, but that didn't happen. I was just handed a piece of paper which instructed me to report to the classroom of a teacher who was absent that day. Since I had no introduction to the staff I felt like an outsider for several months.

In her last journal entry she reported that even after six

months on the job, her name still does not appear on the list where teachers sign for receipt of their paychecks. She realized her name was not included on the staff list for Melody Road Elementary School when she attended a Department of Education sponsored workshop. Maria experienced the complaints of all teachers employed by the department for the first time. Her first paycheck was issued three months after her date of employment.

The big problem with being a substitute teacher was that she was shuffled from one room to another daily.

Because of this I had no sense of direction. I never had the time to really get to know the children in any room. I had no time for follow-up work or testing. I never got to see a unit of study through to completion. After awhile I felt that I was just giving the children busy work.

Another problem she faced as a first-year teacher was that some of the older teachers felt because they had been teaching longer it gave them the right to interfere with her classes. For example, if they felt the class was too noisy they would walk right in and proceed to reprimand the children with no regard for Maria's presence. She expected that they would discuss the situation with her later or ask if they could be of assistance, but this expectation did not materialize.

She continued to express her feelings, concerns, and attitudes in her journal by discussing her coping strategies:

I coped in the classroom by having a well organized lesson plan for what I wanted to achieve during the day. I found that students who have interesting work to do don't have time or interest in disrupting the class. Therefore, I believe that my main coping strategy was to sufficiently plan for the day's activities. I used ideas from the Learning and Instructor magazines. Using the lesson plan techniques I learned in student teaching, I planned detailed lessons so I would not have to rely on the plans left by the absent teachers. Often there were no plans at all or those left were very sketchy. I also referred to some textbooks I used in my undergraduate program. Of particular help was Wolfgang & Glickman's Solving Discipline Problems.

The above comments were interesting in light of the dichotomy of Maria's remarks during and after viewing the videotape. The sixth grade science class in which she was substituting that day was videotaped from 10:30 to 11:20 AM. In addition to shaking her head in disbelief at the sound of her voice and mispronunciations during the evaluation of the videotape, she described a few of the students who entered the classroom as over-aged: 14, 15 and 16 year-olds. One student was singled out as a problem student who is known to

be sexually active. She felt that the videotaped science class was too teacher oriented and she gave some recommendations about how the class could have been conducted with more emphasis on student participation. This was her third day with this class, but it was difficult to plan because she was assigned to the group on a day-to-day basis. Maria enunciated that her plan for this class was "not too well-organized." The students did not want to cooperate with her because their regular teacher would be returning soon and they did not need to prepare for a test or accept any information from her.

Maria used the words *haphazard* and *boring* in critiquing this science lesson. She was very critical of the departmentalization system in the fifth and sixth grades for the following reasons: (1) students are difficult to discipline; (2) movement from class to class wastes precious time; (3) it takes too long at the beginning of the class period to settle the students and begin the lesson; and (4) the "Section Sheet" which is brought to each teacher by the class president requires her to list the names of the students who misbehaved or left the room with a pass, in addition to writing a comment about each student and giving an overall letter grade which reflected the behavior of the class during her science period. "There was no meaningful follow up by the administration," was Maria's very candid comments about the section sheet. Toward the end of the year the principal had the students whose names appeared on the

section sheet report to the auditorium during lunch recess.

Maria's Recommendations

1. A support teacher should be assigned to each first-year teacher.
2. First-year teachers should be introduced to the faculty and staff of the assigned school.
3. First-year teachers should be provided with guidelines for classroom procedures and grade level objectives for the year.
4. First-year teachers should be introduced to school policies and time schedules (with emphasis on discipline).
5. Grade level meetings should be instituted to support first-year teachers.
6. The building principal should visit the first-year teacher's classroom frequently prior to formal evaluative observations to offer assistance if warranted.

Maria shared with the researcher her concern about never having been formally observed, although she was evaluated at the end of the year by the principal. She stressed her concern about the principal's emphasis on a teacher's ability to maintain control in contrast to instructing the students. Sadly she admitted, "I felt that I was viewed positively by the principal as a classroom manager who 'controlled' the classes but I did not get the feeling that he was concerned about my ability to 'instruct' the students."

Maria concluded the video review session with these remarks:

I must say that my first six months as a first-

year teacher was **not productive**. I hate substituting. I hope to have a chance to have my own classroom next fall. I've realized that videotaping can serve as a useful self-reflective tool in the assessment of first-year teachers.

Summary

In Maria's substitute teacher position, she found discipline to be a major problem and the other seven areas difficult to address as she moved from class to class on a daily basis.

Portrait of Danika

Danika is a 24 year-old who completed the requirements for a baccalaureate degree in elementary education at UVI (St. Thomas campus) in May of 1988. Growing up in the Virgin Islands and being a student in the educational system from grammar school through the university has made her very aware of the system's major deficiencies. This awareness played a significant role in her decision to become an educator.

She was hired as a first-year teacher at the Calypso Avenue Elementary School. During her interview for the job, she stressed that she was an elementary education major and wanted a self-contained classroom. She was informed that there were no openings for a degreed elementary classroom teacher because the positions are held by non-degreed teachers whom the department is gradually trying to move out of the classroom. Because of this dilemma, Danika found herself assigned as a Spanish teacher in the interim. Danika

reminded the personnel administrators that she wanted a classroom because the teaching ideas, learning centers, bulletin boards, rules and objectives learned in her student teaching would not be put to full utilization by teaching a foreign language to kindergarten through third graders. She was afraid that by not being assigned as an elementary teacher of a self-contained classroom she would lose the momentum she brought from student teaching. As a very assertive person, she insisted that the school administrators include her on lists of attendees for all elementary teacher workshops.

When asked to list the problems and successes faced during her student teaching experience, she listed three major problems:

1. Writing detailed lesson plans at first;
2. Not enough negative criticism; and
3. No stipend provided, especially after purchasing classroom materials and taking the bus to and from the cooperating school.

Her numerous successes during student teaching included:

1. The reality, importance and effectiveness of good personal relationship between students and student teacher;
2. Good, effective and critical relationship between student teacher and the cooperating teacher;
3. Methods of instruction and management were proven successful and valuable because the cooperating teacher incorporated many of the ideas in her teaching;

4. Well-planned lessons allowed her to experience effective instruction;

5. The faculty at the cooperating school treated her like she was a full-time teacher.

What did she anticipate? The problems she anticipated in her first year of teaching were (1) not being paid for some months and (2) being shortchanged by school administrators. Her anticipated successes outnumbered the problems. She eagerly anticipated three opportunities: (1) to portray the characteristics of a good teacher; (2) to make a difference in some aspect of students' academic growth; and (3) to make a difference at the school where hired. In her first journal entry, she phrased her concerns in the following manner:

Prospective and new teachers have more to gain and offer today than do some ten-plus years veteran teachers. New teachers are educated on the importance of how to teach concepts, effectiveness of implementation, evaluating and creating subject related materials. I feel that some teachers are not spending sufficient time teaching concepts. They are not instructing students on how to analyze and think on their own, rather they are giving the students all the information and confining instruction to the "spit back" method. This may account for the reason why students cannot think on the upper levels of the cognitive domain.

Danika is very outspoken and at the group meeting in

January shared the concern that classes started in September and "to this date in January" she had not been observed. In her disappointment, she continued:

I'm always on the lookout and keep asking myself,
'When are they going to come and observe me?',
'When are we going to have a conference?', 'When
are you going to hear my likes and dislikes about
what I'm doing?', 'How am I getting along?',
'What do you want from me?'. I am still waiting.
Input and comments are very important even if they
are negative. I need some feedback and I'm not
getting any.

She feels that the problems she is presently experiencing can be controlled and corrected by school administrators (principals, supervisors, coordinators). She has experienced minimum involvement of the principal, assistant principal and fellow teachers. There is a need for school administrators to interact with first-year teachers within the classroom setting. This will enable them to understand some of the difficulties first-year teachers are experiencing in their effort to improve students' academic achievement. She feels that teachers are not being rewarded by principals when they are not given the opportunity to attend in-service workshops and conferences. Danika concluded, "As a result of negative attitudes on the part of principals, teachers are not encouraged to raise their mediocre level of professionalism."

Classroom Discipline

Danika is thrilled that she has been fortunate not to have experienced any discipline problems with students in the 11 primary classes that she meets weekly. In reading her journal, it is obvious that discipline has not been a priority concern. However, during the observer's visit to a first grade class on February 3rd, a ruckus erupted behind Danika's back while she was stapling student made books. Two boys, whom I will call M and K seated in the row farthest away from Danika, had a shoving, pushing, and boxing good time. This accelerated into chair pushing, punching, and stomping on each other's feet. Noticing that the teacher was oblivious to their antics, one held the other in a neck hold while eyeing the observer on the side. This behavior continued for a period of 10 minutes and included kicking and slapping. As Danika got closer to their desks, the behavior subsided and each boy complained about the other to her. While Danika was listening to M's and K's complaints, Juan and Ida were playing under their desks, and Illya and Don were pulling at each other's pockets. These classroom behaviors were not observed by Danika which is a possible reason why she did not list classroom discipline as a priority concern.

No discipline problems were observed during the 40 minute videotaping of her Spanish lesson with second graders. "With-it-ness," which was not exhibited during the classroom observation in February, was definitely displayed in the

April videotaping. Her enthusiasm, thorough preparation and physical presence contributed to the responsiveness of students which resulted in no observable discipline problems.

Motivating Students

In her journal, Danika wrote:

The subject that I teach, Spanish, is one that motivates the younger students. I have observed that, given the opportunity, students are always motivated to explore something unknown to them. Of course working with primary students with a short attention span, delivery of instructional concepts must be brought to life. I find the use of manipulatives and pictures aid immensely in making a short, simple lesson exciting.

Danika is also tutoring some fifth grade students who are reading on the third grade level. Their classroom teachers contend that these students have difficulty mastering vocabulary and comprehension skills. Being relationship-oriented, Danika concluded that the methods used to teach these students lack motivation which is the key to learning. "Without motivation we cannot expect our students to take the initiative to set goals and reach them," she noted.

Activities chosen to motivate second graders in her Spanish lesson on the parts of a house were interestingly introduced by Danika with a sparkle in her eyes and a bounce in her step. She tells this story:

Last night a kindergartner came over to my house

and I asked him to draw some pictures of the different rooms in his house. I knew you'd be interested in seeing his drawing and learning the names of all the rooms in a house in Spanish.

With that positive, encouraging introduction, her lesson proceeded by having students label the parts of the house in Spanish. Excellent prompting techniques were used throughout the lesson. In viewing the videotape, Danika expressed displeasure with the sound of her voice.

Enthusiasm is a word that describes Danika's relationship with her students. This causes her to bring the subject matter alive for them.

Individual Differences Among Students

One of the areas of greatest awareness highlighted throughout Danika's student teaching was to always consider each child as an distinct individual. Student teaching provided her with many experiences to cater to the individual needs through instructional and social activities. In our multi-cultural society, students come to school from varied backgrounds which include French, Arab, Spanish, Crucian and Eastern Caribbean. In her journal Danika stated that this variety demands that she must allow for greater individual attention, sensitivity and cultural awareness for each ethnic group.

As a teacher of a special subject like Spanish, she meets each of 11 primary classes once a week for 40 minutes. This schedule does not permit Danika time to plan for individual

differences that she is aware exists in each of her classes. Large group instruction appears to be the only way she can meet the objectives of the Foreign Language department. At the beginning of the school year, Danika received a course outline from the Foreign Language Coordinator. She related the following during a group meeting with other first-year teachers:

Most administrators do not provide a comfortable environment for their new teachers in comparison to their experienced teachers. They need to provide a guide to tell you what your duties are. We are concerned today that our students are not taught skills and when new teachers do not have guides, precious time is wasted. The school administrators had no foreign language guide for me. When I finally received the outline from the Foreign Language Coordinator, it was a two-page outline listing ONLY activities for students on grade levels K-6. With the help of my sister, I was able to set up grade level objectives before I started teaching. I was appalled that administrators expected so much of teachers without giving directions or setting expectations.

Assessing Students' Work

Danika said, "The assessment of students' work is very valuable to me and should be to all teachers." In her journal, she stated that her assessment is mostly through

oral expression with minimum written expression. She continued, "I have found through my experience that oral interaction is most suited for the subject (Spanish) that I teach because I can hear accurate/inaccurate pronunciation and usage of the language being learned." Her students are not grouped according to ability. Meeting primary students for a 40-minute period once a week Danika places emphasis on student motivation and development of self-esteem through the learning of a foreign language. During the six month study of first-year teachers, I noted that Danika did not place great emphasis on grades. She was a nurturer whose fun activities used to achieve learning of the Spanish language were of greater importance than letter grades. The statement, "In all situations my students are treated fairly," says something about her concern for fairness and the accent placed on the joy of learning a foreign language. In addition to formal tests, homework assignments are valuable assessment instruments. She receives feedback from parents who express pleasure at their children's correct usage of Spanish words and phrases at home. This feedback helps her to determine whether or not students have mastered a particular concept, whether she should reteach it, or move on to a new concept. Assessing students' work is a procedure she carries out on a regular basis. Letter grades are required by the Department of Education; therefore, she has developed a grading system based on the objectives she had set up for her classes.

Relationship With Parents

As a rule, Danika does not initiate parent conferences but is available when parents request them.

Usually, I would call home or send frequent notes informing parents of their child's development after the fourth week of the commencement of the school year. Although I make it my business to go all out for students, I feel it is the parents' responsibility to respond to my notes. They usually don't respond unless there are negative consequences. In this small community, it is not unusual for parents accompanied by their children to stop me in the supermarket or after school when I'm leaving the premises to ask, "How is my child doing?" They are obviously satisfied with a brief positive response. I don't know, but as a special teacher, I feel some parents are led to believe that special subjects (Art, Music, Physical Education & Spanish) are unimportant.

Danika is very pleased that whenever parents engage her in conversation, they brag about their children's application of their Spanish instruction at home.

Organization of Classwork

Danika must organize classwork that can be transported to each of the 11 classes she meets weekly. Her enthusiasm and motivation for each preparation was noticeable during the classroom observation and videotaping. In the 40-minute

periods allotted to teaching Spanish, she organized well for large group instruction. Reflecting on her first year as an itinerant teacher, she commented that

having a classroom for foreign language instruction would have facilitated my organization for each of the different grade levels. I would have been able to prepare bulletin boards to enhance instruction, maintain files of instructional materials and in general provide for a more conducive learning environment.

Insufficient Materials and Supplies

This is the first time that Spanish has been taught to primary students at the Calypso Avenue Elementary,. Thus Danika either had no available material or what was available was too advanced for these students. No appropriate text or supplementary materials were available for student use. In her journal, she continued:

I have had to and am still creating my own materials for learning (reading sheets for comprehension, worksheets, etc.) adapting and transposing other subject area materials to meet my objectives. Consequently, it is time consuming and costly. Such a problem can cause some teachers to just depend on the chalkboard.

It was very obvious during the classroom observation and videotaping that Danika made maximum use of her homemade materials to enhance both lessons.

Dealing with Problems of Individual Students

With the exception of the incident with M & K, Danika did not seem to have any major problems with individual students. The time she puts into making original materials and the excitement generated within the 40-minute periods could account for her not having to deal with problems of individual students.

Danika's Recommendations

1. That veteran teachers demonstrate more warmth and caring toward first-year teachers in work related areas.
2. That veteran teachers share positive and successful ideas on instructional methods and supplemental materials.
3. That administrators have sufficient classroom materials (teacher's guides, books, etc.) ready for first-year teachers' use.
4. That administrators evaluate first-year teachers' instructional climate by observing them at least three times a year.
5. That the Department of Education issue salary checks to first-year teachers by their third week of employment.

Summary

Danika experienced success in disciplining, dealing with problems of individual students, organizing classwork, and motivating students. Her schedule as a foreign language teacher did not allow her to plan for individual differences. Insufficient materials and supplies for foreign language instruction of primary students was time consuming and proved

to be a major concern.

Key Participant Interviews

As discussed in Chapter III, the case study approach was supplemented by key participant interviews with central office administrators, a teacher educator, a member of the Board of Education, experienced teachers, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, secretaries, parents and paraprofessionals. This section presents an overview of the key participants who were interviewed in this study. The professional educator was asked to describe her perceptions and underlying assumptions concerning the degree of support necessary to retain highly qualified teachers. Parents were asked about their attitudes concerning positive and negative effects first-year teachers have on their children (i.e. "lack of experience," "lack of support," and "fresh, innovative ideas"). Secretaries and paraprofessionals were queried about how they perceive support for beginning teachers at their job levels. The central office administrators were asked if the St. Croix school district has a clear statement of performance expectations for first-year teachers entering the system and what plan the office had for empowering teachers to create and implement a support program for first-year teachers.

Overview of Key Participants

In order to learn the beliefs, concerns, perceptions, and underlying assumptions about support for first-year teachers, I interviewed 30 key participants. All interviewees

represent a fairly diverse group in the St. Croix school district. This representation includes one member of the Board of Education, one teacher educator, two central office administrators, two elementary classroom teachers, two secretaries, three coordinators, three parents, three reading teachers, three paraprofessionals, five assistant principals and five principals.

There were 24 female and six male interviewees. The number of years in their positions ranged from one to 17, with an average of six years. In terms of higher education, one had a Ph.D degree, nine a master's with additional hours, nine with a master's only, one a bachelor's with additional hours, two a bachelor's only, one a high school diploma with additional hours, five a high school diploma only, and two had less than a high school diploma. The majority of the interviewees (16) were born in the Virgin Islands, nine in the continental United States, four on islands of the Greater or Lesser Antilles, and one in Puerto Rico. Their ages ranged from 26 to 56, with an average age of 45 years.

Table 2 provides a summary of this information for each of the key participants. As is customary in qualitative studies, the real names of key participants are not used in an effort to protect their confidentiality.

Table 2

Overview of Key Participants (Interviewees)

Code Name	Sex	Place of Birth	Age	Degree/ Diploma	Position	Years in Position
Adel	F	St.X	52	MA	AP	9
Ann M	F	NC	33	HS	Parent	n/a
Anne	F	PA	45	MA+	AP	1
Barbara	F	NY	36	MA+	AP	8
Betty Lou	F	St.X	37	HS	PP	9
Betty	F	St.X	40	BA	ET	17
Crystal	F	Ill	52	MA+	RT	5
Elroy	M	St.X	32	MA	AP	1
Hibiscus	F	NC	55	BA+	RT	4
Joe-Blo	M	St.T	41	MA	PR	7
Johnny	M	St.X	49	MA+	ADM	3
John B	M	St.X	43	MBA	BOE	10
John W	M	St.X	50	BS	PR	13
Lottery	F	St.X	43	MA+	COOR	5
Ms. Love	F	St.X	42	MA+	PR	3
Marie	F	St.X	51	MA	PR	8
Marianne	F	St.X	36	HS	SECY	17
Merlin	F	TOB	47	MA	ET	8
Princess	F	DOM	34	- HS	PA	n/a
Re	F	St.X	50	MA+	PR	2
Rene	F	AL	49	MA+	ADM	2
Sandra	F	NY	26	HS+	PP	1
Sandra D	F	NEV	56	HS	PP	9
Sara	F	St.X	34	-HS	PA	n/a
Scorpio	F	NY	40	Ph.D	TE	5
Sharon	F	St.X	44	MA+	COOR	4
Simba	M	St.X	46	MA	COOR	2
Susan	F	MASS	49	MA	RT	10
Theodosia	F	PR	52	HS	SECY	7
Vera	F	JAM	43	MA	AP	1

AP= assistant principal; PA= parent; PP= paraprofessional; ET= elementary teacher; RT= reading teacher; PR= principal;

ADM= central office administrator; BOE= board of education;
COOR= curriculum coordinator; SECY= secretary; TE= teacher
educator.

**Beliefs, Concerns, Perceptions and Assumptions
about Support Needs of First-Year Teachers**

The key participant interviews will be presented in alphabetical order by groups beginning with assistant principals and ending with the teacher educator. The individual key participants will also appear in alphabetical order under each of the group headings.

Assistant Principals

The five assistant principals interviewed recalled their experiences as first-year teachers, what type of assistance they would have appreciated during their first year, what kinds of adjustment problems first-year teachers are experiencing presently, what kind of support strategies they employ to help first-year teachers and their recommendations for a support program or system to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district.

Adel

Adel began her teaching career as a substitute teacher in 1954 after graduation from high school. The problems she encountered were the administration's lack of supervision and direction, support and assistance during classroom visits, and setting clearly defined procedures for injured students and discipline cases. She would have liked the principal "to

be more involved in the whole phase of educating the students."

At present, as an assistant principal, she has observed that first-year teachers are disillusioned because in student teaching they were placed with a successful cooperating teacher whose class was well-disciplined, motivated, and had pre-set high academic standards. "The first-year teachers receive a false message when they get a very opposite type of class their first year."

Adel felt that a support system would be more effective on an individual school level.

There should be some kind of handbook with definite expectations, rules and procedures for all schools. I recommend a mentor teacher program with a ratio of one mentor to six first-year teachers. The mentors would conduct demonstration lessons and have the freedom to assist first-year teachers because assessment and evaluation will not be a part of their function. First-year teachers will not be inhibited or feel threatened.

Anne

When I interviewed **Anne** she was just beginning her third month in the position of assistant principal. Prior to accepting this position she was an elementary teacher since 1965. The type of support system she recommended to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers is a program she labels, "partnering, - where experienced teachers are identified who have the skills to help first-year teachers

and at the same time realize a sense of teacher among teachers or team teaching."

As she reflected on her first year teaching she remarked, "I did not have support from the administration." She was never paid a visit from either the principal or assistant during her entire first year. Later in the year she developed friendships with other teachers who provided some sporadic support.

Anne's response to how first-year teachers presently cope further justifies her recommendation for the support system that she referred to as, *partnering*:

First-year teachers presently tend to cope with their frustrations by finding someone to talk to, by asking questions of their peers, by trying to bond with an experienced teacher who they perceive to be a strong role model and some take their frustration out on their families.

She intimated that often the first-year teacher's choice of an experienced teacher might not be one with a positive attitude toward support and guidance in instructional and procedural matters. Therefore, if the Department of Education can put in place a *partnering* program, it would be more economical than training master teachers, and the collegial interaction, feedback opportunities and shared know-how would also be immeasurable.

Barbara

The idea of peer support carries varied labels, based on the

background assumptions of the proposer. **Barbara**, an assistant principal for eight years, proposes the *helping teacher* concept. This concept is not to be confused with the *master teacher* concept. She sees the *helping teacher*, employed in a full time position, as a support bridge between the first-year teacher and the school administrators. This bridge will be achieved by having the *helping teacher* observe the first-year teacher prior to the principal's formal evaluation visit. The *helping teacher* role will not be threatening to administrators because the *helping teacher* will not evaluate first-year teachers but provide assistance through demonstration lessons and obtaining available curriculum resources. The *helping teacher* will also be assigned to teachers who have not satisfactorily met the requirements for probation and tenure. The *helping teacher* could be responsible for "initiating the off-island teacher to the Caribbean environment, because adjustment to this culture poses an additional adjustment problem for the first-year teacher entering the Virgin Islands school system." Barbara suggests that the *helping teacher*, like all other elementary teachers, attend refresher seminars on issues of the Caribbean environment, Health/Sex education and computer literacy.

Elroy

Elroy is in his first year as an assistant principal. He started his teaching career as a mathematics teacher at the junior high school level in 1969. He reflected on his

problems, successes and coping strategies during his first year of teaching.

I did encounter some problems as a first year teacher. The biggest problem was that I did not know what to expect. Even though all of us went through the system as students, I had to devise some strategies for discipline, learn to cope with the so-called homogeneous grouping and the various ability levels. That was very difficult. I just couldn't go in with one convenient lesson plan and just 'teach away.' In terms of some successes, I believe being a fairly young teacher, the students related very well to me as an individual. I am somewhat active in the community in sports and I used that as a avenue to get closer to the students. For instance, I coached a team during the lunch period, I refereed the games and the students got to know me in a non-threatening, informal environment, and as a result of that they confided and respected me more than might have been the case otherwise. Some coping strategies I used--- First, I always administered a diagnostic test to my math students. Second, when I found out the math levels I set up two groups and gave group assignments as much as possible. Even though I did not label the groups A or B, a competitive atmosphere was created, and, being perceptive, the students in one group were always striving to meet the standards of the other group. Teaching math seemed to be easier than teaching

some other subjects because students' enthusiasm for math was better than for some of the other subjects.

As a neophyte in the area of teacher supervision, he freely and forthrightly discussed the type of assistance he would have appreciated.

I would have liked to observe some experienced teachers, talk to them and find out some of the strategies they may have used which helped them to sustain themselves throughout the years. Research shows that many of the teachers leave teaching within the first three years and the fact that these experienced teachers have endured ten or more years, some even 20 is all the more reason for them to assist first-year teachers. It would have been good for me to observe a variety of teachers on a fairly regular basis and interact with them. Education is such that a first year teacher goes in and locks the door and "it's you against the world." We are in the business of imparting knowledge but ironically we don't share that same knowledge among faculty and fellow professionals.

Being on the job for six months at the time of the interview, he had observed three major adjustment problems of first-year teachers - reading grouping, familiarization with the basal reader and discipline. His specific support strategy has been to make himself available to first-year teachers and convince them that he is approachable.

Having recently come from the classroom, he recommends a

transitional period for first-year teachers and some sort of support system to last a year or two. At this point in his recommendations, he draws a parallel that neophyte lawyers are not expected to handle tough, complicated life or death cases during their first month or two on the job. He continued:

Yet teachers are "thrown to the wolves." After four years of education they are expected to know how to teach. I really believe there needs to be a pool of teachers available to support the first-year teacher. With a system of this type in place, first-year teachers would not get discouraged and leave the profession after two or three years. I don't know the specifics of how you'd work that out but first-year teachers need something to support them. Student teaching should be considered earlier in the college/university program, so if teacher education students are not successful or want to change majors they will not have wasted four years. I would recommend that they have this exposure to student teaching as early as their sophomore year.

Elroy seemed to enjoy being a participant in this study and his responses to questions were businesslike and straightforward.

Vera

Vera, who was just completing her first year as an assistant principal, observed that first-year teachers lack confidence, are not comfortable with content material or

department and school policies, and fear losing control of their classes by being inflexible and minimizing their sense of humor. She also observed that first-year teachers preferred to talk to another teacher rather than to a school administrator.

She talked about a federally funded assessment program at the junior high school where she was employed as a teacher. She related the following:

This was a peer support program whose goal was to help experienced teachers improve their teaching skills. Teachers volunteered to be observed by master teachers using observation charts compiled by Johns Hopkins University. The program was voluntary and started off with a bang but for some reason fizzled out and left bad feelings among the team of teachers who started out with positive attitudes.

Vera still felt strongly that a similar type of peer support program would be beneficial on a voluntary basis by a school or cluster of schools for first-year teachers during the initial year of the program. The program would need to be properly evaluated during the first year before being subsequently expanded to include all first-year teachers. On-going orientation to make first-year teachers more knowledgeable about school policies and a "buddy" system to assist with their problems and concerns were two other suggestions she recommended in addition to her strong advocacy for a peer support program.

Summary

The experience of these five assistant principals ranged from one year to nine years in this position. The recommendations gathered from these administrators included a handbook which would provide the first-year teacher with a ready reference about the expectations, rules and procedures of the school district. A mentor program with a suggested ratio of one mentor to six first-year teachers whose main function would be to model teaching strategies by conducting demonstration lessons. To establish collegial interaction and sharing, a partnering program was proposed and the idea of a helping teacher with stipulations that refresher courses in Caribbean History, health, sex education and computer literacy be required. Included in these recommendations was that student teaching begin in the sophomore year during their preservice program.

Board of Education Member

The Board of Education member recalled the frustrations experienced as a first-year teacher, what type of assistance he would have appreciated during his first year, what kinds of adjustment problems first-year teachers are experiencing presently, and the type of support program or system he would recommend to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district.

John B

John B, a member of the Board of Education, began his teaching career in 1969 as a math teacher on the high school

level. He taught Consumer Math which, in his words, "was the dumping ground for students with behavior and retardation problems and all the students who failed all the other math classes." The frustrations that he experienced were lack of effective personnel training and orientation by the system, lack of knowledge about the union contract and rules of the math department, and having no say in the choice of classes. He got the worst students. An overcrowded school and no personal on-campus orientation added to his frustration. John B told the interviewer about two of the coping strategies he used - talking over problems with other teachers in the math department and making a decision to remain in the teaching profession for no longer than two years.

His response to the question about what kind of assistance he would have appreciated during his first year was: (1) knowledge about the organization of the school system by means of a formal orientation at the school site to include a tour of the physical plant; (2) a policy manual; (3) a math departmental orientation and (4) assistance about how to deal with behavior problems. He basically felt that he was "thrown to the wolves" when placed in a classroom without the proper support at the school level from principal, assistant principal and peers in the math department.

As a current member of the Board of Education he has firsthand information about the adjustment problems

experienced by first-year teachers because they bring these problems to his attention.

Some of the adjustment problems first-year teachers experience today are similar to those I experienced 30 years ago with the personnel system, eligibility for the retirement system, receipt of a union contract, how to discipline students, how to prepare lesson plans and the general rules, regulations and expectations of the Department of Education. I must add that I have tremendous praise for the education division of UVI for the type of courses and teacher preparation students have been receiving in recent years.

When asked what kind of support system or program he would recommend to meet the need and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district, his response was based on his concern for the retention of first-year teachers and his commitment to making them feel a part of the organization. The following were John B's recommendations:

- (1) an entire first quarter orientation to include presentations from the personnel office, the retirement system and the business office;
- (2) discussions on the roles of the Counselor, Art, Physical Education, Music, Spanish, and Special Education teachers;
- (3) sessions on how to cope with parental problems;
- (4) formation of professional organizations, societies, chapters, or associations for the various subject areas. When these have been satisfied, then we can expect to retain

teachers who are committed to the teaching profession.

Central Office Administrators

The central office administrators recalled their experiences as first-year teachers, what type of assistance they would have appreciated during their first year, and what kinds of adjustment problems first-year teachers are experiencing presently. They were asked if the St. Croix school district has a clear statement of performance expectations for first-year teachers entering the system and what plans the office of the superintendent had for empowering teachers to create and implement a support program for first-year teachers.

Johnny

Johnny, a central office administrator, began his career in education in 1962. Although he lived with relatives, the experience of not receiving his salary on time was the biggest problem he faced in his first year. He shared the following information:

Knowing the children and their parents made it possible for me to cope with discipline problems. I think fellow teachers could have provided support but they were the ones who were least available. They were in their classrooms at the same time I was in mine. Experienced teachers should have been available to help in all areas especially in the areas of teaching techniques, discipline and should have been able to give different pointers to help shorten my adjustment period.

In discussing the kinds of adjustment problems first-year teachers recruited from off-island are experiencing presently, he alluded to the fact that the different culture, types of expectations, rules and regulations, and language problems are significant concerns. Johnny's main concern with the existing adjustment problems was summed up in this statement: "With these adjustment problems the first-year teacher falls farther and farther behind and the academic achievement of students is adversely affected."

When asked how the Office of the District Superintendent could empower experienced classroom teachers to create and implement a meaningful support system for first-year teachers, Johnny first reflected on his years as an elementary principal:

I made arrangements for first-year teachers to observe a teacher during their prep periods. I don't think the time had yet come for that idea because both teachers (the one observing and the one being observed) were very reluctant. In fact some would comment, "Who does she think she is?" Now the master teacher concept is a part of the union contract. We are presently (summer 1989) receiving applications from teachers who would like to be master teachers. These people would be empowered to help teachers in their individual schools.

With a sparkle in his eyes and a smile on his face, he continued his response to this question by saying:

I just got an idea of what could help first year

teachers. During the first six months of the school year, the first-year teachers could be granted one hour per week to visit with an experienced teacher. This would be an available option they could take advantage of and they wouldn't have to fight for it. However, the attitude of school building principals is of vital importance. Some principals might not be receptive to a teacher's request to observe another teacher based on the logistics of covering the class. This idea needs to be institutionalized throughout the St. Croix school district.

Johnny's response to the question about what kind of support system or program he would recommend to meet the needs and concerns of first year teachers in the St. Croix school district was:

I am thinking of specialists, coordinators, and supervisors who can do a lot to help the first year teacher since there are no more than 50 to 75 first year teachers annually. Transportation will be supplied to this group who have been withholding their services to teachers due to lack of transportation. The specialists, coordinators, and supervisors should make the job of the first year teacher more rewarding. Student achievement would also determine if the help of master teachers is paying off.

Rene

Rene, a central office administrator, began her teaching

career in St. Croix in 1962. Some of the problems she faced as a first-year teacher were a class of 50 students, mostly boys, slow learners, few materials, cultural adjustment, large number of over-age students and not receiving the first paycheck on time (three to four months after employment).

About her preparation for teaching, she said in all honesty, "My theoretical preservice courses did not prepare me for reality." She coped by sharing ideas with experienced teachers in the teacher's lounge and making needed materials.

When Rene was asked what kind of support system or program she would recommend to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers, her response was:

From an elementary standpoint, there is no one in place on the grade level other than the principal and by the time the principal gets to the first-year teacher formally or informally for an observation it is well into the first marking period. We should put in place a grade level curriculum person, a grade level chair whose responsibility is to work with first-year teachers as well as any other teachers who are now showing some deficiencies. The master teacher model is just coming into play as something the district wants to look at, which is a program to be implemented in the 1989-90 school year. The master teachers when selected will work with first-year teachers through a referral system. The details have not been finalized as yet. One of my concerns about support is inservice programs set up for

teachers to participate through a referral system. These programs could also help fill the gap left by not having a recertification program.

When asked how the Department of Education will know that the Master Teacher Program works, Rene responded:

Once the guidelines are in place, the master teacher program will rely on the principals to determine whether the length of time the master teacher assists the first-year teacher and the results of his/her second visit to determine if it is really working. The first-year teacher would also be relied on to express whether or not this six-week assistance was meaningful. The teachers within each school have a closer working relationship and very often you will find that they can share and express those concerns with each other as opposed to someone coming in periodically. If we could provide every school with a school-based support system for teachers within that building in addition to coordinators, etc., I think the results would be better because it becomes a family thing. We are more prone to share those things in-house rather than with the outside.

Summary

Central Office Administrators recommended that first-year teachers be assisted by specialists, coordinators and supervisors. The Department of Education initiated a master teacher program in September 1989, and first-year teacher

assistance will depend on referrals by building principals.

Coordinators

The three coordinators interviewed recalled their experiences as first-year teachers, what type of assistance they would have appreciated during their first year, what kinds of adjustment problems first-year teachers are experiencing presently, what kind of support strategies they employ to help first-year teachers and their recommendations for a support program or system to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district.

Lottery

Lottery, a staff development coordinator, began her teaching career teaching Spanish at a Connecticut senior high school in 1969. In recalling some of her experiences as a first-year teacher, one of her major problems was her size.

As a first-year teacher, I was viewed as a student even by other teachers because I'm slightly under five feet tall. I think I had a pretty good teacher education preparation at the college I attended. One of the things we learned was "Don't smile for the first two months". I was very strict, therefore I did not have as many discipline problems as I might have had. Yet while assigned to hall patrol I would get the runaround from students again because of my size. In terms of the academic portion of the teaching I was not very flexible when it came to mastering the required curricular

material. With what I know now I would pay more attention to the individual student.

In discussing what kind of assistance she would have appreciated in her first year, it was interesting to note that although she had discipline under control, she still felt that someone in a support role could have observed her approach and suggested that she "did not need to be so rigid." She expressed a preference for assistance rather than assessment for first-year teachers who feel threatened by evaluation and do not readily seek help. This help should be in an on-going relationship.

In her position as staff development coordinator she is very aware that "a number of persons teaching are in it as a job, not a profession." Lottery's recommendations stemmed from this premise.

I believe that an orientation program is a springboard for ongoing staff development during the year. There is a need for adequate staffing to carry out this suggestion. There needs to be more than one or two people working in staff development in order for programs to meet the needs of first-year teachers. If we are going to zero in on the first-year teachers, everyone needs to get together and coordinate the plans. New in the literature is the concept of school teams. Each school has its team to work on staff development projects. There is the problem of released time. School improvement teams is another idea as a follow-up

after orientation. There are plans for a separate orientation for first-year teachers during the 1990-91 school year. I'd also suggest a volunteer pool of teachers willing to assist and have their willingness known. Then first-year teachers can feel open enough to approach an experienced teacher they feel comfortable with. It is like choosing a team buddy.

Sharon

Sharon, a subject area coordinator for four years, conducts orientation sessions to familiarize teachers with her subject area, how to teach and how to group students to maximize goals of this subject area. Her response to the question, "What kinds of adjustment problems do you believe first-year teachers are experiencing presently?" was, "I really don't know who are first-year teachers, which is obviously not a primary focus in our system." Following this statement, she indicated that subject area coordinators would like to observe teachers for the purpose of helping rather than evaluating but "finding the time" to do this becomes a major impediment.

Perceiving the limited time available for coordinators to assist first-year teachers, Sharon recommended

a peer cooperative type arrangement where first-year teachers would be assigned a buddy who has five or more years teaching experience. If a first-year teacher knows that he/she has at least one colleague to turn to for advice with discipline problems, how to approach a

lesson and the myriad of other needs and concerns, then in the long run the system will have provided the beginning teacher with beneficial support.

Sharon is convinced that this type of peer support is more meaningful to first-year teachers than complete reliance on coordinators and administrators.

Her first year teaching experience which happened 19 years ago probably influenced her recommendation of a *peer cooperative type arrangement*. Sharon remembers returning home from college knowing she was armed with "all the knowledge" to be a successful first-year teacher. What a rude awakening! She was assigned to what must have been the worst class in the school with no help from the department chairperson or the school administrators. Sharon continues reflecting, "I had to do it all myself. I had to fend for myself and scrounge for materials and activities." Her recommendation, based on reflection of her first-year teacher experiences, demonstrates her concern about the welfare of future first-year teachers.

Simba

Simba, has been a subject area coordinator for two years. His first assignment was a core class of junior high school boys for whom they could find no teacher. Simba has a slight build and the boys in the class to which he was assigned were physically well-built and over-age.

When he walked into the classroom for the first time a student said, "Oh, he's not going to last very long. You

know the teacher we had before, we ran her." His response to this student was, "Oh, you did. Well I'm here to stay. I don't know who is going to run who." This statement evoked laughter from the class and marked the beginning of Simba's teaching career.

I felt very confused because coming in the middle of the year there were no curriculum guides and I had to check with other teachers on the grade level. The main emphasis was reading and the chairperson observed my classes and made very helpful comments.

Simba was joyful and ecstatic in reflecting on his experiences as a first-year teacher. He made it very clear that his preservice education program helped him to develop self-confidence. He also stressed the importance of being able to tune into oneself to achieve success as a teacher. "I took an humble approach and leveled with the students. I did not fool them or play highfalutin nor did I go to their level but was able to communicate with them."

In his response to "What kind of assistance would you have appreciated during your first year?" he said:

I would have appreciated a course outline or a curriculum guide to assist me with the remedial 7th graders. I would also have appreciated the assistance of an experienced teacher who did not dwell on my deficiencies but could have given me positive feedback. That type of assistance would have been a great help in making me a better teacher.

His recommendations for the type of support program or system to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers included setting in place a cultural program for local and stateside teachers, requiring the knowledge of the history of the USVI, conducting series of workshops on language and customs by local presenters, and explaining and clarifying the educational mission statement and philosophy for the St. Croix school district so that the first-year teacher will know the expectations of the Department of Education.

Simba's recommendations were formulated as a result of hearing comments from first-year teachers such as: "This place is behind the times" and "What's wrong with these people?". He sensed that these negative comments are baggage which first-year teachers take into classrooms and students are made to feel inferior about their culture and language.

Summary

Subject area and staff development coordinators suggested school improvement teams, a separate orientation for first-year teachers and a volunteer pool of experienced teachers to assist first-year teachers. They also thought that a peer cooperative arrangement would be beneficial to the welfare of future first-year teachers. In helping first-year teachers adjust to the cultural environment they advised that workshops on language and culture be required.

Experienced Teachers

The two classroom teachers and three reading teachers interviewed recalled their experiences as first-year

teachers, what type of assistance they would have appreciated during their first year, what kinds of adjustment problems first-year teachers are experiencing presently, how they cope with these problems, what kind of support strategies they employ to help first-year teachers and their recommendations for a support program or system to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district.

Betty

Betty, an experienced elementary teacher, began her teaching career in 1972. She remembers that the orientation exposed her "to what was expected in the classroom." She was given the keys to her classroom, and, as a first-year teacher she did not know where to go.

I got a key, a room number and no directions. I found out that the room was way at the back of the campus. There were very few materials and I had to buy most of the things like books and materials that I needed for my classroom. I felt very fortunate as a first-year teacher because my sister who was at the same school helped me to overcome my problems with discipline and an art teacher helped me out with posters that I needed.

Betty very candidly stated that during her first year she "would have appreciated being able to ask an experienced teacher for advice." Basic educational materials were not in place which made her feel that she was left to her own devices. If she did not have student teaching she would not

have been able to help herself.

Her first year experience has prompted her to recommend workshops in reading instruction and how to group students for effective learning. She added that "workshops for teaching mathematics and spelling would also help first-year teachers and having a department head or chairperson would be most valuable in assisting first-year teachers at the elementary level."

Crystal

Crystal, an elementary reading teacher, would like to sit down with first-year teachers weekly or every two weeks to discuss reading plans, strategies, ideas and demonstrate "how-to" lessons with small groups of students. Special workshops for first-year teachers should be conducted by individual or cluster schools. Fellow teachers especially those on the same grade level could double as sounding boards for first-year teachers' problems and concerns. She concluded that an open rap session would also permit first-year teachers to share difficulties being encountered and receive support from their peers who are in the best position to assist them.

Her recommendations about peer support for first-year teachers probably started 28 years ago in a second grade classroom in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She relied on a 5th grade teacher and an art teacher to help her with her lesson plans and visual aids, specifically mathematics' manipulatives. She chuckled about teaching all subjects with

no breaks to 40 or 50 students. In those days a radio show helped her to teach art and writing.

When asked, "What kinds of adjustment problems do you believe first-year teachers experience presently?", she responded:

Well, I think discipline and the paper load. Children today are a lot more hyper than they were 20 or 25 years ago. When they give students written assignments in all the subject areas they find themselves overwhelmed by the number of papers to be corrected.

In my judgment, her response applied in general to all teachers new to the school. My hunch that Crystal in her position as reading teacher had not been informed about first-year teachers on the staff were proving true as the interview continued. Ironically, the question, "How do first-year teachers cope with the problems of discipline and the paper load?" was answered, "I don't have very much experience with first-year teachers, so I'd have some problems answering the question about how they cope."

When asked the question, "If you assist first-year teachers, cite specific support strategies you employ to help them make the transition from student to professional?", her immediate response was, "No one has ever asked me to work with a first-year teacher." I asked her about a teacher who I knew was a first-year teacher two years ago. After recovering her composure, Crystal recollected that two years ago, the comprehension scores of this teachers' class showed

a definite weakness. Crystal expressed amazement at not being told that this fourth grade teacher was a *first-year teacher*. "It is very important for someone in my capacity as reading teacher to be made aware of first-year teachers on the staff." Hindsight permits her to realize that this teacher needed help not only with general teaching strategies, but most specifically in helping her to focus on comprehension skills because the reading achievement of her students suffered. As the reading teacher, she felt robbed of the opportunity to help a first-year teacher by not being informed by the administration of the first-year teacher's status.

Hibiscus

Hibiscus began her teaching career in 1962 in a second grade in Pembroke, Illinois. In recalling her first-year experience, the discipline problems posed by a student by the name of Joseph were most vivid in her mind. He not only made her life miserable but also the lives of other teachers, the bus driver, lunchroom staff, playground monitor, etc. Letters were sent to the superintendent to have him expelled. A letter sent to Joseph's father, who was the disciplinarian in the family, resulted in a major change in his behavior. Her other problems included inadequate supplies, finding different sources to get help and materials. She coped by buying materials and seeking the advice of other teachers.

Knowing that the school administration was aware of the magnitude of the discipline problem in her room, she would

have appreciated them handling the situation sooner. She would also have appreciated having knowledge of available materials and sources.

Hibiscus believes that the first-year teachers are currently experiencing problems similar to those which she experienced in 1962. They are having problems coping with discipline in the classroom and parents' attitudes concerning homework. First-year teachers are shy in their dealing with administrators since they have formed mental images of them as evaluators instead of assessors of their needs.

When asked what specific support strategies she employs to help first-year teachers make the transition from student to professional, she stated what her role entails:

I advise them about the materials available in the reading lab and offer to help them to make maximum use of these materials. I also advise them how to pace the children and the need for adequate review before the mastery testing. I help them to identify the students who need help in the reading lab.

For lack of a better term, Hibiscus recommended the buddy system. She visualizes an experienced teacher who will be a buddy to the first-year teacher.

Since the experienced teacher would have access to more sources or resource people, I feel that the buddy system should be established within each school. I think that the buddy system would provide the one-to-one teams of experienced and first-year teachers that could meet the

needs and concerns of entry level teachers.

She also recommended that the supervisors/coordinators conduct quarterly workshops in their area of specialization for all first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district.

Merlin

Merlin came up through the monitorial system on one of the islands of the Eastern Caribbean. A monitor went around supervising classes and correcting books. Monitors were required to continue their studies by attending classes on Saturdays from 9-12 noon. She considered 1960 as the start of her teaching career because that is when she received her first salary.

Her first-year teaching experience took place in a British-patterned educational system where she experienced more successes than problems for which she gave credit to the principal who came to her classroom daily and demonstrated lessons. "The principal's presence in my classroom eliminated a lot of the discipline problems." The big problems she faced on this small island was lack of equipment and materials that are so prevalent in the USVI.

I had to use the chalkboard, copybooks, and had to demonstrate creativity and utilize resources in the environment. In addition to help from the principal I had help from a teacher next door. She would tell me if she noticed that I was doing something well. When I started teaching we did not have individual classrooms. We taught in an open hall and everybody saw what you were

doing. You had to be on your Ps and Qs, there was no shirking of your duties. Your class couldn't be noisy either for they'd disturb the whole school. You had to have your class under control.

As the interview continued she listed the major problems of first-year teachers in descending order as she has observed them in recent years:

1. Lack of supervision.
2. Techniques for discipline.
3. Pacing of the lessons.
4. Grading practices.
5. Lack of dedication.

She feels that first-year teachers are left on their own with hardly any support, infrequent supervision, and no procedural orientation about plan books, scheduling, or reading grouping. She stated very emphatically when first-year teachers pick up bad habits their first year due to lack of support or supervision, these habits are hard to break. She editorialized on grading practices by telling the story of a first-year teacher whose classroom was next door.

This teacher asked me why I was spending so much time recording and averaging grades because all she does is 'watch the students and give them a grade.'

In standard American English, 'watch the students and give them a grade,' means that the teacher did not record grades for her students. She merely looked at each one of them and arbitrarily assigned a grade on each students'

report card.

Merlin thinks that most first-year teachers on their own initiative ask questions of experienced teachers and observe them on their own time. Others quit. She had a friend who quit after one month on the job because she did not know what else to try.

Her recommendation for the type of support program or system to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers is a supervisory or mentor teacher who would assist not assess first-year teachers. In this program the first-year teacher will have the opportunity to observe the best teachers in the district and discuss his or her needs and concerns.

Susan

Susan, an elementary reading teacher, started her career in 1974 in a first grade class. She felt unprepared, but an aide who had seven years experience at this grade level was helpful by giving suggestions. Susan reflected:

Student teaching really did not prepare me for the transition to full-time employment as a teacher. The planning and organizing of lessons were easy because these aspects were emphasized in student teaching. The problem was in carrying them through and dealing with a few children who were behavior problems.

She has observed that some major adjustment problems of first-year teachers include classroom discipline, lack of parental support, knowing the school routine, making the

transition from one subject to another, setting the tone of the environment, using instructional aids other than the textbook, balancing reading groups, and diagnostic-prescriptive teaching. "The first-year teachers appear to cope with their adjustment by finding out how other teacher's deal with similar problems during informal exchanges in the teacher's lounge and indirectly trying to follow patterns of experienced teachers." She did not seem to have any firsthand information about how first-year teachers cope. In answering this question, I had a feeling that the two coping strategies she offered were not specific to first-year teachers. The apparent lack of priority given to first-year teachers in the system surfaced again in her discussion of the specific support strategies that she employs to help first-year teachers make the transition from student to professional. She stated reading teachers at her school give support to all classroom teachers, which would automatically include first-year teachers. The support strategies are:

a brief orientation to familiarize new teachers with the reading series; reading teachers are also available to go to their rooms during reading time and assist them; keep in close contact with them; assist with particular reading skill; listen to them and help them make maximum use of materials. They are free to come in and use anything in the reading room. We do the testing and monitor whether individual students have mastered the reading level or not. We also monitor the unit tests.

We do this for all teachers.

These observations coupled with her own first-year experience led her to recommend some type of team approach on each grade level since there is seldom more than one new teacher per grade level. She also suggested some sort of an internship at each grade level. Actually Susan decided on the support of a mentor teacher because she visualizes a designated mentor at each grade level to observe, demonstrate, coach and assist the first-year teacher.

Summary

These reading and classroom teachers recommended that workshops in the content areas and classroom management be conducted by supervisors and coordinators. They visualized peer support by having assigned mentor teachers on each grade level to observe, assist, coach and demonstrate lessons for first-year teachers.

Paraprofessionals

The three paraprofessionals related their specific contacts with first-year teachers, the major problems areas that first-year teachers face, how they assist first-year teachers, and what kind of support program or system they would like to see adopted to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district.

Betty Lou

Betty Lou has been a paraprofessional for nine years at the same elementary school. Presently she is assigned to the office and her job primarily entails distribution of supplies

and materials. Prior to this she assisted primary grade teachers with small groups of students in reading and math.

When asked what specific contact she had with first-year teachers, her immediate response was:

I don't have much contact with first-year teachers. I prefer to work with experienced teachers because I feel that I can learn from them. Right now I am working in the office. I am in contact with first-year teachers who need supplies like books, crayons, and paper. I give it to them and answer any questions they ask about the classroom. I try to assist them to the best of my ability.

After getting a clearer understanding of the definition of first-year teachers and the focus of my interview, Betty Lou listed some of the major problems first-year teachers are facing: lack of patience in dealing with students, discipline, limited materials, and inability to teach reading and mathematics.

Regarding the role a paraprofessional plays in the support of first-year teachers, Betty Lou was asked how she assists first-year teachers. She said:

No, I really do not assist first-year teachers. I like to work with the older ones. I learn from them, I can also learn from the first year teacher. I worked with a kindergarten teacher who was a first year teacher who explained what she was doing and why. I assisted her by working with small groups of students in either reading

or math.

The last question of the interview was, "What kind of support system or program would you like to see adopted to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district?" Betty Lou thought awhile then answered:

I think that before first-year teachers are given full responsibility for their own classes, they should learn different views from experienced teachers. An on-the-job training period of about six weeks will be good before they are given a class of their own.

Sandra

Sandra, a paraprofessional of one year, is assigned to the reading room and to all third grade teachers. Just having completed her first year as a paraprofessional, she had some difficulty answering the questions and expressing her thoughts verbally.

From her experiences and observations in the reading room and in third grade classrooms, when asked about some of the major problem areas that first-year teachers face, she said:

Getting adjusted to the different reading levels of the Ginn Reading Series and understanding the sequencing of the criterion and mastery tests are major problems for first-year teachers. How to organize their daily plans in the small spaces provided in the lesson plan book are also problems. Every teacher in this school enjoys the services of a paraprofessional. Without

paraprofessionals first-year teachers would have additional adjustment problems.

Although Sandra gave the impression of being very happy to be a part of this study, she was very cautious in her responses due to the fact that she had just completed one year as a paraprofessional. When asked the question, "As a paraprofessional, how can you assist a first-year teacher?", her response was

I would assist a first-year teacher by informing him/her about the procedures, regulations and different activities that take place around the school. I would also assist in the assigned classroom by correcting papers, assisting with the reading groups, preparing bulletin boards and establishing a motherlike feeling toward the first-year teacher if I have been at the school longer than he/she. In general, I feel that whatever the needs of the first-year teacher, I should assist in the areas of my capabilities.

When asked about the kind of support system or program she would like to see adopted to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district, I gathered that the support system she would like to see in place would include:

- having experienced paraprofessionals assigned to first-year teachers.
- workshops to introduce first-year teachers to materials and teaching strategies on their grade

levels.

- stipends to cover the out-of-pocket expenses used for purchasing instructional material for their classrooms.

In trying to pull together her idea about quarterly visits to first-year teachers to see how they are faring and give them feedback on their performance, Sandra proposed that a panel of teachers with ten or more years of experience be established as a sounding board for first-year teachers. This special panel would not be involved with the probationary evaluation, but would focus its efforts in a helping situation that involves assistance rather than assessment.

Sandra D.

Sandra D., a paraprofessional for nine years, sees her role as helping teachers with discipline and managing small groups. The question about the kind of support system she would like to see adopted to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers was a bit difficult for her to conceptualize at first. As in all her other responses, I found that her concern for discipline was a major factor. Her response corresponded with the goals of peer coaching when she answered:

Each year discipline gets worse. It's kind of tricky because you can't discipline children anymore so it's hard for first-year teachers. The teacher next door should be able to assist with discipline on a continuous

basis.

Summary

In their unique relationships with all classroom teachers, the paraprofessionals recommended a six-week on-the-job-training program before first-year teachers accept full responsibility for their own class. They advised that experienced paraprofessionals be assigned to first-year teachers in addition to workshops on teaching strategies. Peer coaching and a panel of experienced teachers to act as a sounding board for first-year teachers were also included in their responses about the type of support system needed to meet the concerns of first-year teachers.

Parents

The interest in interviewing parents in this study was a result of a personal experience as a beginning teacher in an elementary school in the St. Croix school district 34 years ago. During the first week of school, a parent of one of my students requested that her daughter be transferred to another sixth grade section because I had no teaching experience. The principal did not honor the parent's request.

Veenman (1984) cites *relations with parents* as the fifth most frequently mentioned perceived problem of beginning teachers:

Beginning teachers complained about the inadequate preparation to establish and maintain proper relationships with students' parents. Furthermore,

beginning teachers complained about the parents' insufficient support for their ideas and parents' inadequate interest in the well-being of their children at school. (p. 156)

The three parents interviewed expressed an interest in the educational well-being of their children. Specific emphasis was placed on *love, obedience* and *support*. The parent with a high school diploma works outside of the home as a clerk and has two school age children. The other two mothers with less than a twelfth grade education are both full-time homemakers with three school age children each.

Princess

Princess' nuclear family of five lived in a one-story home. On bookcases in the living room is a set each of Encyclopaedia Britannica and Young Children's Encyclopaedia, a globe, plate of presidents, sports awards, academic awards and diplomas of her two sons. There are a television set and stereo. She and her husband have two sons aged 15 and 13 and a daughter who is nine years old.

When asked if any of her children had a teacher who had never taught before, she responded:

None of my children had a teacher who never taught before. We are from down island and don't know how many years they have been teaching. Really, I don't know if my children ever had a first-year teacher.

It was obvious from this response that Princess was satisfied with her children's teachers. She called the names

of many of her children's teachers and was sure that they had many years of teaching experience.

When asked, "Do you believe that a first-year teacher can be an effective teacher?" she expressed confidence and trust in teachers as professionals and the fact that they know what they are teaching. In Dominica, Princess went as far as the equivalent of our sixth grade in the United States educational system.

My last question stressed the kind of support she envisioned first-year teachers should receive from parents.

The teacher could get help from we, the parents. Their love, things like that. Teach the children to be obedient to the teacher. Keep themselves good. Things like that. Not to be rude, pay attention to their lessons, things like that. Yea, Yea, Yea, parents can go into classrooms to help so teachers could see the parents. Our presence there will show support. The Department of Education and parents have to work together, so that things will go the way it supposed to go. When children misbehave it causes the teacher not to care about them, but if we the parents would work together with them it would help the children. The Parent Teachers Organization arranges meetings with teachers to discuss what's taking place, but few parents and few teachers attend.

Her focus on parental support seemed to include parents' need to instill love, togetherness, and obedience in their

children. When children cause problems at school, she recommends that the teacher "knock" them. Princess' use of the word, "knock" means that she is in favor of corporal punishment. The interview ended with Princess being very proud of herself as a parent after boasting that she is not the type of parent who gives her child weapons to take to school.

Sara

Sara is a mother of three school age children in grades seven, five and three. The day of the interview I was greeted warmly by Sara. Her younger daughter, Jacqueline, ran in from the yard and gave me a big hug. She knew me because two of my student teachers had been assigned to her 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms. Her daughter, Mayra, a fifth grader, was seated in a chair across the living room. This parent had her seated there to be a part of the interview because in the words of the mother, "She is a very rude girl and not doing well in school." Tears came to her eyes when she alluded to the fact that her marital problems might be the cause of Mayra's problems at school. She also referred to Mayra as stubborn.

In her response to the two questions: "Have any of your children had a teacher who never taught before?" and "Do you believe that a first-year teacher can be an effective teacher?", she thought for a few moments and said "Not that I know of. I don't think that teachers teaching for the first time can do a good job teaching

my child."

When I asked her, "Why?", she responded:

I say that but it could be possible, but it depends if she went to college or whatever. I really had no experience about that with my kids. It could be and it could not be because some teachers are good and some are not. My son had a teacher who the other teachers didn't like because of how she graded the students. But my son was a nervous child and she treated him nicely. My daughter had a teacher who didn't help her at all. If you are a teacher you are supposed to help the students and show them. My husband and I went to school to talk to the teacher. My daughter is 11 years old and very rude.

Sara herself dropped out of school in the ninth grade and wanted her fifth grade daughter to witness the interview with a university professor as a means of helping her to know the importance of doing well in school. Sara was so pleased and ecstatic at having been chosen to participate in this study and the attention that goes with it.

Hesitating for a few minutes after being asked the question, "What kind of support do you think first-year teachers should receive from (a) the Department of Education? (b) the University of the Virgin Islands? and (c) parents?", she stated:

The support I think the Department of Education should give to first-year teachers is to provide experienced

teachers to help them. The experienced teachers should get together and show the first-year teacher to help them to build up and get along with each other. This sharing could set an example to the students, so they are not set apart as some being better than others. Parents should help by: try to speak to the children; teach them to obey and respect the teacher; tell them to do their homework; learn the rules; go to school and sit down and talk with the teachers when there are problems; conference with parents and teachers; and keep the lines of communication open. For example, my child can be rude to the teacher everyday and if the parents don't show interest the teacher could put her aside and pay her no attention. Right now I have an appointment to go to school and meet with the teacher and counselor because Mayra's grades are very low.

Sara, with a ninth grade diploma, is concerned with the fate of her school age children.

Ann M.

This interview was conducted in the assistant principal's office at Melody Road Elementary school because it was a convenient arrangement for this parent. **Ann M** is the parent of two school age children ages five and ten in grades kindergarten and fourth.

My kindergarten child has had three teachers since she started school this year. Her present teacher is new to Melody Road Elementary, but I don't know if she is a

first year teacher. All my 10 year old daughter's teachers have been experienced.

During the interview Ann M. stated that she didn't know whether her daughter's teacher was a first-year teacher or just teaching for the first time at this school. I found out from the personnel list that the third teacher Ann's daughter had during this year in kindergarten was in fact a first-year teacher.

Ann M. expressed confidence in a first-year teacher's effectiveness in her answer to the question, "Do you believe that a first-year teacher can be an effective teacher?"

Yes, I believe so. Well I am originally from the states and you have on the job training and you do get evaluated while on the job. If the person wasn't capable they wouldn't have allowed them to graduate and been given a certificate. Just like on any other job you have to learn from experience. You can't go in with all the knowledge, you have to learn as you go.

Her attitude toward first-year teachers was very positive, as she continued:

Well, if you know your child has a first-year teacher, you should be a little more concerned and should keep in touch with that teacher and have good rapport. So you and your kid will get to know the teacher better, so that anything that happens in the classroom your child can come back and tell you about it. Then the teacher can sit down and talk to you about it. A lot has to do

with the parent's involvement with the classroom work and homework.

About two weeks after this interview, I called Ann M to inform her that I learned her daughter's third teacher this year was a first-year teacher and to inquire if this information would alter the responses she had given during the interview. She was very upset. So before responding to my inquiry, she proceeded to tell me that her daughter would be repeating kindergarten because of her short attention span. Ann M. was concerned that she was not notified about this deficiency earlier in the year, but realized that the problem stemmed from the number of different teachers in this class during the year. However, she did not feel that this information would alter her attitude about first-year teachers, but she did question the effectiveness of the early childhood curriculum.

What kind of support did Ann M. think first-year teachers should receive from (a) the Department of Education? (b) the University of the Virgin Islands? and (c) parents?

First, from the Department of Education, the teachers should have all the basic equipment and supplies they need to teach these kids. They need support from the Department of Education if they have a problem they should know that the employer is backing "me" since they gave me this job and have trust and confidence in me. Like on the job training of some sort. If first-year teachers don't take time out to read and study current

literature in the educational field, they won't keep up to date about what's going on. So the department should have seminars about monthly or quarterly. The salaries need to be raised in order to get better qualified teachers. Many teachers come from the states because this is a vacationland and it is warm all year round. A number of them don't care about students in their classrooms, they come because it's paradise. The Board of Education should evaluate new teachers by observing their performance and talking to parents of these kids and talk to the kids themselves. This could include conversation with other teachers also. The principal should keep a closer eye on the first-year teacher and ask about their needs and concerns. First-year teachers should feel free to talk to the principal, who should have an open door policy to discuss whatever problems they might have. Experienced teachers should also have "open doors" knowing that this is the teacher's first year. The Parent Teacher Association also can help by introducing all first-year teachers to the parents and to other teachers who might not know they are first-year teachers. A session should be held early in the school year to allow parents to ask questions of the first-year teachers and the first-year teachers to ask for help and support from individual parents or the association. I feel strongly that radio, television and newspapers can help by advertising the PTA meetings and not rely on

just a note from school. If these meetings are constantly announced on the radio, television and newspapers the attendance at meeting might be improved.

Summary

The parents' views about support they felt necessary for the success of first-year teachers included the assistance of experienced teachers, sufficient materials and supplies, monthly or quarterly seminars, and more careful supervision by principals. They felt the role parents should play in the support of first-year teachers is to teach their children to respect and obey the teachers and keep lines of communication open between home and school.

Principals

The five principals interviewed recalled their experiences as first-year teachers, what type of assistance they would have appreciated during their first year, what kinds of adjustment problems first-year teachers are experiencing presently, what kind of support strategies they employ to help first-year teachers and their recommendations for a support program or system to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district.

Joe Blo

Joe Blo, a principal reflecting on his first year as a teacher described his initial stage as a freshman teacher as neither positive nor negative but one of bewilderment. He was very resentful of his administrators who he considered

very "picky" because they crossed every "t," dotted every "i," red inked his plan book, and checked his handwriting on the chalkboard. He later accepted these standards and expectations as constructive criticism.

Before discussing the type of assistance he would have appreciated during his first year, he remarked that administrators in this school district express their school management style in this fashion: "First-year teachers come trained with degree in hand and it's not my responsibility to help them make the transition or adjust to their first year."

Joe Blo's first-year teacher experiences and his seven years as an elementary school principal inspired him to strongly promote peer relationship as a type of support system. He is confident that this can be achieved by providing release time for experienced teachers. Peer assistance provides a challenging, rewarding and positive experience which is free of administrative assessment. "The idea of empowerment of teachers is not a new concept," says Joe Blo as he reflects on an assignment during his first year to a program committee for which he did not volunteer. "I, with the support of the committee members, put on a beautiful Transfer Day program which is an available resource for other elementary teachers and is located in the archives of the Enid Baa Library on the island of St. Thomas, USVI." His first-year teacher experience proved that trust, support and collegiality of peers allowed Joe Blo to improve his skills.

John W.

John W. began his teaching career in 1963 as a sixth grade teacher and assumed duties as an elementary school principal in 1976. As a first-year teacher, he was shocked at the low performance level of the sixth graders whose primary language was Spanish. Three sixth grade teachers collaborated and turned a problem into a success by departmentalizing on their level. As a principal, he remembers being critical of the fact that his principal never visited his classroom except when invited, and admits that he is experiencing the same inability to observe and assist teachers that he abhorred as a first year teacher. "I spend too much time involved in non-instructional duties."

He seemed to welcome the opportunity to answer the question, "What type of assistance would you have appreciated during your first year?"

Ah! I needed more input from the supervisors. I went in expecting one thing and ran headlong into something altogether different. First, I should have gotten a true picture of what the students were like. Supervisors should have come into my classroom to actually work with me, not simply to observe, and give me some idea about how to handle particular problems with which they were already familiar. Grouping for reading would have been a tremendous help. Now that we have the Ginn program grouping for reading is automatic.

He placed first-year teachers in two categories when

discussing the kinds of adjustment problems they are presently experiencing:

There are two types of first-year teachers, one new to the island and the local. The greatest adjustment problem of the former group is understanding the language of the students. Another adjustment is to the system which is so different from anything they might have learned about stateside. For example, they come with the idea that the principal can fire them, so as first year teachers they are completely puzzled by what they see tenured teachers doing or not doing. This adds a great deal to the morale problem. The local people, on the other hand, face drastic changes that have taken place between the time they leave high school and begin their teaching career. They expect things to be the same as when they left and they are in shock at the dramatic changes.

John W., in his position as principal, shared his views on how he observes first-year teachers coping.

Well, there is a complete feeling of helplessness about receiving their paychecks late, some have gone to the bank to borrow money and others have simply gone back home. Those who stay spend a great deal of time convincing landlords that they are going to get paid. I have even been asked to write a letter of assurance to a landlord. In coping with their adjustment to the community there are the hidden prejudices to overcome,

because if they are white they are often perceived as intruders and if they are black are perceived as wanting to take over. In both cases this is true. The ones who are willing to fit in suffer because of this perception. I can't see that anything can be done by first year teachers to cope with the lack of administrative support. This has to be handled by the administration. We need more administrators. Most first year teachers don't know how to handle discipline in this culture. When they find out that most of the parents believe that teachers should punish children by using corporal punishment they usually refer the disruptive students to the office. Teachers who don't believe in corporal punishment find other ways only to realize that many students only respond to the 'belt.'

As the interview came to an end, John W. gave the impression that he was extremely happy for an "ear" to relate the fact that he is bogged down with non-instructional tasks and needs an assistant principal to supervise the intermediate grades. His recommendations for the kind of support system or program to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district were basically placed in the sphere of the subject area coordinators.

They ought to squash the idea of the initial orientation of all teachers at the beginning of the year and go back to having all new teachers meet with the building

principal. A support system needs to use the expertise of the subject area coordinators who can move from school to school. They could sit and talk with the new teachers, find out their problems and meet together to consolidate all information gathered and develop a program that they will take back to the first year teachers within two weeks. Their program plan will be discussed with first-year teachers and input elicited from them. The coordinators will then set a schedule of visits to first-year teachers. I am saying this knowing full well that the coordinators have the same problem as principals. They get bogged down in non-coordinator type things. The Department of Education needs to make a point of saying, 'this is what we have to do.' The Department of Education needs to drop this open-ended flowery type of curriculum we have adopted from the states. After 20 years we should tell ourselves that if it is not working in the states it probably won't work here either. The teachers need to know the expectations of the department. We need a second assistant principal at this school. I need somebody to supervise the intermediate grades while I mess around with the non-instructional tasks.

Marie

Marie, a principal for eight years, began her teaching career in 1960 as a substitute teacher in a third grade class consisting of 57 students. She was confronted with negative

and hostile attitudes of experienced teachers. She recounted the following first year experience:

I had to teach myself what I needed to know. The majority of experienced teachers were non-degreed at that time and were jealous because I had a bachelor's degree in elementary education and should know what to do. The principal sent me to observe in the classrooms of two experienced teachers who refused to allow me to enter their classrooms, so I didn't get the opportunity to learn from them. I would listen to what was happening in my neighbor's classroom and pattern her teaching strategies. My preservice program in undergraduate school did not prepare me for teaching.

In her response to, "What kind of assistance would you have appreciated during your first year?", she listed: observing a master teacher; involvement in a peer coaching program; being observed more often; receiving feedback; having her principal inquire about how she was coping.

As a result of her experience, she stated that she does the things for the first-year teachers on her staff that she wished for herself as a first-year teacher. With this goal in mind, she recommends that first-year teachers "observe master teachers."

Ms. Love

Ms. Love, who started teaching in 1968, was not at all prepared for the situation in which she was placed. The reading level of her students ranged from non-reader to above

grade level while the textbooks were written at grade level. Looking to the ceiling and constantly motioning with both hands, she admitted:

I found a lack of support from the administration, whose attitude was that I came from college and I am supposed to know what I am doing. I was observed in October and received no feedback until February or March when I saw a copy of the report. When I asked how I was doing and what I needed to do to improve, the answer was always, 'You are doing OK'. I coped with the lack of materials by consulting with more experienced teachers who assisted me in setting up five reading groups and shared materials with me.

She recommended that a support system include frequently planned discussion groups with first-year teachers and a master teacher program staffed with experienced teachers who have expertise in each of the curricula areas. She specifically stated that these master teachers should share and assist but not impose old methods and stifle the first-year teacher.

Her recommendations came as a result of her reminiscing about what kind of assistance she would have appreciated as a first-year teacher. She wished for a more understanding attitude from her administrators. She felt that her teaching career could have been more successful if the administrators and the experienced teachers portrayed an attitude of camaraderie.

Re

Re, a principal for two years, started her first year teaching in a fifth grade classroom with more than 30 over-aged students whom she perceived as having no respect for authority. They also had no commitment to do or complete assignments, were excessively absent and/or tardy, and showed a disinterest in school. The lack of parental support only helped to magnify these problems.

She felt that the basic adjustment of first-year teachers new to the island is acculturation.

Many do not understand the basic culture that exists here. I think when the Department of Education recruits, there needs to be a more indepth explanation of what teachers are going to meet or expect. The local first-year teachers on the other hand need to get a good grasp of relationships in terms of how to deal with students from the varied backgrounds i.e. local Crucian, Puerto Rican and families from the islands of the Eastern Caribbean.

The second major adjustment problem Re observes is that of discipline. A first-year teacher's only recourse is sending disruptive students to the principal's office. The third adjustment problem experienced by first-year teachers is their heavy reliance on textbooks.

I feel we are in an era where students should be learning more from discovery and doing in the classroom rather than gearing everything to the textbook page and

assigning homework. They should be given assignments that are extensions of the classwork. If classwork is extended and related into community awareness then youngsters will not say that school is boring.

Some support strategies that Re employs as an elementary principal are an open door policy (although first-year teachers do not readily avail themselves of the opportunity to seek assistance), faculty meetings, the PTA, and the availability of resources and special teacher assistance. I could not elicit specific examples from her about the type of support she gives through the availability of resources and special teacher assistance.

In response to "What kind of support system or program would you recommend to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district?" she expressed strong feelings for a "good handbook that is universal for the first-year teacher to guide him/her about the proper procedures or who to refer certain situational problems to."

Inservice programs for first-year teachers was a second recommendation that she envisioned being developed by the Department of Education on an annual basis to

let first-year teachers know they will get support throughout the year. Coordinators and supervisors will play an integral role in this support as they help first-year teachers to plan creative and innovative ideas within each discipline and subsequently develop less

reliance on textbooks.

A major thread that Re wove through the entire interview was the need to "develop a segment for cultural exchange and understanding so that each ethnic group understands and tolerates the culture of another person." She also offered three more suggestions:

1. That the Insular Superintendent or her assistants or even the commissioner plan to meet with first-year teachers once or twice a year to listen to their concerns and better plan to make their transition period less traumatic.

2. That the Department of Education give consideration to cutting down the bureaucratic red tape in processing Notification of Personnel Action (NOPA) which will result in first-year teachers receiving their first paycheck in a shorter time than eight weeks; and

3. That available materials, supplies and the physical plant are in readiness for the first-year teacher.

Summary

Principals, in their role as instructional leaders, recommended utilizing the expertise of the subject area coordinators to help first-year teachers plan creative and innovative lessons. To implement a peer relationship support system they suggested release time for experienced teachers to assist first-year teachers. Other recommendations included the master teacher program, a handbook, inservice programs and adequate materials and supplies.

Secretaries

The two secretaries related their specific contacts with first-year teachers, the major problems areas that first-year teachers face, how they assist first-year teachers, and what kind of support program or system they would like to see adopted to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district.

Marianne

Marianne has been an administrative secretary at the same school for 17 years. She is enrolled in the teacher education preservice program at the University of the Virgin Islands.

The specific contact that Marianne has with first year teachers is having them fill out personnel forms, distributing supplies and materials needed in their classrooms, giving information about paychecks, collecting daily classroom attendance records, taking calls from teachers who are absent and recording whether they will take personal or sick leave, giving information on the types of leave available, and replacing lost student texts.

The major adjustment of the first-year teacher to the real world of teaching as observed by Marianne is that of discipline. They cannot "manage" the students and send them to the office. Another problem area she notices in the classrooms of first-year teachers is grouping for the different levels for reading and math.

Marianne was the first administrative secretary when the

school opened 17 years ago, and she is very proud and confident about the way she assists first-year teachers with discipline problems without referring them to the principal.

I have been here for awhile as administrative secretary and have seen many different first-year teachers come in with discipline problems. I would take the students to my desk and try to figure out the problem. Most of the time I am very successful and take them back to class without having to take them to the principal. These are the real problems and I am pleased that I don't see these same students again. Maybe it's because I have been here for 17 years why they listen to me, but I have been able to help a lot of first-year teachers with their discipline problems. I give the teachers some suggestions about how to deal with them. I have even told teachers they must demand that the student stay in the classroom and do the assigned work, show them that they must listen to you. I assist in all personnel matters. I collect money for workbooks in the office or sometimes ask an aide to assist. We have a first-year teacher this year and she hasn't brought any complaints to the office. The aide assigned to classrooms helps to reduce adjustment problems of first-year teachers.

Her recommendations for a support system or program was for each school:

set aside a portion of each monthly faculty meeting for a question and answer period when the first year

teachers can bring up problems they are experiencing and ask for help. I believe that the guidance counselor should be an integral part of the support system particularly to conduct on-going workshops on discipline.

Theodosia

Theodosia, an administrative officer in the elementary school system for 7 years, introduces first-year teachers to the school routine, rules, regulations and general personnel procedures. She especially empathizes with first-year teachers from the U.S. mainland because of the hardships they face when their first paychecks are six to eight weeks late. "I sometimes prepare letters for them to receive food stamps until their checks are processed."

From her years of experience in this position at two different elementary schools, she focused on the first-year teacher's adjustment to the culture with specific reference to the Puerto Rican student and classroom punishment.

For example, Puerto Rican students when spoken to by an older person at home, are supposed to keep their heads down. They get into trouble with the new teacher who demands that they look at them when being spoken to. The first-year teacher considers the child to be rude, when the child's culture doesn't permit the behavior expected by the teacher. At home the child is not permitted to answer an elder when spoken to, not even a "yes" or "no" which is contrary to the teacher's demands. When they

punish a Puerto Rican child by putting him to kneel down and asking him to place his hands on his head, the child is sent to the office when he refuses to follow these directions. The child will refuse to follow these directions because the culture has trained him from the time he was small that if puts his hands on his head his mother will die.

When asked what are some of the major problem areas that first-year teachers face, her initial answer was shocking since she has worked in the system for 17 years:

That is difficult to say since I have not really, really, really been exposed to them. Most of them feel frustrated when trying to acquire affordable rentals, getting food stamps because their checks are so late. A teacher this year has been put out of two apartments because he couldn't pay the rent. His Notification Of Personnel Action (NOPA) wasn't processed. The statesider has difficulty because they don't have sufficient funds to support themselves for six weeks or more. This frustration could be the cause of some major problems that could affect the first-year teacher's classroom performance.

I got the distinct feeling that Theodosia is frustrated in her present working situation because at the end of her response to the question, "how can you assist first-year teachers", she became very emotional and broke down in tears.

Well, from my position I can be of help to first-year

teachers if I get help from school officials. With my years of experience, whenever I try to assist teachers I am told I am skipping channels or going overboard. I have been in the system for 17 years and in a position to explain to first year teachers the personnel procedures, the sick slips needed, the number of personal days and how to apply for leave. But I am told by the administration that I'm being too informative. Everything has to go through the principal.

Theodosia felt strongly that there should be a separate pre-orientation session for all first-year teachers and their building principals. They would learn about rentals, Department of Education expectations, procedures, rules, and regulations prior to the all-island orientation involving experienced teachers. From her experience with first-year teachers' adjustment problems, she expressed the desire to have the Department of Education construct housing to accommodate first-year teachers during their transition period, finding an apartment, and receiving their first paycheck which sometimes takes as long as eight weeks after date of employment. The pre-orientation session will permit concerns to be focused on such areas as transportation and high food prices. Throughout the interview, she stressed the importance of knowledge of the culture, and recommended that a separate program include an immersion in the culture of the students they will be teaching. At this point, apparently happy to have a forum to vent her dissatisfaction with her

principal, she again expressed her distaste for the negative manner in which the principal treats teachers, especially "insulting" them over the intercom.

Summary

The two secretaries interviewed had a combined total of 24 years of experience. They recommended that special faculty meetings be called to promote interaction between first-year teachers and experienced teachers. Orientation programs should be conducted to explain the expectations, rules, regulations and procedures of the Department of Education and special programs to immerse first-year teachers in the culture of the Caribbean. It was also suggested that guidance counselors conduct workshops on discipline since that is the major problem that secretaries face in their position in the front office. Knowing that first-year teachers do not receive their initial paycheck for eight weeks after employment, the secretaries recommended a housing program to accommodate these teachers during their transition period.

Teacher Educator

The University of the Virgin Islands provides both preservice and inservice programs to meet the needs of undergraduate students preparing for the teaching profession, teachers meeting Board of Education requirements for certification, and ongoing staff development seminars and workshops. A collaborative first-year teacher program can be an effective means of strengthening the performance of a

beginning teacher. This collaborative effort between the Department of Education, Board of Education and the University of the Virgin Islands is important in developing security and confidence that will improve teaching and encourage first-year teachers to remain in the profession.

This interaction provides university personnel with an opportunity for direct involvement in the transition from preservice teacher education to inservice teacher development and provides university faculty with an opportunity to study the specific daily needs of first-year teachers. (Varah, Theune & Parker, 1986, p.33)

The beliefs, concerns, perceptions and assumptions of a teacher educator on the faculty of the University of the Virgin Islands were vital to this study.

Scorpio

Scorpio is a mother of two who was born in New York City to Virgin Island parents. After attending St. John's University, her family returned to St. Croix where she began her teaching career as a substitute teacher in 1970. The Title I program of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act gave her an opportunity to complete her degree in elementary education by becoming a teacher trainee for three years. She worked with a master teacher 15 hours per week and attended the University of the Virgin Islands full time receiving both her bachelor's and master's degrees in education. She returned to the U.S. mainland to complete her sixth year certificate and doctorate degree in Education. Scorpio

enjoyed recalling some of her experiences as a first-year teacher.

I was fortunate to be teaching 4th grade because the intermediate supervisor at the time was very supportive. She came in several times during that year to observe, gave constructive criticisms and in addition to that my principal was very supportive. The principal came into the classroom periodically, gave comments on bulletin boards and inquired how I was interacting with other members of the faculty. My relationship with my fellow teachers was most helpful. I asked a lot of questions. We shared a lot of ideas. I became good friends with the reading teacher who came into my room and helped me with my reading groups. I think she was instrumental in my decision to going into the area of reading. Actually I didn't have any problems because I developed my own support system.

She was very pleased with the type of assistance she received during her first year, but felt that first-year teachers are presently experiencing major adjustment problems.

First-year teachers presently are experiencing just the opposite of what I experienced. It's a scary situation. New teachers go into the classroom with a lot of theory and some practice in applying theory to certain situations. They still need a support system, need people who have experience in this area, need to feel

they are a part of the system. If something like what the literature refers to as a mentor teacher or whatever can be put in place it will benefit the first-year teachers. Administrators do not always have the time to deal with new personnel but we do have teachers in the classroom who can serve as support systems and mentors to new teachers. New teachers need to know where they are going wrong and also when they are doing something correctly.

Her response to how first-year teachers are coping with adjustment problems was:

I wonder how many of them are coping. It's indicative of what's going on in the classroom. It's hit or miss and there is no follow-up, no feedback and first-year teachers are left to either *sink or swim*.

Inasmuch as Scorpio assists first-year teachers, I was interested in finding out what specific support strategies she employs to help them make the transition from student to professional.

As teacher educators, we at UVI on St. Croix try to develop an atmosphere where our students can call on us at any time to seek our assistance. It might be a good idea for us to have something formally in place. There is a transitional period and maybe there should be a year when we at the university can just go into the classroom and give first-year teachers a hand. However, this is done informally when students call me at all

times, "Help!!, How do I do this?" or "Come down, see what I'm doing", or "Am I on the right track?" So I think assistance is there. Some students take advantage of it and some don't.

The kind of support system or program that Scorpio would recommend to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district is included in her response.

I believe in establishing a collaborative situation within the Department of Education whereby there is a preservice immersion program at the beginning of the sophomore year. In this way all members of the staff (administrators, secretaries, paraprofessionals, librarian, school nurses) understand the importance of preparing preservice teachers to take on the task of teaching 30 students. If we can work as a team, the mystery of the transitional period can be minimized. First-year teachers must get accustomed to the climate of the school and all the personnel with whom they will be working. University professors should also follow-up first-year teachers on a scheduled basis after graduation. I'm thinking of a five-year program idea.

**Composite of a First-year Teacher
in the St. Croix School District**

The case study of five first-year teachers in the St. Croix School District revealed some primary needs, concerns, assumptions, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions. A first-year

teacher receives preservice education at the University of the Virgin Islands or a mainland college/university. The first-year teacher files an application with the office of the Personnel Administrative Assistant and is notified when there is a vacant position. Upon this notification, the first-year teacher is interviewed by the building principal, who either accepts or rejects the applicant.

The novice, an elementary education graduate, is hired as an elementary school teacher in one of three categories. He/She is hired either as a full-time teacher assigned to a self-contained classroom, or assigned to a special subject area (physical education, foreign language, music, art), or as a full-time substitute teacher assigned to classrooms of absent teachers on a day to day basis.

With great anticipation, the beginning teacher is anxious to know the rules, regulations and procedures of the school. The first-year teacher is ready to transfer all the newly acquired preservice skills to his/her very own class and is confident of being an immediate success. The reputation of the DOE, with regard to disbursement of first pay-checks, gives the first-year teacher reason to harbor negative feelings about working for months without remuneration. This is coupled with a strong perception of not being supported by the school administrators.

The thoughts of a first-year teacher turn from personnel matters and the idealism of immediate success to apprehension about achievements in the daily activities of student

instruction. Concerns, such as, how to set up reading groups, plan and organize daily lessons and motivate students are of primary significance since these experiences were mainly managed by the cooperating teacher during the student teaching experience. Knowing whether or not students are being evaluated fairly presents another worry to the already overwhelmed first-year teacher who turns to experienced teachers on the same grade level for advice. The fear of losing control of the class looms before the first-year teacher as an insurmountable hurdle. As the novice reflects on his/her student teaching experience while groping for practical techniques, he/she realizes that upon entering the classroom of the cooperating teacher this process of setting procedures and expectations had already been in place and was not observed. How to set the stage for observations and summative evaluation by the principal or assistant principal, when confronted with the range of apprehension, concern and worry, is often a determining factor whether or not this first-year teacher will stay in the teaching profession.

Isolation, within the cellular architectural structure of an elementary school, helps to magnify discipline problems. Discipline problems for the first-year teacher run the gamut from none to horrendous. It seems that the first-year teacher is being inducted into the profession on a "trial-by-fire" method initiated by the students themselves.

Motivation is a key element to students' successful engagement in the learning process. Being able to motivate

students is not a "piece of cake" for a first-year teacher on St. Croix. In seeking answers about how to arouse interest and establish appropriate student behavior, experienced teachers are turned to for help. Lack of planning, due to uncertainty of daily class assignments and problems with repeaters are other specific concerns of the first-year teacher.

Lack of support, assignment as a substitute teacher, no mid-year information on achievement level of students, no teacher's editions for textbooks, not knowing grade level expectations or having a handbook for beginning teachers all contribute to a frustrating year when dealing with individual differences among students. Credit was given to cooperating teachers during the student teaching experience for any success with individual differences.

The first-year teacher operates in a vacuum because it seems apparent that clearly defined goals and objectives, grading policy guidelines, mastery checklists, direction from school administrators, outdated tests, and class scheduling are issues which the St. Croix School District has not distinctly addressed. A nurturing, caring, and warm relationship established with the students combined with a concern for fairness aids the first-year teacher in "treading water" until the end of the year.

A first-year teacher's relationship with parents can be threatening. In the St. Croix School District, novices who are of the culture and who grew up in a "small town," and

closely knit extended family, do not find the relationship with parents to be one of their common problems. On the other hand, a beginning teacher who is recruited from off-island and is new to the culture has difficulty understanding the language of the parents and their views on how punishment should be meted out to their children.

In organizing classwork, the first-year teacher relies almost exclusively on his/her student teaching experience, which proves to be quite a different experience from the reality of being in charge of his/her own classroom. Coping with being hired during the second semester of the academic year causes additional stress and bewilderment for the first-year teacher who struggles to provide continuity in the absence of lesson plans, teacher's editions, detailed expectations, guidelines for organizing reading/language arts and math grouping. Organization of classwork is haphazard for those who find themselves in substitute teaching positions. Planning around the schedule of paraprofessionals who adhered to the schedule one-half of the time, required the first-year teacher to prepare two game plans each day.

The problem of insufficient materials and supplies range from being adequate to not having simple supplies such as staples, scotch tape, tacks, art supplies, and paper. Lack of textbooks for a vital subject area like mathematics and access to copy machines are also major problems. The creativity of the first-year teacher is definitely being tested in the St. Croix School District when the love of

teaching and the determination to succeed encourages him/her to make or purchase material needed to meet his/her instructional objectives.

In conclusion, a first-year teacher in the St. Croix School District faces a number of problems as he/she takes that important first step into the reality of the profession. The first-year teacher's concern within the organization could be linked to Maslow's hierarchy-of-needs theory. The concern about not receiving a first pay-check for months after commencement of duties represents the lowest order of needs to be satisfied -- that of food, clothing, and shelter. The need for love and belonging manifests itself in the expressed concerns about isolation--not being introduced to the faculty and staff, and the hostile attitude of some experienced teachers. When the lower order needs of security, association and self-esteem are satisfied, the first-year teacher can function as a self-actualized individual, respond to the realities of the teaching profession and perform a satisfying and successful job.

A detailed examination of the assumptions, concerns, beliefs, and perceptions of five first-year teachers and recommended support needs of 30 key participants will follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEVELOPING A TEACHER LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR THE ST. CROIX SCHOOL DISTRICT, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Research

The purposes of this study were:

1. to examine the assumptions, concerns, beliefs, and perceptions of selected first-year teachers;
2. to investigate the beliefs, concerns, perceptions, and assumptions that the central office administrators, a teacher educator, a member of the Board of Education, experienced teachers, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, secretaries, parents and paraprofessionals have about support needs for first-year teachers;
3. to explore the needs of teacher leadership at the classroom level where effective teachers will be trained to support each other through empowerment, communication, trust, vision and generativity; and
4. to design a model for teacher leadership which will promote the concept that teachers at the classroom level can exert leadership in providing support for first-year teachers.

What is it like being a first-year teacher? How do local cultural mores and customs impact on the support needs of first-year teachers in the St. Croix School District? What

type of teacher leadership model would best meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in a Caribbean cultural setting? What factors would contribute to the retention of first-year teachers in the public school system in the St. Croix School District? Are the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and underlying assumptions of experienced personnel significant to the success of first-year teachers? These represent the research questions that were examined during the study to provide the researcher with "thick description."

One of the most comprehensive reviews (Veenman, 1984) presented results of 83 studies that have appeared since 1960 on the perceived problems of first-year teachers. These studies were conducted in the continental United States, Puerto Rico, West Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, Austria, Switzerland and Finland. No study on the perceived problems of first-year teachers had been conducted in the United States Virgin Islands.

The case study of first-year teachers incorporated phenomenological and ethnographic approaches aimed at interpretive understanding. This naturalistic research explored the needs and concerns of five first-year teachers, described key participants' attitudes about support for first-year teachers, and will lead to a recommendation for a teacher leadership model based on the data analysis. In the preceding chapter eight of the 24 common problems perceived

by beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984) were chosen to describe aspects of the five first-year teachers' entry into the profession. The eight most frequently perceived problems were: classroom discipline; motivating students; dealing with individual differences; assessing students' work; relationship with parents; organization of classwork; insufficient materials and supplies; and dealing with problems of individual students.

The data collected on St. Croix, a Caribbean island with a population of 50,000, indicated that *dealing with individual differences* was the most serious problem the five first-year teachers experienced. Next in the frequency of perceived problems were *insufficient materials and supplies*, *organization of classwork*, and *assessing of students' work* followed by *dealing with problems of individual students*, *discipline problems*, and *motivating students*. None of the five first-year teachers considered *relations with parents* a major problem. This might be attributed to the fact that four of the five first-year teacher subjects grew up in this school district. Long association in the community would give these first-year teachers a link with parents, guardians, or siblings of their students which should enhance this relationship. It might also be attributed to their limited contact with parents. The first-year teacher from Pennsylvania, although a shy newcomer, kept the few visibly interested parents informed of the successes and weaknesses of their children and provided them with instructional aids

to use at home.

The needs expressed by first-year teachers varied according to their first-year teaching experiences. YESHA was as anxious to transfer her successful student teaching experience to her first class as she was to know about the rules, regulations and procedures of the Caruso Park Elementary School. Although she did not find lesson plans, roll book, report cards or teacher's editions when she took over the class second semester, she felt welcomed at the school. Reflecting on her first semester of teaching, she would have appreciated a workshop designed with simulated activities to help first-year teachers be more prepared for the reality of a dream come true, more information and explanation of the rules, regulations, and expectations of first-year teachers, and special workshops for kindergarten teachers to initiate them on the "how-to" of preparing kindergartners to meet the standards for promotion to the first grade.

MANASHA, unlike Yesha, had quite a disconcerting experience when assigned as a full time substitute teacher. But similarly, she expressed the need for the DOE to hold workshops to familiarize first-year teachers with the policies and expectations of the St. Croix School District. There is a need not only for improved communication between administrators and teachers within schools, but between the DOE and UVI to plan teacher placement based on the number of teacher education graduates. She was very disillusioned by

the DOE's policy of hiring degreed teachers in substitute positions when non-degreed teachers occupy full time positions.

JOHN, who began his teaching career 15 years after graduation, showed concerns about administratively approved options for dealing with various types of unacceptable behavior while maintaining teacher creativity, providing more adequate learning aids, stating clear grade level goals and objectives. He suggested that school administrators observe classrooms more often and give immediate feedback to first year teachers. John strongly recommended getting the St. Croix District out of the hands of top government officials by having the elected Board of Education develop a budget, establish goals and objectives and take complete control of the school district.

MARIA was disillusioned the first morning on the job because no one welcomed her, explained job expectations or introduced her to the faculty and staff. She was further troubled knowing she had completed all requirements for a baccalaureate degree in elementary education only to find herself assigned as a substitute teacher. Her suggestions for a smoother transition for the first-year teacher included having a support teacher assigned to each first-year teacher, instituting grade level support meetings, providing first-year teachers with school policies, classroom procedures and grade level objectives, and more frequent visits from the building principal prior to formal observations.

DANIKA, an elementary education major who expected to be assigned to a self-contained classroom, accepted an interim assignment as a primary Spanish teacher. Although Danika had a relatively successful year, she made the following recommendations: for veteran teachers to share ideas on instructional methods and supplemental materials, to demonstrate more warmth and caring toward first-year teachers; for sufficient classroom materials to be readily available; that administrators observe first-year teachers at least three times a year; and that salary checks be issued to first-year teachers by the third week of employment.

The 30 key participants in this study represented a "slice" of the available talent within the St. Croix School District which impacts on the successes or failures of first-year teachers. This representative talent included: an elected member of the Board of Education; a teacher educator at the University of the Virgin Islands; two central office administrators; two elementary classroom teachers; two secretaries; three subject area/staff development coordinators; three parents; three reading teachers; three paraprofessionals; five assistant principals and five principals. The analysis of data described the key participants' reflections on their first year of teaching, their perceived problems of first-year teachers in 1988-89, and their recommendations about the kind of support system or program that would meet the needs of first-year teachers as they make the transition from student teacher to

professional.

The reflections of the professional educators concerning their own first year as teachers exposed some very revealing reminiscence. In recalling their experiences as first-year teachers the most frequently stated problems were that they received no support from the school principal or chairperson, and that their preservice training did not prepare them for the reality they faced in the classroom. Underlying many of the experiences in one manner or another was the recognition that advice or assistance came from another teacher. In contrast, there were the recollections of hostility, jealousy, negative attitudes and in one instance the refusal of two experienced teachers to allow a first-year teacher to observe in their classrooms as recommended by the building principal. Twenty years later, similar experiences also echoed by the first-year teachers in this study, included such concerns as unusual delay of their first salary check, classroom discipline, no course outline or curriculum guide and no knowledge of what to expect. A few of the key participants related good first-year teacher experiences which included one in a British-patterned system.

The problems of first-year teachers as observed by key participants were many and varied. In the area of curricula, key participants noted:

-too great a reliance on textbooks either because there were insufficient supplemental materials or they were not introduced to the available resources in the school;

- under-utilization of the basal reading program especially in the area of comprehension skills instruction and use of diagnostic and mastery level tests;
- feelings of inadequacy in grading practices;
- lack of grade level course outlines and curriculum guides; and
- organizing clearly written daily lesson plans in the small space provided in lesson plan books.

In the area of classroom management, discipline topped the list of perceived problems. The key participants believed that acculturation of recruits from outside the Virgin Islands should include an understanding of the language of the students and a compulsory course in Virgin Islands History to reduce or minimize discipline problems. Other management problems were difficulty with smooth transitions from one subject area to another and lack of patience in dealing with students.

Other problems the interviews disclosed were that first-year teachers:

1. Were left on their own and picked up bad habits which are then hard to break.
2. Lacked supervision.
3. Lacked parental support.
4. Had little knowledge of the rules, regulations and procedures of the school.
5. Did not receive adequate personnel employment

information (i.e. eligibility for membership in the retirement system and receipt of a union contract).

6. Felt unsure about their reliance on principals/administrators for assistance.

7. Faced housing shortages and high rents.

8. Received initial paychecks late.

The recommendations of key participants, with or without first-year teaching experiences, concerning the kind of support system or program for first-year teachers in the St. Croix School District were wide-ranging and will be incorporated in the teacher leadership model. Based on the initial stares, confused looks, and some responses to questions about first-year teachers during the interviews, the researcher has drawn the conclusion that concern for first-year teachers is not a high priority in the St. Croix School District. Some specific examples as proof of this conclusion are:

1. Crystal, a reading teacher, comments, "I don't have very much experience with first-year teachers, so I'd have some problems answering the question about how they cope." As the reading teacher, she felt robbed of the opportunity to help first-year teachers because the administration did not identify them.

2. Sharon, a coordinator, in no uncertain terms said, "I really don't know who are first-year teachers."

3. Susan, a reading teacher, did not seem to have any information about first-year teachers because in her

responses to support strategies, she referred to all teachers. Therefore the first-year teacher was included in the "broad brush" used in her responses.

4. Betty Lou, a paraprofessional with nine years in this position, is quoted as saying, "I don't have much contact with first-year teachers."

5. Theodosia, with seven years experience as an Administrative Officer, proclaims, "I have not really, really, really been exposed to them."

6. Princess, a parent, remarked "Really I don't know if my children ever had a first-year teacher."

The findings imply that there is neither a support program in place for first-year teachers nor is there a noticeable recognition that first-year teachers exist. In the words of one of the elementary school principals interviewed, "I remember being critical of the fact that as a first-year teacher my principal never visited my classroom except when invited, and now I have to admit that I am experiencing the same inability to observe and assist first-year teachers." Some first-year teachers and key participants alluded to the fact that fellow-teachers came to their rescue as confidants, "shoulders to cry on," role models, and reliable neighbors. As a result of the data collection and analysis, it is readily apparent that a gap exists between the needs and concerns of first-year teachers and a support program. The researcher will attempt to design a teacher leadership model which will promote the concept

that teachers at the classroom level can exert leadership in providing support for first-year teachers.

**Teacher Leadership Model for the St. Croix School
District**

Sizer (1984) and Cross (1984) make strong pleas for teacher leaders by requiring high levels of performance and giving teachers control at the building level. Current research cites the policy initiatives of the Virginia Beach proposal, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Tennessee's career ladder programs.

For schools to be successful in the "Information Age," the bonds of leadership must be loosened from a hierarchical system and given over to a model of leadership at the school level that accentuates empowerment, vision, communication, trust, and generativity. The "invisible" experienced teachers provided the "glue" that helped the first-year teachers in this study and the other educators interviewed to ride out the rough first year in the profession. Figure 1 shows approaches and types of programs recommended by key participants which are facets of mentoring that may be used separately or in combination for support of first-year teachers in the St. Croix School District. According to this, an analysis of field notes about support for first-year teachers, experienced teachers could form a cadre of teacher leaders in the St. Croix School District.

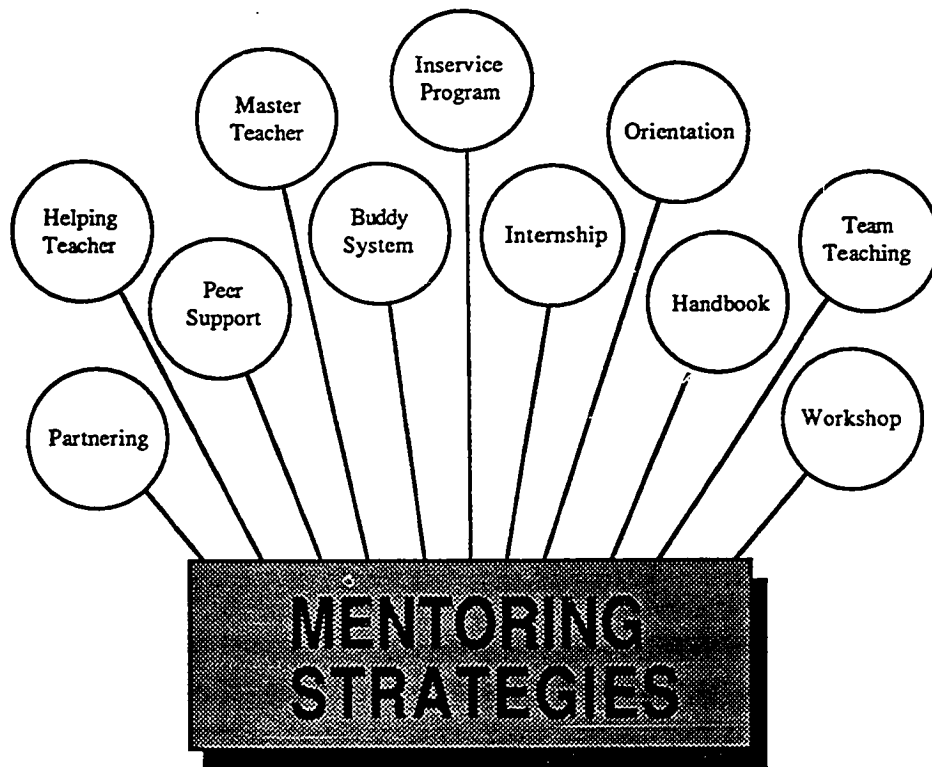


Figure 1. Types of Mentoring Strategies Recommended by Key Participants

The design of a teacher leadership model will attempt to guide the preparation of experienced teachers beyond the confines of their own classrooms to support future first-year teachers. The teacher leader's direct assistance to beginning teachers can serve as a method for circumventing the rigidity and inflexibility that student and first-year teachers are known to experience (Busching & Rowls, 1985, p.20). Teacher leaders can also offer assistance to teachers beyond their first year to fine-tune or polish their instructional techniques, to improve management problems in the classroom and, in general to give peer survival support

which is less threatening than administrative assistance.

Inasmuch as one of the conceptual foundations of a leadership role is mentoring, teacher leaders will need to prepare for this role by learning to articulate, model, and share their teaching expertise with first-year teachers. To accomplish this, the University of the Virgin Islands and the Department of Education may use the preparation model shown in Figure 2 to instruct experienced teachers through the five essential themes of leadership: empowerment; vision; communication; trust; and generativity. No support program can be expected to survive without a leadership focus.

An action plan for the St. Croix School District will involve the role of the following players:

Principals - will identify experienced teachers for preparation in teacher leadership at the University of the Virgin Islands.

Office of the Insular Superintendent - will approve the names submitted for preparation in teacher leadership.

St. Croix Board of Education - will factor into their teacher certification requirements the participation of first-year teachers in the teacher leadership support program.

University of the Virgin Islands-Education Division - in collaboration with the Department of Education, will train the identified experienced teachers to meet the support needs of first-year teachers by utilizing the preparation model in Figure 2 to set goals and objectives

for a teacher leadership program.

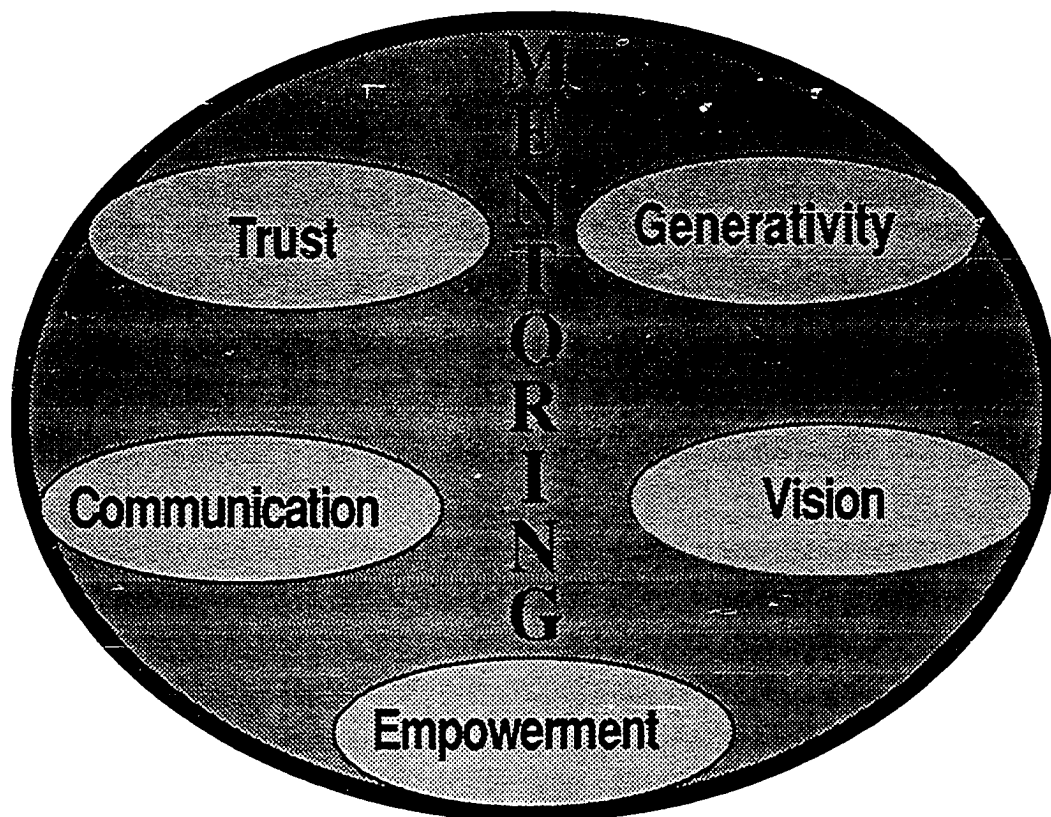


Figure 2. A teacher leadership preparation model for the St. Croix School District.

One of the purposes of this study was to explore the needs of teacher leadership at the classroom level where effective teachers will be prepared to support each other through empowerment, communication, trust, vision and generativity. Each of these five categories of competence, intended to be distinguishing characteristics of teacher leaders, are defined and program outcomes generated for each leadership behavior.

EMPOWERMENT - an internalized locus of control at the individual school level. Teacher leaders will empower first-year teachers by:

1. Demonstrating the meaning of leadership as a transformational process.
2. Carrying out the helping relationship with first-year teachers.
3. Working with first-year teachers and other experienced teachers toward the improvement of instruction.
4. Influencing first-year teachers to engage in creative problem solving and removing obstacles to flexibility.
5. Showing an attitude of selflessness in their collegial interaction with first-year teachers.

VISION - an imaginative insight in creating a better future for the schools. Teacher leaders will state a clear vision of:

1. First-year teachers' adjustment to the Caribbean culture.
2. Effective leadership.
3. Resource materials necessary to strengthen instruction.
4. An effective elementary school curriculum.
5. The effective role of inservice programs.
6. Support programs for first-year teachers.
7. Grade level goals and objectives.

COMMUNICATION - the transmission of high, but achievable expectations for performance, emphasizing shared commitment

to ownership of the vision. Teacher leaders will communicate the vision by:

1. Generating care and concern among first-year teachers for enthusiasm and commitment to the vision.
2. Shaping and focusing on the expectations, rules and procedures of the St. Croix School District.
3. Developing a sense of shared meaning about discipline and teaching strategies.
4. Bolstering the first-year teacher's confidence in coping with parental problems.
5. Developing a handbook for first-year teachers.

TRUST - a faith or confidence that is reliable, consistent, and which can be counted on to bind leaders and followers together. Teacher leaders will develop a sense of trust among staff by:

1. Demonstrating patience and persistence in sharing "know-how" with first-year teachers.
2. Practicing a set of ethical standards that serves as a model of professional behavior.
3. Generating political support for planned change.
4. Identifying competent staff who will be observed by first-year teachers.

GENERATIVITY - concerns with future generations and the nature of society and the world in which those generations will live. Teacher leaders will value those who:

1. Have concern for future generations.
2. Care for those who follow us and those who follow

them.

3. Demonstrate lessons, coach, share, assist, and cope with parental problems.

4. Nurture the idea that education is a continuing process.

5. Take risks in their roles as mentors, peer coaches, buddies, master teachers or partners.

6. Establish a healthy ego identity among experienced teachers.

The five categories of competence in this model of teacher leadership are intended to focus on leadership as an art of influencing others. Figure 2 identifies five leadership functions that pinpoint the essentiality of the mentoring relationship. EMPOWERMENT will promote teacher professionalism in issues related to classroom instruction, teacher competence and decision making that goes beyond the classroom. VISION of effective teacher leaders will be incorporated in the culture of the school district and reinforce decision making. The primary task of COMMUNICATION will be to generate enthusiasm and commitment to the vision. TRUST will bind teacher leaders and first-year teachers together to keep the focus on the vision. GENERATIVITY will value care and concern for future generations.

The Office of Staff Development in the Department of Education and the Division of Education at the University of the Virgin Islands in a collaborative effort could develop a series of seminars and/or workshops to concentrate on topics

such as:

- * Leadership in Mentoring
- * Staff Development Through a Collegial Teacher Leadership Model
- * Communicating Support for a First-Year Teacher's Adjustment to the Caribbean Culture
- * Effecting Change in Teaching Strategies to Improve Student Learning
- * Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century
- * Assessing Needs of First-Year Teachers

Seminar and/or workshop descriptions, objectives, content, learning experiences and evaluation will have to be developed utilizing the themes empowerment, communication, vision, trust, and generativity as the central focus. Decisions about the topic offerings will have to be determined jointly as will the duration of each seminar/workshop. This approach should guarantee that the proposed teacher leadership preparation model would best meet the needs of first-year teachers as the school district strives to improve the quality of education.

Recommendations for Further Research

This case study provides an insight into the feelings, concerns and attitudes of first-year teachers supplemented by key participants' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and underlying assumptions about support for first-year teachers. While a case study of beginning teachers is not unique in the field of education, there has been no study of first-year

teachers in the St. Croix School District of the United States Virgin Islands with its unique culture, language, and geographical isolation.

This research revealed that support for first-year teachers is not presently a goal or function of the Office of Staff Development in the St. Croix School District. During the course of the study some questions have been answered, others have been raised and some issues need further confirmation. Future research is necessary

1. To define the role of elementary school principals in the empowerment of teacher leaders within schools to achieve the goal of raising first-year teachers, other staff and themselves to higher levels of professionalism.

2. To test, assess, and evaluate the responsiveness of this model to the improvement of teacher leadership roles in the support of first-year teachers.

3. To focus on the role of the university in the preparation of teacher leaders.

4. To determine how teacher leadership will assist first-year teachers and their students to exercise leadership.

5. To concentrate on the quality of preparation for principals in their roles as instructional leaders.

6. To focus on the behavior and attitudes of staff development personnel and university faculty who are engaged in a teacher leadership preparation program.

Concluding Remarks

The researcher has enjoyed exploring the needs of first-

year teachers, describing the perception of first-year teachers by participants and designing a model for the leadership preparation of experienced teachers by the University of the Virgin Islands in collaboration with the Department of Education. Teacher leaders recognize that "mentoring" will significantly benefit the students, therefore, the role of the university in the preparation process is crucial to the future of education in the St. Croix School District.

This research should be followed up by a proposal to fund a teacher leadership program which would be implemented with the master teachers currently employed by the Department of Education in the St. Croix School District.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

APPENDIX A-1**Interview Questions for Coordinators, Experienced Teachers, Principals**

Good-day, I am very happy that you agreed to this one-half hour interview. Do you have any questions you'd like to ask me before we get started?

1. When did you begin your career in education?
2. Please recall some of your experiences as a first-year teacher.
Include: (a) problems and successes
(b) coping strategies used to deal with concerns and problems
3. What type of assistance would you have appreciated during your first year?
4. What kinds of adjustment problems do you believe first-year teachers experience presently?
5. Please list major problems of beginning teachers in descending order.
6. How do they cope with these problems?
7. If you assist first-year teachers, cite specific support strategies you employ to help them make the transition from student to professional?
8. What kind of support system or program would you recommend to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district?

Reminder: Collect consent and demographic forms. Thank the interviewee!

APPENDIX A-2**Interview Questions for Secretaries and Paraprofessionals**

Good-day, I am very happy that you agreed to this one-half hour interview. Do you have any questions you'd like to ask me before we get started?

1. What specific contact do you have with first-year teachers?
2. What is your attitude about their adjustment to the real world of the classroom?
3. From your position, what are some of the major problem areas that first-year teachers face?
4. As a (secretary/paraprofessional), how can you assist a first-year teacher?
5. What kind of support system or program would you like to see adopted to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district?

Reminder: Collect consent and demographic forms. Thank the interviewee!

APPENDIX A-3**Interview Questions for Parents**

Good-day, I am very happy that you agreed to this one-half hour interview. Do you have any questions you'd like to ask me before we start?

1. How many school age children do you have?
2. In what grades are they enrolled?
3. Have any of your children had a teacher who never taught before?
4. Do you believe that a first-year teacher (teacher with no teaching experience) can be an effective teacher? Why? Why not?
5. What is your attitude toward first-year teachers?
6. What kind of support do you think first-year teachers should receive from (a) the Department of Education? (b) the University of the Virgin Islands? and (c) parents?

Reminder: Collect consent and demographic forms. Thank the interviewee!

APPENDIX A-4**Interview Questions for Staff Development Coordinator**

Good-day, I am very happy that you agreed to this one-half hour interview. Do you have any questions you'd like to ask me before we get started?

1. When did you begin your career in education?

2. Please recall some of your experiences as a first-year teacher.
Include: (a) problems and successes
(b) coping strategies used to deal with concerns and problems

3. What type of assistance would you have appreciated during your first year?

4. What kinds of adjustment problems do you believe first-year teachers experience presently?

5. If you assist first-year teachers, cite specific support strategies you employ to help them make the transition from student to professional?

6. What kind of support system or program would you recommend to meet the needs and concerns of first-year teachers in the St. Croix school district?

On a separate sheet I have some direct quotes from interviews with principals, assistant principals, experienced teachers, and paraprofessionals expressing their views on the role of supervisor/coordinators in support for first-year teachers.

Reminder: Collect consent and demographic forms. Thank the interviewee!

Some quotes on the role of supervisors and coordinators in support for first-year teachers:

- “give quarterly workshops to first-year teachers in their area of specialty”
- “on-going in-service training”
- “conduct workshops in reading, grouping, math and spelling”
- “a six-week training period (internship) before being assigned to their own class”
- “experienced paraprofessional assigned to first-year teachers”
- “district wide workshops for first-year teachers by grade level”
- “insular administration involved in on-going orientation (regular meetings)”
- “develop handbook with rules and procedures”
- “pay regular visits within the disciplines”
- “sponsor seminars every six months”
- “in-house training program on computer literacy”
- “squash idea of initial orientation and have first-year teachers meet with building principals”
- “to meet with first-year teachers to gather information to develop a support program”
- “create a segment for cultural exchange and understanding”
- “listen to concerns of first-year teachers”
- “assist first-year teachers because principals viewed as evaluators”
- “should be an integral part of the support system”

APPENDIX B

Correspondence for Gaining Entrance

APPENDIX B-1

November 18, 1988

Mrs. Juanita Smail, Superintendent
Department of Education
21-22-23 Hospital Street
Christiansted, St. Croix 00820

Dear Mrs. Smail:

On November 11, 1988 I defended my dissertation proposal on the topic, Case Studies of First-Year Elementary Teachers on St. Croix to Develop a Model for Teacher Leadership as a part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at the University of San Diego. A copy each of the cover page, abstract, and Appendix B of the proposal is attached.

I am requesting your permission to conduct this research study in the school district of St. Croix from January to December 1989. This study will examine the perceptions, concerns, beliefs, and assumptions of first-year teachers and the support system necessary to raise the teaching profession to higher levels of competence. It is my hope that the design of a teacher leadership model will contribute to the wealth of research being undertaken in the interest of improving the quality of education in the St. Croix school district.

The collaborative effort of the Department of Education, the University of the Virgin Islands, and students of education is one of the many avenues for ensuring excellence in education as we prepare staff to meet the challenges of the 21st century. In this tenor, I am seeking the cooperation of the Department of Education by receiving your permission to undertake this study.

I thank you and hope to receive a favorable response as soon as possible to enable me to begin data collection when schools reopen in January 1989.

Very truly yours,

Ruth H. Beagles
Associate Professor

Enc: Cover page
Abstract
Appendix B of the proposal

APPENDIX B-2



GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE INSULAR SUPERINTENDENT, ST. CROIX TEL NO: 773-1095
= 21,22,23 Hospital Street, Christiansted 773-1747
St. Croix, V.I. 00820

Mrs. Ruth H. Beagles
Associate Professor
University of the Virgin Islands
St. Croix Campus
RR2, 10,000, Kingshill
St. Croix, US Virgin Islands 00850

Dear Mrs. Beagles:

It is a pleasure to grant your request to conduct a research study in the public schools district of St. Croix, from January to December of 1989.

Your topic, Case Study of First-Year Elementary Teachers on St. Croix to Develop a Model for Teacher Leadership, is challenging and I hope will produce the necessary information needed for in-depth initial and on going orientation of new teachers.

Enclosed is a copy of memorandum sent to principals and coordinators.

Additionally, by copy of this letter, I am requesting that Mr. Marc Biggs, Personnel Administrative Assistant, give you an update list of new teachers for School Year 1988-89, and any other assistance needed.

Sincerely,

Juanita Smail
Insular Superintendent

JS:jeb
cc:Assistant Superintendents
Personnel Administrative Assistant

APPENDIX B-3



GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE INSULAR SUPERINTENDENT, ST. CROIX
21,22,23 Hospital Street, Christiansted
St. Croix, V.I. 00620

TEL NO: 773-1095
773-1747

MEMORANDUM

TO: Principals
Coordinators

FROM: Insular Superintendent

DATE: November 30, 1966

RE: Visits by Associate Professor, Ruth H. Beagles

Mrs. Ruth H. Beagles, associate professor at the University of the Virgin Islands, requested and has been granted permission by my office, to conduct a research study in the public schools, district of St. Croix, from January to December 1969.

The purposes of this research are to: (1) examine the assumptions, concerns, beliefs, and perceptions of first-year teachers about their entry into the teaching profession; (2) investigate the beliefs, concerns, perceptions, and assumptions that experienced teachers, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, secretaries, parents, and paraprofessionals have about support needs for first-year teachers; and (3) generate data to design a model of teacher leadership which will promote the concept that teachers at the classroom level can exert leadership.

Mrs. Beagles has signed a statement assuring that none of the information gathered will be published or used to the detriment of our system, its students or its employees.

You will be contacted by Mrs. Beagles in the near future.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Juanita Smail

JS:jeb
cc:Assistant Superintendents
Director, Curriculum, Instruction
and Library Services
Mrs. Ruth H. Beagles

APPENDIX B-4



GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE INSULAR SUPERINTENDENT, ST. CROIX TEL NO. 773-1095
= 21,22,23 Hospital Street, Christianssted 773-1747
St. Croix, V.I. 00820

November 30, 1988

The only purposes for Mrs. Ruth H. Beagles's interviews and observations of educational personnel in school facilities, are to conduct a research study on the perceptions, concerns, beliefs, and assumptions of first-year teachers, and the personnel in the support system, and to design a teacher leadership model as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at the University of San Diego.

No information concerning the students, personnel, or infrastructure of the Virgin Islands Public School System will be published or used in any manner which could be construed as derogatory.

Agreed: _____

Ruth H. Beagles
Associate Professor
University of the Virgin Islands

Approved: _____

Juanita Small
Insular Superintendent

APPENDIX C

Letters, Questionnaire, Forms and Guides

APPENDIX C-1

P.O. Box 172
Christiansted, St. Croix
USVI 00821-0172
November 30, 1988

Case Study
Box 0000
C'sted, St. Croix
USVI 00800

Dear Case Study:

I am conducting a research study in the public schools, district of St. Croix from January to June, 1989. This is an invitation for you to participate in this research as a first-year teacher.

The title of this research is: Case Studies of First-Year Elementary Teachers on St. Croix to Develop a Model for Teacher Leadership.

The purposes of this research are to:

- (1) examine the assumptions, concerns, beliefs, and perceptions of first-year teachers about their entry into the teaching profession;
- (2) investigate the beliefs, concerns, perceptions, and assumptions that teacher educators, experienced teachers, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, secretaries, parents, and paraprofessionals have about support needs for first-year teachers; and
- (3) generate data to design a model for teacher leadership which will promote the concept that teachers at the classroom level can exert leadership.

I want to assure you that this study has the approval of Mrs. Juanita Smail, Insular Superintendent, St. Croix. You will have the opportunity to give feedback and verification on the findings of the data collected from you.

As parents and educators we are always seeking ways to improve the quality of education in the St. Croix school district, therefore, I thank you sincerely for your assistance. If you have any questions, please call me at UVI at 778-1620 ext. 124 or at home 773-6368.

Very truly yours,

Ruth H. Beagles
Associate Professor
University of the Virgin Islands

APPENDIX C-2

P.O. Box 172
Christiansted, St. Croix
USVI 00821-0172
January 09, 1989

Key Participant
000 No Name St.
Fsted, St. Croix
USVI 00800

Dear Key Participant:

I am conducting a research study in the public schools, district of St. Croix from January to June, 1989. This is an invitation for you to participate in this research as an interviewee.

The title of this research is: Case Studies of First-Year Elementary Teachers on St. Croix to Develop a Model for Teacher Leadership.

The purposes of this research are to:

- (1) examine the assumptions, concerns, beliefs, and perceptions of first-year teachers about their entry into the teaching profession;
- (2) investigate the beliefs, concerns, perceptions, and assumptions that teacher educators, experienced teachers, principals, assistant principals, coordinators, secretaries, parents, and paraprofessionals have about support needs for first-year teachers; and
- (3) generate data to design a model for teacher leadership which will promote the concept that teachers at the classroom level can exert leadership.

I want to assure you that this study has the approval of Mrs. Juanita Smail, Insular Superintendent, St. Croix. You will have the opportunity to give feedback and verification on the findings of the data collected from you.

As parents and educators we are always seeking ways to improve the quality of education in the St. Croix school district, therefore, I thank you sincerely for your assistance. If you have any questions, please call me at UVI at 778-1620 ext. 124 or at home 773-6368.

Very truly yours,

Ruth H. Beagles
Associate Professor
University of the Virgin Islands

APPENDIX C-3

CONSENT FORM

This consent form is designed as an agreement for your protection in this research. It guarantees personal and school anonymity in group meetings, journal entries, and classroom observations. The estimated duration of your participation is 18-19 weeks beginning in January, 1989.

There are no anticipated risks or discomfort and observations will be conducted during the regular course of your employment. The benefits of your participation in this research will be your contribution to the development of a teacher leadership model for the St. Croix school district.

All data will be described in a manner so that your personal and school confidentiality will be protected in all reporting procedures. Please return one copy of this form and keep the other copy for your records.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and, on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

Signature of Subject

Date

Signature of the Researcher

Date

Signature of a Witness

Date

Done at _____,
School District

Territory

APPENDIX C-4

CONSENT FORM

This consent form is designed as an agreement for your protection in this research. It guarantees personal and school anonymity in your interview responses. The estimated duration of your participation is three to four weeks beginning in January, 1989.

There are no anticipated risks or discomfort and interviews will be conducted during the regular course of your employment. The benefits of your participation in this research will be your contribution to the development of a teacher leadership model for the St. Croix school district.

All data will be described in a manner so that your personal and school confidentiality will be protected in all reporting procedures. Please return one copy of this form and keep the other copy for your records.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and, on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

Signature of Interviewee

Date

Signature of the Researcher

Date

Signature of a Witness

Date

Done at _____,
School District

Territory

APPENDIX C-5
Demographic Information

Name: _____

Pseudonym: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Resident Address: _____

Date of Birth: ___/___/___ Sex: female male

Place of Birth: _____

Position: _____

Number of years in this position: _____

Education:

High School Diploma

First year college

AA degree

Third year college

BA/BS

MA

Post-graduate

Other: _____

Name of colleges and/or universities attended:

APPENDIX C-6
First-Year Teachers' Calendar

Week of

Jan 16	select personal and school pseudonym. • get class schedules
Jan 23/30	one-hour audio-taped group meeting to discuss experiences to date compared with perceptions prior to start of employment at a place to be determined. • begin journal entries by describing feelings and concerns about entering the teaching profession on St. Croix. • be observed in one subject area.
Feb. 19/26	state feelings , problems, and concerns. • include coping strategies used to date.
Mar. 05/12	videotaping of one class session.
Mar. 19/26	one-hour opportunity to evaluate concerns and needs as you view the tape. • reflect on experiences and submit recommendations about the type of support that might have guaranteed a smoother transition, eased anxieties, apprehensions, and improved teaching skills.
Apr. 02/09	second audio-taped group meeting to discuss experiences, frustrations, and support received to date.
May 14/21	final journal entries. • description of coping

May 28

strategies. • third/last classroom observation.
submit recommendations to the researcher about the
type of support you feel necessary for first-year
teachers.

APPENDIX C-7**Interviewee's Calendar****Week of**

Jan. 22/29	Select personal and school pseudonym. Collect demographic information.
Feb. 05/12	One-half hour audiotaped interviews of ten key participants.
Apr. 16/23	One-half hour audiotaped interviews of ten key participants.
Apr. 30/May 07	One-half hour audiotaped interviews of ten key participants.

APPENDIX C-8**First-Year Teacher's Checklist**

NAME: _____

Accomplished

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Select pseudonym | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Questions prior to start of observations | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consent form | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Classroom schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| First group meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| First classroom observation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Journal entries due March 03 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Videotaping | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Evaluation of videotape | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Journal entries due April 07 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Second group meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Last classroom observation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Journal entries due May 19 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Submit recommendations about type of support | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Thank You Very Much!!!!!!!!!!