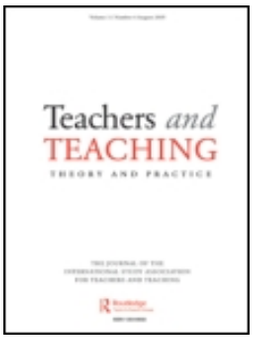

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Judith Peters & Jane Pearce

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Relationships and early career teacher resilience: a role for school principals

Judith Peters[a]* and Jane Pearce[b]

[a]*School of Education, University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia;* [b]*School of Education, Murdoch University, Murdoch, Australia*

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Given the current climate of high levels of teacher attrition, it is critically important that we understand what keeps early career teachers in the profession. This paper reports early findings from a project addressing the question: 'What conditions are conducive to promoting teacher resilience and retention in the first two years of teaching?' The research aims to identify the internal strengths and external strategies that promote resilience in early career teachers. School leaders and first year teachers from 59 schools across two states in Australia contributed to in-depth, open-ended interviews in which they talked about the experiences of beginning teaching. From this data, narrative portraits were developed and emerging themes documented and analysed. A strong emerging theme is how relationships with principals influence teachers' feelings of personal and professional well-being, with both negative and positive effects reported. This paper uses portraits of two early career teachers to examine this theme. The findings provide important insights for principals who wish to foster resilience in early career teachers.

Keywords: early career teachers; resilience; relationships; school leaders/principals

Introduction

Australia, along with many other countries, faces a range of challenges related to an ageing teaching force and high levels of attrition among beginning teachers. In Australia the highest proportion of teachers are in their mid-40s or older (Mayer, 2006) while attrition rates in the first five years of teaching are running as high as 30% (Ramsey, 2000). Ewing and Smith (2003) attributed the high level of attrition to early career teachers being 'burnt-out', a finding supported by research identifying early career challenges such as inadequate pre-service preparation (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007); little or no induction (Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, & Cowan-Hathcock, 2007); lack of congruence between their ideals and the daily realities of teaching (Abbott-Chapman, 2005) and the ever-increasing complexity of keeping up with the diversity of students and their families, changes in work patterns and different information and communication technologies (Pillay, Goodard, & Wills, 2005). Findings of a recent survey of beginning teachers by the Australian Education Union (2006) indicated that 45.6% did not see themselves teaching in 10 years time.

*Corresponding author. Email: judith.peters@unisa.edu.au

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O'Connor (2008) and many others (see, e.g. Biesta, 2004; Gu & Day, 2007; Romano, 2004) suggested that a further challenge for all teachers, but especially beginning teachers, is the highly emotional and 'caring' nature of teaching where 'caring is primarily defined as those emotions, actions and reflections that result from a teacher's desire to motivate help or inspire their students' (p. 119). It is hardly surprising that many beginning teachers feel overwhelmed with both the sudden realisation that they are responsible for the students in their care and the myriad emotions this engenders – emotions such as 'love, anger and depression, and hope and possibility' (Nieto, 2003, cited in Gu & Day, 2007, p. 1304). In addition, they find themselves in daily contact with teaching colleagues, school leaders and parents all of whom bring their own emotions to interactions. When they leave school each day, new teachers must engage with family and friends who may or may not be sympathetic to the stress that they are experiencing, as well as manage emotionally charged events that happen outside of school. Aultman, Williams-Johnson, and Schutz (2009), in a study of in-service teachers, found 'participants were vocal about their lack of training and expertise in dealing with student emotion and emotional situations' and felt they had to learn about it 'on the job' (p. 644). Yet the emotional and relational nature of teachers' work is not always at the forefront of public policy and teaching standards discourses:

> Discussions of emotionality in teachers' work form a counter-discourse to the technical rationalist emphasis on teacher standards. Whilst standards seek to define and prescribe the professional role that teachers play, teachers' identities are complex and socially situated within lived experiences. (O'Connor, 2008, pp. 125–126)

Clearly the emotional nature of teachers' work is intrinsically linked to its basis in multi-layered relationships. Crawford (2009), who studied the role of emotions in school leaders' work in Britain, put it simply: 'At the centre of a school lie relationships: teacher-student; parent-teacher; teacher-teacher; child-child' (p. 521). She went on to highlight the critical role of emotion as the 'language of relationships because it is through the language and experience of emotion that we contextualize not only our individuality but also our sense of belonging in a group' (p. 521). Although considerable attention is given to the importance of teachers forming positive relationships with their students, the challenges and significance of their relationships with adults are often overlooked. Yet according to Barth (2006, p. 9), 'the nature of the relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of the school and on student accomplishment than anything else'. He characterised desirable relationships as 'trusting, generous, helpful and cooperative' (p. 9). Recent studies have found a strong link between early career teachers' positive self image and the relationships and help they receive (Flores & Day, 2006; Peeler & Jane, 2003).

Studies in Australia (see, e.g. McCormack, Gore, & Thomas, 2006; McCormack & Thomas, 2003) and overseas (see, e.g. Flores & Day, 2006; Wood, 2005) have found that school principals have an important role to play both in developing collaborative school cultures and supporting early career teachers. Wood (2005), in her study of principals' roles in 54 high, middle and elementary schools in California, identified five critical roles that principals played in the induction of beginning teachers: '(a) culture builder, (b) instructional leader, (c) coordinator/facilitator of mentors, (d) novice teacher recruiter and (e) novice teacher advocate/retainer'

(p. 39). Following on from the work of Wood (2005), this paper uses two narrative portraits of early career teachers to examine the central role of principals in influencing teachers' feelings of personal and professional well-being, with both negative and positive effects reported. It draws on findings from a research project intended to identify the internal strengths and external strategies that promote resilience in early career teachers. The following discussion focuses in particular on how principals might ensure that beginning teachers experience the positive benefits of affirming relationships, and explores some of the positive and negative consequences of different approaches to the provision of support for early career teachers.

Research design

The authors are part of a team of researchers involved in a longitudinal study (2008–2012) of resilience in early career teachers funded by the Australian Research Council and industry partners. By resilience we mean in part 'the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances' (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990, p. 425). However, the research adopts a socially critical orientation to resilience where the broader social, economic and political contexts of human experience are acknowledged as being significant in contributing to the development of resilience (see Johnson & Down, 2009; Johnson et al., 2010).

The research is a collaboration between the University of South Australia, Murdoch University, Edith Cowan University and eight stakeholder organisations including employer groups and unions in South Australia and Western Australia. Participants in the study are 59 teachers (from two states [South Australia and Western Australia]) who were in their first year of teaching in 2009 as well as one member of each of their school leadership teams where possible. Selection aimed for a mix of participants from primary (reception to year 7) and secondary schools (years 8–12), government and non-government schools, metropolitan and rural settings and in permanent, contract and Temporary Relief Teaching positions.

The research was designed as a critical enquiry drawing on the traditions of narrative enquiry and critical ethnography (Smyth, Angus, Down, & McInerney, 2006). The data are qualitative and were collected over the course of a year through two semi-structured interviews with the teachers, one early in the year and another towards the end. An interview was also conducted with a member of the leadership team in each school towards the end of the year. All interviews were recorded and transcribed to produce over 1800 pages of interview data. A preliminary thematic analysis was conducted at two workshops held over five days, and more fine grained coding categories were then created using NVivo8 software. Five main 'Conditions for Resilience' emerged from the analysis: relationships, school culture, teacher identity, teachers' work, and policies and practices (see Johnson et al., 2010). In this paper we focus on 'relationships' and use narrative portraits developed from interview data to explore the experiences of two early career teachers, Jasmine and Audrey, and their principals, Ryan and Ross, as they negotiated professional relationships in their schools. Our aim in creating the portraits was to provide a coherent picture of the teachers' experiences by framing their personal stories in the context of the broader practices in the schools where they worked. To construct the narrative portraits participants' interviews were analysed and data illuminating

the role of relationships were selected, collated and reviewed. Portraits then were written that synthesised direct quotations and paraphrased data to form coherent narratives. Each portrait was reviewed by five other members of the research team to verify the story was consistent with the data it sought to represent. Before publication the participants checked their own portrait for veracity, and some minor corrections were made.

The central role of principals in early career resilience

We begin with Jasmine's story to provide a rich illustration of how school principals can influence the extent to which early career teachers are welcomed, included and supported as new members of staff.

Jasmine's portrait

Jasmine graduated as a secondary teacher in the middle of 2008. Immediately she was contacted and offered a six-month contract by a metropolitan school in which she had completed professional experience as part of her teaching degree. This meant she was familiar with the school and 'knew most of the staff'. She was given no formal induction which meant that she 'just rocked up on the first day and started working'. She did, however, recall having wonderful support from her subject coordinator and that she was 'encouraged quite a bit my learning team'. She found most staff welcoming but that 'the subject areas kind of stayed in their little niche', which meant that she interacted only with other teachers in her discipline. Nor did Jasmine have any interaction with the principal. She recalled: 'I actually had never spoken to the principal. I wouldn't even recognize her on the street'.

When no further employment was offered for 2009, Jasmine applied for and won a permanent teaching position at another metropolitan school. She recalled that two days after her interview 'I was very surprised . . . the Principal called me himself at home at night . . . and he offered me the job'. Induction was extensive in her new school and led by the principal, Ryan and other school leaders. After an intensive session before school started, she and other new staff members continued to meet monthly with Ryan and the deputy principal at the local coffee shop to debrief and ask questions. She also found that school leaders and staff from all subject areas mixed freely in the staffroom and she was frequently asked about her welfare and offered help. Ryan explained that interaction of staff across traditional discipline boundaries was encouraged through thrice weekly meetings before school and a school-wide professional development strategy that focused on staff working in 'professional learning teams, where teachers work across learning areas on a topic that they're interested in'. The school also operated on an ethos of 'community and care'. Ryan described part of this ethos as doing 'lots of things that celebrate us as a community', such as celebrations of birthdays, regular 'drinks and nibbles' and leadership 'affirmations' in the form of small gifts and cards to acknowledge individual staff contributions.

Wider school assistance for individual teachers was also evident in the area of behaviour management. Although Jasmine found some of her students challenging, she felt thoroughly supported in terms of the school wide approach, staff training in the area and consistent follow through from school leadership to address more serious issues. Ryan described the school wide approach as:

(a) student development process of personal responsibility so that we phrase it that we're all responsible for what we do which includes staff and students and so we have a set of processes that go with that.

With the support of these processes Jasmine was able to establishing warm and respectful relationships with students and found teaching them rewarding and enjoyable.

By the end of term 2 in 2009, the end of her first year of teaching, Jasmine appeared to have achieved high standards in organisation, teaching and professional interactions. As well, she had been encouraged and supported to join a network of teachers involved in curriculum development for technical and further education linked vocational educational courses. It seemed she was on track for a successful and sustainable teaching career until her professional well-being came under threat from two highly traumatic personal events that occurred in the third term of 2009. Both events continued to have a significant impact on her sense of well-being and the demands on her time outside of school hours throughout the rest of the year. What enabled Jasmine to continue to juggle the demands of her teaching role and the troubling events in her life outside of school were the significant support and empathy provided by the wider staff and in particular by Ryan. He insisted that she take some leave when things were especially difficult and told her she could take more whenever she needed. Even more importantly he regularly checked on her welfare, demonstrated sympathetic understanding and gave her the details of a counselling service offered by the system should she need it. Jasmine was quite clear that the supportive culture of her school helped her enormously during this difficult time:

> Everybody's family goes through things – things happen that you can't plan for and they're very family oriented at this school and it's made it a lot easier for me knowing that they're going to support me … It's also the principal himself, taking a one on one approach and having conversations with me about it.

Jasmine's story demonstrates the critical role played by principals in the recruitment and retention of beginning teachers and the development of a supportive school culture. It is illustrative of at least three of the roles Wood (2005) identified as best practice for principals working in early career teacher induction. As was the case in Wood's study, Ryan played a 'pivotal role in the recruitment of novice teachers' in his school' (p. 52). He was part of the panel that interviewed Jasmine and took a leading role in her induction. He continued in the role of 'novice teacher advocate/retainer' through regular follow up meetings with her and other teachers new to the school, and he made a deliberate effort to engage her regularly on a one-to-one basis. This enabled him to form a close personal relationship with her based on trust and respect. As a result when Jasmine experienced difficulties in her personal life she did not hesitate to share these with him. He responded with empathy and compassion as well as providing practical support and advice. His response helped Jasmine to continue to stay focused and teach effectively – to remain resilient during a challenging time. Gu and Day (2007) in their study of the resilience of 300 English teachers, similarly found that leaders' sympathetic responses to pressures in teachers' personal lives had a direct effect of teachers remaining resilient while unsympathetic responses eroded resilience.

It is also clear from Jasmine's story that Ryan prioritised the emotional and relational aspects of his leadership role within the wider school culture. In doing so, he can be seen to be playing a third role identified by Wood (2005) – that of 'culture builder' in the school, described as 'a site administrator (who) organizes and/or supports institutional activities that promote professional relationships among novice teachers' (p. 45). Jasmine's socialisation into the profession was facilitated by the deliberate structuring of a range of structures, processes and activities aimed at developing a caring and community oriented culture – a culture that provided Jasmine with emotional support and assisted her to develop positive relationships with fellow staff. This was in stark contrast to her first appointment where she mixed only with teachers from her own discipline. Hargreaves (2004) used the term 'balkinisation' to describe school cultures (predominantly in secondary schools), where teachers primarily associate in 'departmental cubbyholes' and detailed negative consequences such as 'pedagogical inconsistency, competitive territoriality and lack of opportunities for teachers to learn from and support each other' (p. 18). Flores and Day (2006) found that balkanisation was one of a number of cultural features that had an adverse effect on new teachers:

> By and large, balkanization and competition amongst teachers, the 'normative' and bureaucratic side of teaching and the existence of 'vested interests' and the unwritten and implicit rules at school affected negatively new teachers' attitudes and practices, which became less progressive and innovative … Little importance was attached to colleagues as influencing elements in learning at work. (p. 229)

Jasmine understood the importance of forming close relationships with her students and drew on her own knowledge, skills and experiences to do so. However, she greatly appreciated the school-wide support that was available when she encountered student behaviour of a particularly challenging nature. The power of such support was confirmed by Manuel's (2003) finding about first year teachers in New South Wales:

> When new teachers perceive they are not well supported in their management efforts by colleagues, including the School Executive, they rapidly become disillusioned about the efficacy of the school's infrastructure, and their own capacities as effective teachers. (p. 147)

The second early career teacher, Audrey, also experienced working in two different schools during her first year of teaching. Her experiences further illustrate how the lack of appropriate support from school leaders may affect the resilience of early career teachers. Her story adds another dimension to understanding the role that principals might play in fostering positive relationships and providing emotional support for early career teachers.

Audrey's portrait

As sole parent of three school-age children it was vital for Audrey to find a job as soon as possible after qualifying, and she accepted the first teaching position offered to her. This was in the middle school department of a large senior high school situated in an area of extreme socio-economic disadvantage. Though primary trained Audrey had hoped eventually to teach in a middle school setting, after gaining

some experience in primary classrooms, so this was a perfect opportunity for her and she began the year with high optimism. However, she found the middle school 'very tough'. There were bullying, racism, and 'a lot of difficult behaviours in the classroom'. She was given what she described as the 'two worst class groups' to work with. Her situation was made more difficult because half of her year team were people in their first year of teaching. The lack of support from experienced colleagues who knew something of the realities of her work situation made a very difficult teaching situation even harder. Audrey felt she needed someone 'who is validating your experience because they know it, they really do know it'. Lacking the support of experienced colleagues, Audrey was left alone to struggle with situations for which she felt she had not been well prepared.

Towards the end of term 2, Audrey decided to leave the middle school and return to what she expected to be a more familiar setting in a primary school. This was not an easy decision, but again as a sole parent her choices were limited.

> I feel in a lot of ways, that I'm letting the team down, the school down, the kids down, myself down. But at the same time I have to look after myself and my kids, and I have to put that first.

Audrey's expectations were that at the new school she would be well supported and 'it would be wonderful'. She did indeed receive the support of the principal, Ross, with whom she met weekly to discuss her forward planning and programming. However, rather than feeling supported by Ross's input Audrey instead felt . . .

> . . . immediately chastised, I would say, for my classroom and how things were going in there. I was just being told 'this isn't good enough' and 'that's not good enough'.

Her sense of relief at being able to go back into the more amenable primary setting, having experienced pressure for 'a long, long time' at the first school, was short-lived. Her growing sense that her work was never good enough made her initial feelings of incompetence worse, to the extent that by the end of her first term in the new school, Audrey described herself as 'barely functioning in the classroom and not functioning at all outside the classroom'. With her young family to look after, whom she wanted to protect from knowing about her difficult work situation, and with 'no support' in the school, she felt 'completely alienated and isolated and ready to quit'. Her situation became so difficult that she decided to consult the union, who advised her not to go back into the school for the following term. But, because she decided that 'I needed to, that if I didn't do that then I may never get back into the classroom' Audrey did return to school at the start of term 4.

At about the same time Audrey began to acknowledge to herself where her problems really lay.

> I knew all along what the problem was although I'd been so, you know, embattled with that . . . I perhaps wasn't recognising it, perhaps I couldn't even verbalise it myself. I knew it was classroom behaviours that were the problem for me.

However, because she had been feeling 'so incompetent' she had been unable to ask for help.

> You can't, you don't function very well when you're being told that you're incompetent. And the last thing you want to do is go and tell somebody 'I'm hopeless'.

Once she was able to acknowledge to herself that she needed help she 'started talking to people' at the school for the first time.

This proved a turning point for Audrey. A few weeks into the term, and having felt able to ask for support from mentors both within and outside the school, Audrey had begun to feel better. Importantly, the principal expressed satisfaction with her work, and her belief in herself was beginning to be restored. Nevertheless by the end of the school year she was looking forward to leaving the school where her experiences had been so negative. She planned to stay in teaching, but intended to work as a relief teacher for the following year. As she explained, 'I would rather be broke and pushing to pay the mortgage than having to go through the stress of what I've done here'.

Audrey's experiences in her first school were not unlike those of many early career teachers who have to undertake the roles and responsibilities expected of a much more experienced teacher, often with the more difficult classes (Martinez, 2004; McCormack, 2007), and for whom feelings of isolation are often a reality (Fantili & McDougall, 2009). Her increasing isolation in her first school is attributable both to the difficulty of her teaching responsibilities and to the lack of support she received from more experienced colleagues. This lack of support led her to develop a less positive attitude to the experience of teaching in this school, and in this way her experiences resonate with those of the teachers studied by Flores and Day (2006). Audrey's experiences of isolation and lack of support appear not to be untypical, and contrast starkly with those of Jasmine in her second school.

While there are advantages when school principals take a central role in the induction of beginning teachers, Audrey's experiences demonstrate the potential risks involved if principals have a narrow conception of what induction might entail. Ryan, in his focus on providing emotional support and supporting Jasmine's socialisation into the profession, typifies a 'humanistic' approach to induction and his role as mentor (McCormack, 2007). In contrast, Ross's practice has much in common with the 'situated apprentice' approach to induction, which by prioritising the development of technical knowledge represents a 'rather narrow, functional' view of teaching (McCormack, 2007). Additionally, in Audrey's case the same person, Ross, was both her supervisor and her mentor. In blurring the important distinction between 'supervision' (with its associated requirement to monitor and assess performance) and 'mentoring' (with its focus on the provision of support for growth and professional learning), Audrey's performance became emphasised at the expense of a focus on her well-being and self-esteem. Furthermore, the decision of Audrey's principal to take complete responsibility for her supervision and mentoring prevented her from developing supportive professional relationships with other teachers. Thus Audrey did not have the opportunity to be surrounded by 'a professional culture that focuses on constructive learning' but experienced instead 'a period of coping, survival and adjustment' that was not conducive to her professional growth (McCormack & Gore, 2008, p. 2).

Ross's focus on the functional aspects of teaching meant that this became Audrey's focus too. This focus also emphasised her hopelessness, and made it impossible for her to talk to someone else in the school because 'the last thing you want to do is go and tell somebody that you're hopeless.' As Long (2009) points

out, some mentoring practices impede the growth of early career teachers and in fact may contribute to their decision to leave the profession. Examples are when mentors are not formally trained in their role, or when the role is not clearly understood or the complexities made explicit to mentors (Long, 2009). For Audrey, the experience of a mentoring relationship that was narrowly conceived and that did not take into account her feelings or her self-esteem did impede her growth, and had a negative impact on her resilience. In fairness, it must be acknowledged that Ross's investment in Audrey's professional development was considerable. His desire to provide support can be seen in his weekly meetings and in his strategic monitoring of Audrey's teaching. Yet Ross's interventions appear primarily to have aimed at ensuring that Audrey's class was able to continue to function with the least disruption: a 'business as usual' approach (Martinez, 2004): and the provision of support can be read as undertaken in the interests of the school rather than of Audrey.

Jasmine's and Audrey's experiences both illustrate the emotional and unpredictable nature of teachers' lives and the critical role of positive staff relationships in sustaining commitment and promoting resilience. They provide powerful examples of the 'social dimension of teacher resilience' (Gu & Day, 2007, p. 1305). It can be seen that Jasmine's success as a beginning teacher was linked to the nature of the relationships she was able to develop with her students, fellow staff and school leaders and the emotional support she received. These became even more important when events in her personal life threatened her ability to cope with the daily demands of being both an effective teacher and a responsible family member. Her experiences are consistent with Gu and Day's (2007, p. 1302) finding that 'resilience is located in the discourse of teaching as emotional practice and is found to be a multi-dimensional, socially constructed concept that is relative, dynamic and developmental in nature'. At the end of her first year of teaching Jasmine appeared to be thriving, and was demonstrating characteristics such as commitment, motivation and high efficacy found to signify teacher resilience (Gu & Day, 2007). It would have been easy for Ryan and others in the school to have seen her as no longer needing their support. Yet within a few short weeks her professional identity as a successful teacher was under threat from her emotional response to outside events. This is not surprising when considered in the light of O'Connor's (2008) reflection on the connection between professional identity and emotions:

> Discussing professional identity, or the individual's ability to negotiate and improvise aspects of a professional role, requires an understanding of how emotions guide our professional practices and decisions. (p. 118)

If Jasmine had been in a school that allowed new teachers to 'sink or swim', or even in one that provided structured induction for beginning teachers that was limited to a few sessions or a fixed period of time, then the consequences may have been deteriorating performance, loss of confidence, an extended period of stress leave or even resignation. McCormack et al. (2006) made the point:

> It is therefore important for schools and leaders to create the kind of school ethos where not only structured induction programs operate but also where professional discussion is the norm and early career teachers are encouraged and welcomed to contribute. (p. 108)

Fortunately, Jasmine was in a school where there was an ethos focused on developing a caring and inclusive community for all staff and students, as well as providing formal and informal support for beginning teachers over an extended period of time.

Kardoss, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, and Liu (2001) described cultures where new teachers had frequent support and exchanges with more experienced colleagues as 'integrated cultures'. Such cultures can be contrasted with 'veteran-oriented cultures', which neglect the needs of beginning teachers, and 'novice-oriented cultures' where large numbers of novice teachers support each other but have little experienced guidance about how to teach (p. 250). The school cultures that Audrey experienced could be characterised as 'novice-orientated' (in the first school) and 'veteran-orientated' (in the second). Her story illustrates the impact of the isolation that resulted from the lack of an 'integrated culture' in either school. It is interesting that based on her prior knowledge of the school culture of the second school, which was based on the reports of other students and teachers who had worked there, Audrey expected she would indeed find opportunities for support from experienced colleagues typical of an 'integrated culture'.

In Jasmine's case, Ryan appears to have been central to the 'integrated' nature of the school culture. According to Moir (2003), this is how it should be. She argued that building a 'school culture that is caring, collaborative, open and inclusive' is one of a principal's most important jobs' (p. 1). In similar vein, having a collaborative school principal who is 'open to questions and at the disposal of new teachers' is one of the most effective supports for people in their first years of teaching (Fantili & McDougall, 2009, p. 823). However, it might also be argued that it is problematic for one person in a school to have so much influence on the welfare of a staff member, new or otherwise. For instance, Hall and Southworth (1997, p. 155; cited in Crawford, 2009) suggested that 'headship is "the licensed promotion of an individual's professional values", which "legitimates their exercise of power in the school"' (p. 523). This may be the case in schools where democracy is not practised, but in Jasmine's school there appears to have been an inclusive and democratic approach to leadership where in her first year she had been encouraged to take on a strong leadership role in her discipline area. The fact remains that even in the most democratic of schools, decisions about matters such as induction, learning opportunities and time release tend to be made at the formal leadership level.

One might expect that all principals would take a personal interest in the development and welfare of novice teachers, but many studies have shown this to be the exception rather than the norm. For instance, Flores and Day (2006, p. 229), in their study of new teachers in England found lack of support from school leaders 'led to the emergence of idiosyncratic coping strategies' and less positive attitudes in new teachers. Similarly, in a large Australian study of beginning teachers over their first two years, McCormack and Thomas (2003) found that their most common concern was the lack of ongoing support from school leaders. Even where leaders took some role in their induction, many participants found 'this form of induction was of an administrative nature with information relating to school routines and requirements rather than assistance with the teaching and socialization processes within the school' (p. 133). Jasmine's experience in her first school was reminiscent of these findings as she never spoke to the principal and school leaders took little or no responsibility for supporting her socialisation as a new member of the school

community – it was left largely to chance. In that school she was fortunate that her previous work in the school as a pre-service teacher enabled her to form connections with key staff in her subject areas.

Considering the context in which school leaders are currently working, it is perhaps not surprising that having a close personal/professional relationship with beginning teachers is not a high priority. Gu and Day (2007) made the point that more than ever before schools in the UK, USA and Australia have to operate within culture of 'strong "performativity" and increased workload pressure' (p. 1303). Within this culture the emotional and relational nature of school leaders' work is not prioritised. As Blackmore (1996) suggested, the prioritising of rationality over emotionality is a characteristic of market-driven education policies and has led to an impoverished view of emotion as something to be controlled. It is not surprising if school leaders feel the need to manage their own and teachers' emotions by developing 'a rhetoric of detachment and coping' (Blackmore, 1996, p. 346). This seems to have been the case for Ross, Audrey's principal, whose focus on the improvement of her performance seems to have prevented him from understanding the intense distress she was actually feeling. A failure to acknowledge the relational and emotional dimensions of school leaders' work can lead to principals believing that 'ideal "professional" behaviour' is rational and carefully emotionally controlled (Crawford, 2009, p. 533). Crawford found that nothing could be further from the truth, arguing:

> . . . emotion is inherent in the practice of leadership rather than separate from it, and all organizing actions are inseparable from and influenced by emotion. It is not enough for a leader to acknowledge the inherent emotions in the culture of an organization; s/he has to make them explicit through their own leadership. (p. 521)

Davies and Davies (2004) concurred, suggesting that if they are to be effective leaders need 'to combine practical intelligence, analytical intelligence and emotional intelligence' (p. 35). Emotional intelligence has been defined as the ability to know one's own emotions, manage emotions, motivate oneself, recognise emotions in others, and handle relationships (Salovery & Mayer, p. 190, cited in Goleman, 1995).

Within the current managerial climate school leaders are understandably preoccupied with meeting a variety of external standards imposed by governments and systems while also taking on increasingly complex administrative roles in terms of managing budgets and facilities. These pressures can mean that many principals have only fleeting contact with teachers and students. Wood (2005) found that it could be even more difficult for principals to interact with new staff in secondary schools, such as the one in which Jasmine taught, because they are often large in size, have more rigid and constraining class schedules, and induction is more likely to be delegated to someone else in the leadership team. Furthermore, she concluded:

> . . . the culture of secondary schools may contribute to relationships between secondary principals and novice teachers being less informal, personalized and interactive and instead contribute to school expectations that these relationships are more formalized, indirect and assessment oriented. (p. 57)

Nor is it common for school leaders to receive any kind of professional development to better support beginning teachers. Wood (2005) and Sharp (2006) are

among researchers whose studies of teacher induction have led them to call for clear guidelines and professional development for principals to help them to better support new teachers.

Conclusion

The portraits of Jasmine and Audrey illustrate the vulnerability of many beginning teachers, whose work conditions are dependent on the goodwill and discretion of colleagues and leaders. In both stories, the principals played a central role in terms of the amount and kind of personal support they gave and their leadership in developing the overall school culture. While Ryan and Ross were equally generous in dedicating their time and expertise to supporting Jasmine and Audrey, the qualitative differences in the support they gave led to very different outcomes for the teachers. In particular, the acknowledgement of the emotional and relational dimensions of teachers' work, which was exemplified so well in Ryan's support for Jasmine, appears to have been a key factor in the resilience of these two early career teachers. Their experiences suggest that early career teacher resilience is enhanced when leaders:

- take a personal interest in early career teachers' welfare and development;
- actively participate in their employment and ongoing induction;
- model and foster relationships that are 'trusting, generous, helpful and cooperative' (Barth, 2006, p. 9);
- lead the development of school cultures that are supportive of the learning and well being of staff and students;
- negotiate democratic and collaborative processes;
- take a 'humanistic' approach to mentoring which acknowledges the importance of building self-esteem while also developing professional knowledge and skills.

We have noted that it is uncommon for school leaders to receive any kind of professional development to better support beginning teachers. In light of these stories, we would echo the voices of those such as Wood (2005) and Sharp (2006) who call for increased support for principals in recognition of the important role they can play in enhancing the resilience of early career teachers.

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