
by

Lizzie M. Alston

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APPROVED:

Glen Earthman, Chairman

Richard Salmon

Jerome Niles

Tina Dawson

Joseph Bryson

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A CASE STUDY OF EIGHT FIRST-YEAR SECONDARY SCIENCE TEACHERS IN NORTH CAROLINA: PROBLEMS, ISSUES AND BEHAVIORS

by
Lizzie M. Alston
Dr. Glen I. Earthman

Educational Administration

(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study is to (1) identify some of the major problems confronting first-year secondary science teachers; (2) list supportive practices supplied by the school-based administration and district-wide programs for first-year secondary science teachers; and (3) describe problems of socialization confronting first-year secondary science teachers.

The study analyzes perceptions of eight first-year secondary science teachers under contract at the start of the 1996-1997 school year. The study viewed these teachers as novice by definition and perceptions of specific support activities which assisted them in moving from initially licensed to career tenure status.

The literature review examines research on teacher based on self-reporting data. Although several of the cited research studies consider first-year teachers in general, few qualitative studies contain specific information on first-year secondary
science teachers, e. g., what is involved in the new environment or what developmental skills are needed to survive the year.

The research procedure used in this study is the individual case study method. Data were collected primarily through ethnographic interviews and surveys of eight first-year secondary science teachers and six administrators responsible for evaluation of these teachers. (Two administrators did not respond to the survey.) A thematic conceptual matrix was used to display the problems and issues faced by and support offered to these teachers.

The findings clearly reveal the top two problems of first-year secondary science teachers to be discipline and classroom/time management exacerbated by a perceived lack of administrative support and assistance.
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A journey like this, takes a lingering look backward at many people who supported, loved, and guided my path. These memories provide evidence that such a journey was fearful, but at the same time fearless.

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