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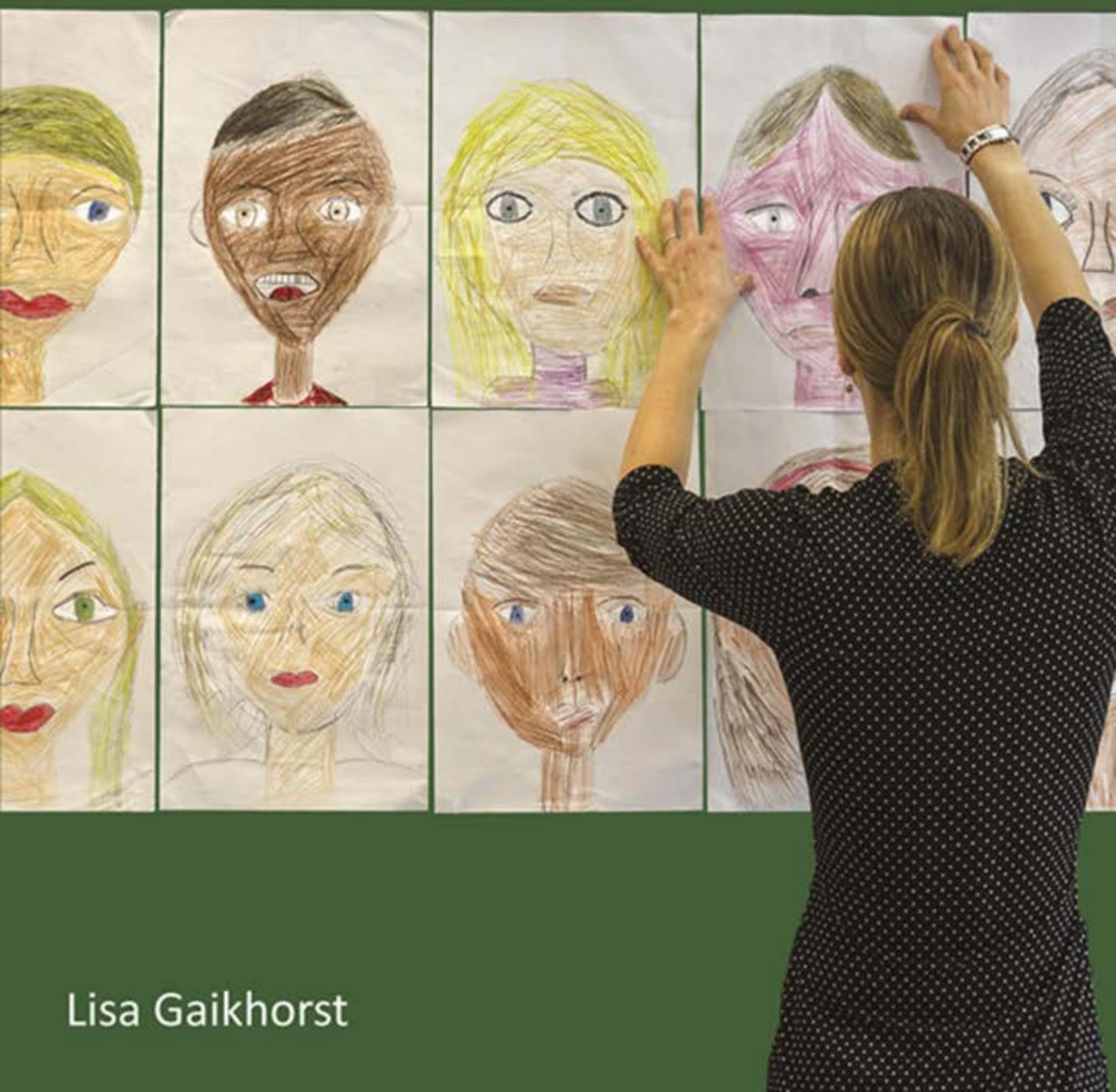
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Supporting beginning teachers in urban environments



Lisa Gaikhorst

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ico

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Supporting beginning teachers in urban environments

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CHAPTER 1

General introduction

Teacher retention is a considerable problem in many countries, in particular in urban areas (e.g., Ingersoll, 2003; Olsen & Anderson, 2007). In the Netherlands, the four major cities (Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague and Rotterdam) have more problems in fulfilling teaching jobs than other parts of the Netherlands (Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, 2012; Participation Fund, 2012). In the school year 2010-2011, the unfilled vacancy-intensity, which is the percentage of vacancies relative to the total employment, was higher in the four major cities than elsewhere in the Netherlands, with Amsterdam ranks highest (Participation Fund, 2012). It also appeared that the outflow of beginning teachers from primary schools is higher in the four major cities than in other parts of the Netherlands (Vrieling, Ruis, & Van der Ploeg, 1997; Berndsen, Gemmeke, Hello, & De Weerd, 2004). The high drop out of beginning teachers is a problem in the Netherlands, because the need for new teachers will increase in the coming years when a large number of teachers will reach the retirement age (CAOP, 2012). In 2020, a great shortage of teachers in primary education is expected, especially in the largest cities of the Netherlands (Centerdata, 2013). For a variety of reasons, including violence and cultural differences, teaching in urban schools is difficult and challenging (Groulx, 2001; Haberman, 1995; Hooge, 2008; Smith & Smith, 2006). This can lead to an outflow of teachers from these schools and from education in general.

This research focuses on *how beginning teachers can be better equipped for teaching in urban environments, so the chance that they leave teaching after a few years decreases*. Several studies showed that both professional development programmes outside the school and guidance in the workplace itself ('induction') can contribute to the quality and retention of teachers (Gilles, McGlamery, & Davis, 2009). Teachers who participated in support programmes remain longer in the teaching profession and are more successful in their career than teachers who have not participated in such programmes (Gilles, Davis, & MacGlamery, 2009). Nevertheless, it is unknown how to best support and retain teachers in urban environments. Despite several initiatives intended to professionalise and motivate

teachers to teach in urban schools, there are still teacher shortages in urban areas and beginning teachers are more likely to leave urban schools compared with non-urban schools (Berndsen, Gemmeke, Hello, & De Weerd, 2004; Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003).

This dissertation reports on different ways of supporting beginning urban teachers. The study starts with an exploration of the specific problems of beginning urban teachers. Thereafter, a professional development programme that aims to better equip teachers for teaching in an urban environment was evaluated. Finally, the study focused on induction in the workplace itself, in particular on the elements of induction that are of great importance for beginning urban teachers.

Conceptual framework

In this study, several lines from the literature come together; research on teaching in urban environments, research on teacher quality and research on teacher professional development.

Teaching in urban environments

Research showed that beginning teachers are more likely to leave urban schools compared with non-urban schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003). A major cause of the early outflow of beginning teachers from urban schools is that teaching in an urban environment is difficult and challenging for teachers. Beginning teachers in urban contexts have to deal with the issues that apply to all beginning teachers, such as classroom discipline and a high workload (Abbot, Moran, & Clarke, 2009; Veenman, 1984). In addition, beginning urban teachers have to deal with typical challenges of an urban context, such as dealing with cultural diversity and dealing with an unsafe atmosphere in and around the school (Groulx, 2001; Knoblauch & Woolfolk, 2006).

In contrast to most studies on urban teaching, in this study urban teaching is not only conceptualised as teaching in ‘disadvantaged’ primary schools where students come from culturally diverse and low socio-economic backgrounds. In our study urban teaching also refers to teaching in ‘more advantaged’ primary schools where most students are of Dutch heritage and have highly educated parents, and to teaching in

‘mixed’ primary schools where the student population is a mix of both Dutch pupils and students from culturally diverse backgrounds. This broad definition is used in this study because these different types of primary schools are characteristic of the situation in many large cities in the Netherlands (Hooge, 2008).

Teacher quality

Teaching in an urban environment places heavy and diverse demands on the quality of teachers. This study focused on teacher quality as assessed in terms of the teachers’ competences, professional orientation and self-efficacy.

Teacher competences

As for the quality of teachers, we were in the first place interested in the competences required for working in an urban environment. Teaching in an urban environment demands specific competences of teachers. American research shows that teaching in large cities demands of teachers that they can handle cultural diversity and language deficiencies of children (Olmedo, 1997; Smith & Smith, 2006). Besides, research shows that teachers in urban environments must have collaborative skills; they should be able to build effective relationships with both people in the school (like colleagues) and outside the school (like parents) (Voltz, Collins, Patterson, & Sims, 2007). However, about the Dutch situation is little known at this point; it is not clear what specific problems and competences the work of teachers in the major cities of the Netherlands includes. Although there are several initiatives, from for instance the university teacher training colleges, to formulate competences for teaching in Dutch urban environments, these initiatives are not based on scientific research on teaching in urban environments.

Professional orientation

In today’s society, teachers are expected not only to perform well within their own classroom but also to demonstrate professionalism that extends beyond the classroom. Thus, an extended professional orientation is an important criterion for teacher quality (Mahieu, Forest Diet, & Peene, 1999). Hoyle (1980) distinguishes ‘restricted professionalism’, in which teachers focus primarily on their own classroom and base their actions on experience rather than on theory, from ‘extended professionalism’ in which

teachers are involved in the school organisation and have an interest that extends beyond the classroom. There are indications that job satisfaction of teachers is positively promoted by shared responsibility and mutual support of the team of teachers, which is typical for extended professionalism (Mahieu et al., 1999).

Self-efficacy

Finally, this study focuses on the teachers' self-perceived quality. The study follows the literature on 'teacher efficacy', which is defined as "the teacher's belief in her or his ability to organise and execute the course of actions required to successfully accomplish a specific task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 233). Self-efficacy affects not only teacher effort but also the extent to which the teacher can flexibly cope with mistakes and stress from dealing with demanding situations (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Research also indicates that teachers with low self-efficacy are less motivated to experiment with pedagogical innovations/challenges and are more likely to experience burnout than are teachers with high self-efficacy (Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002). Consequently, teachers with lower self-efficacy are more likely to leave the teaching profession because of burnout. Siwatu (2011) found that starting teachers have lower self-efficacy regarding teaching in urban areas than regarding teaching in suburban areas. In other words, beginning teachers believe that they are less capable of teaching in urban schools. According to Siwatu (2011), it is conceivable that teachers in urban areas who doubt their capabilities to manage daily challenges may be the ones who will leave the teaching profession after a few years of teaching.

Teacher professional development

Several studies have shown that professional development programmes can improve teacher quality and teacher retention (Borko, 2004; Gilles, Davis, & MacGlamery, 2009). Teachers who participated in professional development programmes remained in the profession longer than teachers who did not participate in such programmes (Gilles et al., 2009). Professional development programmes could also contribute to teacher retention in urban schools.

Although there is agreement regarding the importance of professional

development programmes, it is not clear what form of professionalisation is most effective for teachers. There is a growing consensus that programmes situated in the workplace are more effective than those situated outside the workplace, though there exists no unequivocal evidence to support this conclusion (Van Veen, Zwart, & Meirink, 2012).

Recent research shows that the content of a professional development programme appears to be more relevant than the form, and programmes that primarily focus on daily teaching practice seem to have a greater effect on the development of teachers than programmes with a more general focus (Van Veen et al., 2012). A study on new forms of professional development for teachers found that networks of teachers that allow teachers of different schools to exchange and discuss their experiences are promising ways for professional development and job motivation of teachers (Hofman & Dijkstra, 2010). However, previous research has not taken into account the effects of professional development programmes in different contexts. A specific context in which the professionalisation of teachers must be further investigated is that of the urban educational context (Freedman & Appleman, 2009). Despite several initiatives aimed to professionalise teachers to teach in urban schools, there are still teacher shortages in urban areas and beginning teachers are more likely to leave urban schools compared with non-urban schools (Berndsen et al., 2004; Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003).

Professional learning communities

Although several studies showed that professional development programmes can contribute to teachers' quality and retention (Borko, 2004; Gilles, Davis, & MacGlamery, 2009), it also appeared that it is not self-evident that the effects of professional development programmes will be maintained in the longer term. Previous research showed that professional development interventions should be permanent and lasting to become and remain effective, for instance by creating follow-up activities (Yoon, 2009; Desimone, 2009).

According to several studies, the creation of a professional learning community (PLC) in schools is a promising way to promote continuous professional development of teachers (Little, 2006). PLC's refer to close relationships between teachers, usually with the implication that these relationships are oriented toward teacher professional

development (Little, 2006). Strong PLC's are characterised by an overall vision in which the learning of teachers is considered to be relevant by both school leaders and teachers (Little, 2006). There is a collective focus on and shared responsibility for student learning, collective control over important decisions and collaboration between teachers (Grodsky & Gamoran, 2003; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Little, 2006; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Teachers in strong PLC's have access to new knowledge about teaching and learning and to the expertise of colleagues from in- and outside their school. They give each other feedback on individual performance and on aspects of classroom and school practice (Little, 2006). Preconditions for the creation of strong PLC's are enough time, materials and space, and access to the expertise of colleagues (Little, 2006). Furthermore, school leaders play an important role; their role is to cultivate PLC's (Stoll, et al., 2006).

Several studies showed positive relations between PLC's in schools and the ongoing professional development of teachers (Little, 2006; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Wilson & Berne, 1999). There are also indications that the success of professional development programmes is dependent on the quality of PLC's in schools. At the same time, there are indications that when a school supports teachers' participation in high-quality professional development programmes, this in turn may also strengthen PLC's (Little, 2006).

Although many studies stressed the importance of PLC's in schools for the (ongoing) professional development of teachers and for the success of professional development programmes, little is known about the characteristics of and activities in PLC's that contribute to the sustainability of professional development interventions.

Context of the study

The first two chapters of this study consisted of an evaluation of a professional development programme ('Mastery') for beginning urban teachers. This 'Mastery' programme aimed at preparing beginning teachers for the challenges of teaching in urban primary schools in the Netherlands. The programme which was developed collaboratively by teacher education institutes, had a twofold purpose: to increase the *quality* of teaching and to contribute to the *retention* of beginning teachers in an urban educational context.

The 'Mastery' programme was focused on the acquisition of skills necessary to

meet the challenges of teaching in a complex urban environment - such as collaborating with professionals both inside and outside the school environment, dealing with aggressive behaviour and language deficiencies of children, communicating with parents of different cultural backgrounds - and on developing an extended professional orientation. The programme comprised four modules: 'school and environment', 'safety', 'language' and 'cultural diversity'.

The programme lasted one year and consisted of the following three components: group meetings (these involved theoretical input from experts regarding the four urban themes, opportunities for sharing and discussing experiences and group assignments that connected theory with practical situations), classroom application (participants apply newly gained insights to their teaching practice and discuss their experiences during group meetings) and lectures (in which experts explored substantive themes and linked them to research results). Additionally, supervision was organised, offering a context for beginning teachers to share experiences and expertise.

The city of Amsterdam

The main part of the study was conducted among beginning teachers and principals from urban primary schools in Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands. Although the number of inhabitants in Amsterdam (approximately 780,000) is not high compared to cities in other countries, Amsterdam is, often as part of the Randstad, considered to be a global city. Schools in global cities are confronted with different types of student populations: there are schools that primarily serve children with a high socio economic status and a native background (the so called 'advantaged schools') and schools with primarily children from a low socio economic status and sometimes also culturally diverse backgrounds (the 'disadvantaged schools'). 'Mixed schools' can also be found, where the student population is a mix of both disadvantaged and advantaged pupils (Hooge, 2008). For our study, we included teachers from both disadvantaged, mixed and advantaged schools because these schools are characteristic for global cities and teachers must be equipped and supported for the situations in these different types of schools. In Table 1, several characteristics of primary education in Amsterdam are presented.

Table 1

Characteristics of primary education in Amsterdam

Teachers	
Gender	The majority of the teachers in Amsterdam are female, 20% of the teachers are male.
Age	Only 5% of the teachers are 24 years old or younger, almost 30% of the teachers are between 45 and 54 years old.
Schools	
Size	An average school in Amsterdam has 293 pupils, the largest school consists of 759 pupils and the smallest school has 57 pupils.
Performance	The average results of the Cito-test (which is a end of primary school test that is annually administered to final year primary school pupils in the Netherlands) in Amsterdam are lower than the average results nationally (534.3 and 535.6 respectively). In 2008, 42 of the 200 primary schools in Amsterdam were evaluated as (very) weak by the Dutch national inspectorate. A cooperation of the municipality and schoolboards was set up to improve the quality of primary education in Amsterdam. In October 2012, only 12 schools were evaluated as (very) weak.
Students	
Distribution boys/girls	In Amsterdam, the distribution of boys to girls among the students is equal.
Students' cultural background	The total student population of the primary schools in Amsterdam consist of students with a native background (37%), students with a non-Western background (52%) such as Moroccan (18%), Turkish (8%), Surinamese (9%) and Antillean (2%) students, and students with non-Dutch Western backgrounds (11%). 21% of the primary schools in Amsterdam have less than 25% students with a non-Western background, 23% of the schools have between 25-50% non-Western students, 18% of the schools have between 50-75% non-Western students, and 39% of the schools have more than 75% non-Western students.
Students' economical background	55% of the primary schools in Amsterdam have less than 25% students from lower SES, 31% of the schools have 25-50% students from lower SES, and 14% of the schools have between 50-75% students from lower SES.

Sources:

Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling (2012). *Kwaliteitswijzer 2011-2012*. Amsterdam: Gemeente Amsterdam & BBO Amsterdam.

Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs. Retrieved from

http://www.duo.nl/organisatie/open_onderwijsdata/databestanden/po/Leerlingen/default.asp

Problem statement and research questions

As previously stated, the central question of this research project was: How can beginning teachers be better equipped for teaching in urban environments, so the chance that they leave teaching after a few years decreases? This central research question was broken down into the following research questions:

1. What are the problems that beginning teachers encounter in urban primary schools?
2. What is the (long term) contribution of participating in the ‘Mastery’ programme to the quality and retention of beginning teachers in an urban environment?
3. Which characteristics and activities are typical of school organisations in which teachers reported positive longer term effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme?
4. What are characteristics of the support structure and – culture at schools where teachers judge positively or less positively about the support they receive?

Method

To answer the first research question, an exploratory study was conducted using in-depth semi-structured topic interviews with 15 beginning teachers from Dutch urban primary schools. A qualitative research method was selected because we were interested in the perceived problems and the meaning of these problems for the teachers.

The second research question was investigated by using a quasi-experimental design. The contribution of participation in the ‘Mastery’ programme to the different dependent variables was measured using a knowledge test and questionnaires (pre-, post- and retention measures). Multilevel modelling was used to analyse the data. Measurement occasions (level 1) were treated as nested in teachers (level 2). The independent variables in the analyses were condition (‘Mastery’ condition or control condition) and measurement occasion, while the dependent variables were competences, professional orientation, self-efficacy, job motivation, and career choices. To gather complementary information regarding teachers’ evaluation of the programme and to obtain a detailed understanding of the active elements of the programme, interviews were conducted and analysed qualitatively.

The third research question, about the PLC characteristics and activities that are

typical of school organisations in which teachers reported positive longer term effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme, was investigated through interviews with ten teachers who reported positive effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme in the longer term and with their principals. This qualitative method was chosen because we wanted to obtain a detailed understanding of the PLC characteristics and activities that were meaningful for the teachers in that sense that the activities helped the teachers to maintain and/or enhance the longer term effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme.

To answer the last research question, a descriptive study was conducted using 19 in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight beginning teachers and 11 principals from 11 primary schools in Amsterdam. A qualitative research method was chosen because we were interested in the participants’ experiences of the support structure and culture of their school. By using a qualitative method, the participants were able to describe their experiences in detail.

Relevance of the study

The study presented in this dissertation is relevant both from a practical and theoretical perspective. The study provides an overview of some prominent problems faced by beginning urban teachers in different types of urban schools. In contrast to previous studies on urban teaching, this study focused not only on urban schools with disadvantaged student populations, but also on schools with more advantaged and mixed student populations, which makes it possible to get a good overview of the diversity of teaching in urban schools and the diverse problems that urban teachers might experience. The results could be used to develop adequate preparation and support for beginning urban teachers.

Furthermore, the study provides theoretical insights by identifying several elements of professional development and induction programmes that are valuable for beginning urban teachers. The study showed which elements of professional development programmes, professional learning communities and the support structure and –culture of schools are important for beginning urban teachers.

The research provides theoretical and empirical knowledge about the organisation of valuable support practices for beginning teachers in urban environments. The focus in the study was on the European urban educational context, in which little research has

been done before on urban teaching. The results of the study can contribute to the knowledge of teachers educators, educational support services, schools, school boards and researchers about the organisation of valuable support practices for beginning urban teachers. Increased knowledge could lead to a more effective organisation of support practices for beginning urban teachers, which - in turn - could lead to an improvement of the quality and retention of beginning urban teachers.

Outline of the dissertation

The general aim of this dissertation is to provide insight in how beginning urban teachers can be better equipped for teaching in urban environments. In order to achieve this aim, four studies were conducted.

Chapter 2 reports on an in-depth study of the problems encountered by 15 beginning teachers who worked at a primary school in Amsterdam or Utrecht (Research Question 1). Semi-structured interviews were used to find out what problems beginning teachers perceived in urban primary schools. The study provides an overview of prominent problems faced by beginning teachers in urban schools.

Chapter 3 reports on an evaluation of a professional development programme ('Mastery') that aimed to improve the quality and retention of beginning teachers in an urban environment (Research Question 2). The contribution of the Mastery-programme to 66 primary school teachers' competences, self-efficacy, professional orientation, job motivation and career choices was examined by using a quasi-experimental design and interviews. A knowledge test, questionnaires and interviews were used to determine the contribution of the Mastery-programme to the dependent variables. These instruments were used to perform measurements on three occasions, namely: a pre-test, a post-test and a retention test to examine the short-term as well as the long-term effects of the programme. The results of the short-term effects are presented in chapter 3, the effects of the long-term effects in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 reports on the long-term effects of the Mastery-programme (Research Question 2) and the PLC characteristics and activities that were undertaken in school organisations where teachers reported positive long term effects of the programme (Research Question 3). The long-term effects were investigated in a quasi-experimental design, whereas the PLC characteristics and activities were examined through interviews.

Ten teachers who reported positive long term effects of the Mastery-programme and their principals were interviewed.

Chapter 5 contains a report on a descriptive study of the induction of beginning teachers at urban primary schools (Research Question 4). This study aimed to gain insight into the support structure and culture for beginning teachers at urban primary schools. Beginning teachers and principals from 11 urban primary schools were interviewed about the support structure and culture at their school. The sample included schools where beginning teachers judged positively or less positively about the support that they received. Based on a comparison between the schools where teachers judged positively or less positively about the support practice, valuable elements of the support structure and culture were identified.

Chapter 6 presents and discusses the main results of the studies in this dissertation. Furthermore, the limitations of the study and implications for future research and educational practice are considered.

Schematic overview

Figure 1.1 provides a graphical overview of the research project reported in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

The problems of beginning teachers in urban primary schools

Abstract

This study examined the problems of beginning teachers in urban primary schools. Interviews were used to investigate the problems experienced by teachers at schools with advantaged, disadvantaged and mixed student populations. The results showed that beginning teachers experience several problems related to the urban environment. These problems were different for the different types of urban schools; teachers at disadvantaged schools primarily perceive problems related to the diverse student population, whereas teachers at advantaged and mixed schools experience problems such as dealing with highly educated parents and applying differentiation to adequately teach both the gifted and the lower performing students.

Keywords: urban teaching, beginning teachers, induction, professional development; teacher retention

Introduction

As a consequence of continuous urbanisation, an increasing number of teachers is employed at schools in global cities. Social polarisation is typical for global cities: they are populated both by highly educated inhabitants with high incomes who live in relatively wealthy and safe neighbourhoods and by less educated inhabitants with low incomes who live in relatively poor and unsafe neighbourhoods (Van de Wouden & De Bruijne, 2002; Sassen, 2002). Social polarisation in global cities is reflected in the schools: there are schools that primarily educate children with a high socio-economic status and a native background ('advantaged schools') and schools that primarily educate children from a lower socio economic status and sometimes also from culturally diverse backgrounds ('disadvantaged schools'). In addition, 'mixed schools' can be found where the student population is a mix of advantaged and disadvantaged pupils (Hooge, 2008). Teachers in global cities can thus be confronted with either a more homogenous (deprived or advantaged) or a more heterogeneous student population.

Research showed that the dropout rate of beginning teachers in urban primary schools is relatively high (Ingersoll, 2003; Berndsen et al., 2004). Teaching in urban schools is difficult and challenging (Groulx, 2001; Smith & Smith, 2006), and a relatively high number of teachers tend to leave jobs at these schools and to leave the education profession in general. It appeared that teachers are often not well prepared for teaching in urban schools (Erskine- Cullen & Sinclair, 1996; Çelik & Amaç, 2012). This lack of preparation is understandable: an adequate preparation for urban teaching is difficult to achieve because the problems of urban teachers and the schools in which they will be employed are so diverse.

Several studies showed that both professional development programmes outside the school and induction programmes inside the school can positively contribute to the retention and professional development of teachers (Borko, 2004; Gilles, Davis, & McGlamery, 2009; Lindgren, 2005; Krol et al., 2008). Research showed that it is important for these programmes to focus on the problems and support needs that teachers experience in the specific context in which they operate (Van Veen, Zwart, & Meirink, 2012).

Therefore, to develop good preparation and support programmes for urban teachers, it is important to obtain a clear picture of the problems faced by starting

teachers in urban schools. The majority of research concerning urban teaching is based upon the situation in 'disadvantaged' schools (see, for instance, Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010; Halvorsen, Lee, & Andrade 2009). Little research has been performed, however, on the situation in advantaged or mixed urban schools, although these schools are also common and characteristic of global cities. Teachers must also be prepared and supported for the situations in these schools.

The central aim of this study was to identify the specific problems of beginning teachers at urban primary schools. We focused on the problems of teachers from three different types of urban primary schools (schools with advantaged, mixed and disadvantaged student populations). An exploratory study with in-depth semi-structured topic interviews was conducted with 15 beginning teachers who worked at an urban primary school in Amsterdam (the capital of the Netherlands) or Utrecht (one of the four major cities in the Netherlands).

Teaching in urban environments

In contrast to most studies on urban teaching, in this study, urban teaching is not only conceptualised as teaching in 'disadvantaged' schools where students come from families with a low socio-economic status and sometimes also culturally diverse backgrounds. We use 'urban teaching' to also refer to teaching in a global city. Global cities are characterised by a large financial sector, many business services, the headquarters of many large (multinational) companies and pioneering activities and achievements on a global level (Fainstain, 2001; Sassen, 2002). Social polarisation is typical for global cities: the residents are represented both by highly educated individuals with extraordinarily high incomes who live in relatively wealthy, safe neighbourhoods and also by less educated individuals with low incomes who live in relatively poor, unsafe neighbourhoods. A reason for this polarisation is the particular economic structure of global cities: on the one hand, opportunities exist for people to earn exceptionally high incomes and, on the other hand, a demand exists for low-paid, low-skill workers. Middle incomes are marginalised (Van de Wouden & De Bruijne, 2002; Sassen, 2002).

Social polarisation in global cities is often reflected in the schools. Schools in global cities are confronted with different types of student populations: there are schools that primarily serve children with a high socio economic status and a native background

(the so called ‘advantaged schools’) and schools with primarily children from a low socio economic status and sometimes also culturally diverse backgrounds (the so called ‘disadvantaged schools’). ‘Mixed schools’ can also be found, where the student population is a mix of both disadvantaged and advantaged pupils (Hooge, 2008). In our study, we used a broad definition of urban teaching, namely, teaching in disadvantaged, mixed and advantaged schools, because these schools are characteristic of global cities and teachers must be equipped and supported for the situations in these different types of schools.

Challenges for beginning teachers in an urban context

Beginning teachers in an urban context must deal with the challenges that apply to all beginning teachers. Additionally, beginning urban teachers must address the challenges that are specifically related to teaching in an urban context.

Challenges for beginning teachers

One of the first and best-known studies about the challenges of beginning teachers is the literature review of Veenman (1984). Veenman reviewed 83 international articles and developed a list of the problems perceived by starting teachers. Some of these problems included classroom discipline, contact with parents, relationships with colleagues and principals, awareness of school policies and rules, insufficient preparation and spare time, the burden of clerical work and inadequate guidance and support. However, only a small fraction of the studies reviewed by Veenman specifically focused on primary schools. In addition, no distinction was made between the problems perceived by teachers at different types of schools, such as urban and non-urban schools. Because the studies were conducted between 1960 and 1984, it is unlikely that the same results would be found nowadays. However, Veenman’s study still provides insight into the broad range of problems that beginning teachers could experience.

More recent studies confirmed several results from Veenman’s study; the problems of classroom discipline, the difficulties in collaboration with parents, colleagues and school principals and inadequate guidance and support were also found in these studies (Bezzina 2006; De Jonge & Muijnck, 2002; Schuck et al., 2012). In addition, the problem of a high workload was acknowledged (Abbort, Moran, & Clarke, 2009). Again,

in the majority of these studies, no distinction was made between the problems of urban and non-urban teachers.

Challenges for beginning teachers in an urban context

The literature on urban teaching identified several challenges for beginning urban teachers. The focus in the literature was on schools with a disadvantaged student population. One important challenge that has been mentioned in various articles is that urban teachers are confronted with *cultural diversity* (Groulx, 2001; Erskine-Cullen & Sinclari, 1996). Urban teachers must work with children and parents from different cultures, with different backgrounds and values and who speak a language other than the teacher's native language (Diffily & Perkins, 2002; Zeichner, 2003). Teachers in urban schools are predominantly (European-American) middle-class females (Diffily & Perkins, 2002). The population of students that attend these urban schools, however, is much more diverse. In the US for example, many Hispanic or African-American families live in urban neighbourhoods and send their children to urban schools. Zeichner (2003) explains that this increasing gap between the backgrounds of the students and the teachers makes it difficult to teach at urban schools. Groulx (2001) argues that teachers need to develop the cultural competence to address the difficulties surrounding cultural diversity. Villegas and Lucas (2002) emphasise the importance of 'culturally sensitive teachers' who have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds; these teachers see resources for learning in their students rather than difficulties to overcome. According to Levine-Rasky (1998), beginning teachers have difficulties to fulfil expectations to bring cultural sensitivity to their dealing with culturally diverse groups of students. In the study of Erskine-Cullen and Sinclair (1996), urban school teachers identified working with parents, and especially communicating with parents, as one of the biggest challenges of teaching at urban schools, primarily because of language barriers.

Another important challenge for education in an urban context is that teachers are confronted with relatively large *differences* within their classroom. These teachers must deal with differences between children in terms of character, behaviour, norms and values and attitudes, together with differences in the students' cognitive and language development (Kooy, 2006; McCombs & Quiat, 2004; Swanson Gehrke, 2005). Regarding differences in language development, second language learners are a major challenge for

urban teachers. This challenge is believed to be more common in urban schools because a higher percentage of families from ethnic minorities live in cities.. According to Swanson Gehrke (2005), urban teachers must also deal with students who are at risk of academic failure, because schools with many children from disadvantaged families have a higher number of at risk children.

Furthermore, increased *violence* and *poverty* are important challenges for urban education. Teachers in urban schools felt anxiety about the students' use of violence at school and also showed fear of the neighbourhoods in which they worked (Smith & Smith, 2006). Many teachers in Smith and Smith's (2006) study left the school or the teaching profession because of violence-induced stress. Teachers in an urban setting also must address the numerous factors that impact students' learning and development, including hunger, anger, fear, illness, conflict, and death (Swanson Gehrke, 2005).

To conclude, teaching in urban schools is, for a variety of reasons, difficult and challenging for teachers. Several challenges of teaching in an urban context are described in the literature on urban teaching. Nevertheless, the literature primarily addresses the situation in disadvantaged schools, not the situation in advantaged and mixed schools.

The present study

The aim of this study was to identify the specific problems of beginning teachers in urban primary schools. The central research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What are the problems that beginning teachers encounter in urban primary schools?
2. What problems are specific to urban schools with advantaged, mixed and disadvantaged student populations?

To answer these questions, an exploratory study was conducted using in-depth semi-structured topic interviews with 15 beginning teachers from Dutch urban primary schools. Although previous research identified several challenges for urban teachers, little is known about how the teachers themselves experience the urban challenges that they encounter. A qualitative research method was selected because we were interested in the perceived problems and the meaning of these problems for the teachers. We wanted to investigate which of the urban challenges identified in the literature were perceived to be real problems by the teachers. In addition, we wanted to investigate whether teachers in

urban schools experienced problems that were different from the challenges identified in the literature.

The study included teachers from ‘disadvantaged’ schools, ‘more advantaged’ schools and ‘mixed’ schools. Because the problems that teachers encounter are expected to be partially dependent on the types of students who they teach, teachers from schools with three types of populations were included to ensure a good representation of the diversity of urban schools.

Context of the present study

All of the participants in the study were starting teachers in urban schools in two large cities of the Netherlands, namely, Amsterdam and Utrecht. Although the number of inhabitants in these cities is not high compared to cities in other countries (approximately 780,000 in Amsterdam and 320,000 in Utrecht), Amsterdam and Utrecht are, often as part of the Randstad, considered to be global cities. The economic activities in Amsterdam consist of financial services, the leisure economy, transport and communication (Van de Wouden & De Bruijne, 2002). In Utrecht, economic activities consist of financial services and computer and information technology (Van de Wouden & De Bruijne, 2002). Amsterdam and Utrecht are also characterised by social polarisation. In these two cities, there has been a steady outflow of the middle class to the suburbs (Van de Wouden & De Bruijne, 2002). Schools with advantaged, mixed and disadvantaged student populations are also typical of Amsterdam and Utrecht.

Method

Participants

In total, 15 teachers participated in this study. The characteristics of the participating teachers can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of the teachers

Starting teachers at urban primary schools (n=15)	
Sex	
Male	0
Female	15
Years working as a teacher	
First year	7
Second year	3
Third to fifth year	5
School population type	
Disadvantaged	5
Mixed	5
Advantaged	5
Age	
20-30 years	12
30+	3
Class (ranges from 1-8)	
Lower grades	6
Middle grades	6
Higher grades	3

Variables and instruments

The interviews consisted of two parts. In the first part, the interviewer asked open questions about the teachers' problems. The interviewer used two introductory questions to start the participant thinking about her first year as a teacher. Afterwards, a question was asked about the problems that the teacher encountered in her first year as a teacher at an urban school.

The interview continued by delving into each of the problems that the interviewee raised by discussing whether the teacher thought that the problem was related to teaching in an urban school. In the second part of the interview, the challenges that were identified in the international literature (see table 2) were discussed.

Table 2

The challenges for teaching in urban contexts that are identified in the literature

Cultural diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dealing with children from a different culture, with a different background and values and who speak a different language than I do and than the people I grew up with. 2. Dealing with parents from a different culture, with a different background and values and who speak a different language than I do and than the people I grew up with. 3. Teaching Dutch to children who were raised speaking a different language.
Differences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Dealing with a diversity of cultures, but also other differences between children in terms of character, behaviour, norms & values and attitude. 5. Adapting to the differences in cognitive development and language development between children; being able to differentiate education. 6. Paying sufficient attention to the students at risk of academic failure.
Violence and poverty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Being able to handle violence or an unsafe atmosphere at school or in the neighbourhood of the school. 8. Being able to deal with the fact that some students experience particular circumstances such as hunger, fear, illness and aggression on a daily basis at home.

These eight challenges were presented to the teachers. Each participant was asked to indicate which of the challenges she had encountered as a problem. If the participant recognised a challenge and perceived this challenge as a problem, the interviewer asked for the relatedness of the problem to urban schools. For the challenges that the interviewee did not encounter, the interviewee was asked to explain why such scenarios were not a problem.

Analysis

Content analysis, as described by Huberman and Miles (1994), was the primary method of analysis used in this study. The cycle of content analysis consists of four steps that should be conducted continuously: data reduction, data display, drawing conclusions and verification. Data reduction was performed by labelling the relevant fragments in the transcribed interviews. A code was assigned to each problem that the teachers mentioned themselves during the first part of the interview (such as dealing with a high workload)

and to each challenge from the literature on urban teaching (for example, dealing with second language learners) in the second part of the interview. Fragments related to the same problems or problem-related topic were grouped to discover patterns that could be part of a particular trend or an interesting relationship. When labelling relevant fragments, specific citations were selected for illustrative purposes. Possible conclusions were drawn based on these patterns and were later verified by examining similar fragments from other interviews or opposing claims made by other teachers.

Validity and Reliability

All of the interviews were transcribed verbatim to prevent interpretation bias from the interviewer. After the researcher transcribed an interview, it was sent to each of the participants for a member check. The participants were asked to confirm the authenticity of the interview; 13 out of 15 performed the confirmation. The two other participants did not respond to the e-mail.

The outcome of the labelling was audited using a procedure in which the codes of one (randomly chosen) scored interview were checked and discussed in a peer review by two experienced researchers (Kvale, 2007). One of the authors was the coder of this interview. One of the other authors examined the different fragments and codes used by the coder and evaluated whether she could agree with the assigned codes. The coding of the focus on 'problems' showed a 93 % agreement. The codes for the 'problems' were discussed until agreement was established and coding was adjusted to match the outcome of this discussion.

Results

Problems

The problems raised by the teachers themselves will be examined first; afterwards, the occurrence of the eight challenges from the literature (see table 3) will be discussed (section 3.1.2).

Problems raised by the teachers

Table 3 displays the problems that the 15 teachers raised during the first part of the interview.

Table 3

Problems raised by the teachers

Problem	School type		
	Advantaged	Mixed	Disadvantaged
<i>Frequently mentioned problems</i>			
High workload, significant stress	2	3	3
No guidance & support at school	3	3	1
Contact with parents	4	1	0
Addressing personal insecurity	2	2	1
<i>Less frequently mentioned problems</i>			
Lack of structure in the school organisation and lack of information/administration	2	1	1
Dealing with children who require special attention	1	1	1
The planning of schooldays and organisation of class work	0	1	2
Dealing with new tasks	2	0	0
Carrying the full responsibility of a class	0	1	1
Constraining personal perfectionism and desire for control	1	1	0
Children's home situation/upbringing	0	0	2
<i>Occasionally mentioned problems</i>			
Children's violent physical behaviour	0	0	1
Keeping track of all students	0	0	1
Developing and maintaining personal vision	0	1	0
Working together with a 'duo'-colleague	0	0	1
Proving yourself to the children	0	1	0
Insight into the social and emotional development of children	0	1	0
Registration of the development of children with special needs	1	1	0
Inadequate support at school for children with special needs	1	1	0

High workload and significant stress

The first issue, 'high workload and significant stress', was a problem reported by the majority of teachers. Several teachers stated that they worked many hours in the beginning of their career, including evenings and weekends. One teacher described her situation as follows:

"I worked at school from 7 in the morning until half past 6 at night. At night I would prepare my lessons. I was used to working hard in my previous career, but as a teacher, you have to do so many new things and you carry such a high responsibility... I worked so hard; I have never been so tired in my entire life."

The problem of a high workload occurred at advantaged, mixed and disadvantaged schools. However, the causes behind the high workload appear, to a certain extent, to be different according to the different school types: teachers at the disadvantaged schools mentioned that they experienced significant pressure and stress because they had difficulty meeting the standards of the educational inspectorate, whereas the teachers at the advantaged schools experienced significant pressure and stress because they had to work with critical and demanding parents. A teacher at a disadvantaged school explained the situation as follows:

'This is such a 'black' school, the school was supposed to close, so we had to work very hard to keep it open. The results of the children really had to be improved... That puts pressure on you as a teacher; you had to get those children on a higher level.'

A teacher at an advantaged school declared:

"The parents of this school prefer weekly conversations. The parents think that they know as much as you do as a teacher, or even more. And they do not hesitate to tell you! Like "[my child] is behind in reading, what are you doing about it?" The parents are very demanding and want you to show that you are doing it right."

Several teachers who experienced this problem did believe that the high workload is a particular problem for teachers in urban schools. They noted there is significant pressure on teachers in urban schools because they must deal with very critical parents and/or a large number of children who need extra guidance and support.

No guidance and support

The second issue, ‘no guidance and support’, was a problem identified by seven teachers. One teacher explained:

“Basically, you had to figure it all out yourself... That was the main reason why I had so much trouble in my first year. They basically left me to my faith. Nobody guided me at all, although I often asked for [support or supervision].”

Interestingly, the teachers at the disadvantaged schools rarely mentioned the problem of ‘no guidance and support’, whereas the majority of the teachers at the advantaged and mixed schools experienced this problem. The teachers mentioned during the interviews that the reason for this difference could be that the disadvantaged schools receive more money from the government (because of their deprived student population) in comparison to the advantaged and mixed schools disadvantaged schools¹; thus, the teachers at these schools have more opportunities for guidance and support. Another reason for the additional support could be that the principals at disadvantaged schools are more aware than the principals at advantaged and mixed schools of how difficult it is to be a beginning teacher at their school.

Three teachers stated that the problem could be related to teaching in an urban school. According to these teachers, schools in urban environments are very often large schools that must manage many complex issues; consequently, there is not enough time to establish strong support structures for beginning teachers. However, to help beginning teachers to manage the complexity of urban teaching, it very important that they receive good support.

Contact with parents

The third issue, ‘contact with parents’, was a problem for five teachers. Interestingly, almost all of these teachers were from advantaged schools where the children have highly educated parents. The majority of the teachers believed that the problem of parental contact was related to teaching in an urban school; according to the teachers at the

¹ In the Netherlands, national funding is provided to all schools based on the number of pupils enrolled, but schools get more money for children from a lower SES than for children from a higher SES (Roeleveld et al., 2011).

advantaged schools, there are many parents in urban environments, in particular at advantaged schools such as theirs. The teachers at these schools framed the problem in a negative way; they described the parents at their schools as being very critical of the teachers, thereby placing heavy demands on them. Most of the parents have only one or two children and have very high expectations for their children. These parents want their children to achieve the highest levels of secondary education, and therefore the parents pressure the teachers. Because the parents are generally highly educated, older than the teachers and very demanding, parental contact is very difficult for the teachers. One teacher described her situation as follows:

“I have difficulties with the contact with parents, especially with bad news conversations. I think that this problem is related [to urban teaching], in particular to an advantaged school with highly educated white parents; they are extremely critical. They all have children very late and thus have only one or two [children], so those children are really their golden eggs.”

It is remarkable that, contrarily the teachers at the advantaged schools, none of the teachers at the disadvantaged schools mentioned the problem of parental contact. However, during the second part of the interviews, when the interviewer explicitly asked if the teacher recognised the problem of parental contact, several teachers from the disadvantaged schools did mention that they recognised the problem. Nevertheless, the fact that the differences between the school types in the first part of the interviews were so high and that none of the teachers at the disadvantaged school mentioned this problem independently are indications that parental contact is in particular a problem of teachers in advantaged schools.

Addressing personal insecurity

The fourth problem, ‘addressing personal insecurity’, was a problem addressed by five of the teachers. The problem of ‘insecurity’ occurred in advantaged, mixed and disadvantaged schools. The majority of the teachers who experienced this problem indicated that there was a relationship between their insecurity and teaching in an urban school; the teachers at the advantaged schools mentioned that critical parents led to greater insecurity, whereas the teacher at the disadvantaged school explained that the student population (with many students from ethnic minorities) made her more insecure.

According to the teachers at the mixed schools, this problem was not related to teaching in an urban school.

Less frequently mentioned problems

Only three of the remaining problems are relevant enough to discuss in detail. The other problems were either not perceived as being very difficult to manage by the teachers, or were not associated with teaching at urban schools at all.

One problem that, according to three teachers, was hard to address is ‘Dealing children who require special attention’. The teachers related this problem to teaching in an urban school. They stated that more children with behavioural or learning disorders live in cities and thereby attend urban schools.

Another problem that, according to two teachers, was very much related to teaching in urban schools was addressing ‘children’s home situation’. One teacher described this issue as follows:

“I think there are more problems, in neighbourhoods like this one in particular ... Yes, more poverty, people who live with their whole family in very small apartments, alcohol and drugs, also children who are mistreated.”

Furthermore, a problem that was hard to manage according to four teachers, was a ‘lack of structure and information in the organisation’. The teachers who experienced the problem explained that their schools were badly organised: often there was no clear information for the teachers about what they had to teach, no learning goals were established, sometimes there were no school-wide methods, no clear school policies, and no learning trajectories².

² This problem could occur, because schools in the Netherlands have a high level of autonomy. Dutch primary schools are fully responsible for the organisation of their teaching, learning, personnel and materials (Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2012).

Challenges found in the scientific literature that were recognised by the teachers

Table 4 shows the eight challenges found in the international scientific literature (for a more elaborate description, see table 2) and the number of teachers who recognised and perceived these challenges as problems, grouped by school type.

Table 4

International challenges recognised as problems by the teachers

Problem	School type		
	Advantaged	Mixed	Disadvantaged
<i>Cultural Diversity</i>			
1. Cultural background of children	0	0	3
2. Cultural background of parents	1	1	3
3. Second language learners	0	2	2
<i>Differences</i>			
4. Diversity	3	0	1
5. Adaptive education	3	2	3 ^a
6. Children at risk	4	4	3
<i>Violence and urban circumstances</i>			
7. Violence, insecurity	2	0	3
8. Children's home situation	0	2	5

N = 15 (5 per school type)

^a Problem was only discussed with three of the teachers from this group

Cultural background of children

The first problem, 'dealing with children from a different culture, background and values and who speak a different language than I do', was perceived as a problem by three of the five teachers from the disadvantaged schools. These teachers all believed that this problem was related to teaching in urban schools because these schools are often located in neighbourhoods inhabited by many families from a different background than most teachers. The teachers at the advantaged schools did not experience this issue as a problem because they did not have many children from different backgrounds in their

class. The teachers at the mixed schools did not find this issue to be problematic because they were either taught how to deal with this issue at teacher training college or they specialised in this topic because they found it so interesting. An explanation for the fact that the teachers at the disadvantaged schools experienced this issue as being problematic more often than the teachers at the mixed schools could be that the teachers at the disadvantaged schools were not as well prepared for this issue by their teacher training education than the teachers at the mixed schools; most of the teachers at the mixed schools mentioned that they received appropriate preparation through modules about cultural diversity at their teacher training education and through their internships at primary schools with a culturally diverse student population, whereas most of the teachers at the disadvantaged schools explained that they were not well prepared for this issue.

The cultural background of parents

The second problem, 'dealing with parents from a different culture, background and values and who speak a different language than I do', was recognised as a problem by five teachers. In contrast to the first part of the interview – where almost all of the teachers at the advantaged schools mentioned the problem of parental contact – here, only one teacher at an advantaged school recognised the problem. The reason for this difference is that in the second part of the interviews, the problem of parental contact was explicitly related (by the interviewer) to the different culture and background of the parents, while the teachers in the first part of the interviews mentioned that dealing with parents at advantaged schools was more related to the extreme involvement and demands of the parents. The majority of the teachers at the advantaged schools explicitly stated that they did not recognise the challenges of this problem because they had no experience with parents from different cultural backgrounds at their schools, but that they did have trouble with highly educated and critical parents.

The teachers who experienced a problem from parental contact at the two other types of schools stated that the problem was primarily caused by a language barrier because the parents did not speak Dutch. The other teachers from these school types also had to deal with this issue, but they did not find it hard to do so.

Second language learners

The third topic, 'Teaching Dutch to children who were brought up with a different language', was problematic for two teachers at the mixed and two teachers at the disadvantaged schools. The teachers at the advantaged schools indicated that they did not experience this problem because they had few students with a different mother tongue.

According to the teachers who experienced this difficulty, there is a relationship between the problem and teaching in an urban school. The teachers explained that more non-Dutch people live in cities, and therefore urban schools enrol non-Dutch children more often than other schools. Most of the teachers at the mixed and disadvantaged schools who did not experience this problem stated that they have a good method for addressing language deficiencies at their school. Several of these teachers indicated that they found managing this area to be one of the parts of their jobs that they enjoyed.

Dealing with diversity

The fourth problem, 'dealing with (a diversity of cultures, but also other) differences between children in terms of character, behaviour, norms & values and attitude' was recognised and perceived as a problem by three teachers at advantaged schools and one teacher at a disadvantaged school.

The majority of the teachers at the advantaged schools explained that they also had difficulties with dealing with diversity. One teacher mentioned that, in particular, she had problems with the different characters of children in her class. Another teacher stated that she had problems with articulate children and differences in concentration between children. According to two of the three teachers at the advantaged schools who recognised this issue as problematic, the problem of dealing with diversity is related to teaching at an urban school. One of these teachers believed that the school's size plays an important role: according to her, in bigger schools, there are simply more children and therefore also more differences than in smaller schools. The other teacher framed the problem as follows: a lack of concentration is more common in big cities because children in big cities are confronted with many impulses and therefore have more difficulty concentrating at school.

Teachers at the mixed schools did not find this issue to be problematic because they were either taught how to deal with this issue at teacher training college or they

simply found it easy to address differences between children. The teachers at the disadvantaged schools who did not experience differences between children as being problematic indicated that their classes were quite homogeneous in terms of the characters, behaviour, norms & values, attitudes and cultural backgrounds of the children.

Adaptive education

The fifth topic, 'Adapting to the differences in cognitive development and language development of children; being able to differentiate education', was a problem for most of the teachers. There were no remarkable differences between the different types of schools.

Most teachers did not believe that this problem was linked to teaching at urban schools, although some teachers acknowledged that urban school classes might be bigger and less homogeneous than school classes in the countryside, thereby making it more difficult to address differences. Several teachers that did not have difficulty with this issue worked at a school where the entire educational approach was constructed around education adapted to children's individual needs. The pedagogy used in the school and the organisation of the school made it easy for these teachers to provide adaptive education. Other teachers mentioned that they had developed a good system to deal with differences themselves, and therefore had no troubles with this issue.

Children at risk

The sixth topic, 'The capacity to pay sufficient attention to students at risk of academic failure', was recognised by the majority of the teachers. This problem occurred more often at the advantaged and mixed schools than at the disadvantaged schools. The teachers at the advantaged schools mentioned that they had serious trouble with this issue, primarily because of the large classes and the fact that their school received no extra money from the government for extra guidance for students at risk.

The teachers at the advantaged and mixed schools experienced not only problems with differentiation for the children at risk, but also with differentiation upwards. One teacher of a mixed school stated this problem as follows:

"I do think this is a problem, but not only for the pupils at risk, but also for the very good pupils. Very often, you pay a lot of extra time and attention to the less intelligent children, but

you have also children who are highly intelligent. You let them just join the group, while you should lift them up. I find this very difficult as a beginning teacher.”

The majority of the teachers who experienced this problem believed that the problem was related to teaching in an urban environment. According to several teachers, there are more children at risk in urban environments than elsewhere.

Teachers at the disadvantaged schools who had no troubles with this issue mentioned that they had smaller classes and received extra guidance:

“No, this is no problem for me because I have a class of only 16 students. There is a method that always provides extra instruction for students who are slightly above or below the average. Besides, many things are organised to give pupils extra individual guidance.”

Violence

The seventh topic, ‘Violence at school or an unsafe atmosphere at school or in the neighbourhood of the school’, was recognised as a problem by two teachers at advantaged schools and three teachers at a school with a population consisting of children from ethnic minorities. The teachers at the disadvantaged schools did not feel unsafe themselves, but explained how their students can sometimes feel unsafe at school:

“I did not experience anything [violent] myself, but the children in my class did.. I do feel secure at school and around the school by the way, but I believe that this might be different for the children. That bothers me a lot.”

The two teachers at the advantaged schools indicated that they did recognise the problem of violence and an unsafe atmosphere, but they added to this that the problem only occurred occasionally at their school.

The majority of the teachers who recognised the problem of violence and an unsafe atmosphere believed that the problem was related to teaching in urban schools. According to these teachers, children in large cities are often hanging around in the streets at night and some of them live in unsafe neighbourhoods.

The teachers that did not experience this problem either worked at a school in a very safe neighbourhood or worked at a school with good policies or instructional methods to address violence among students.

The children's' home situation

The eighth topic, 'Being able address the fact that some students experience particular circumstances such as hunger, fear, illness and aggression on a daily basis at home,' was an issue that was recognised and perceived as a problem by all of the teachers at disadvantaged schools and by two teachers at a mixed school. The teachers who experienced this problem believed that the problem was related to teaching in an urban school. One teacher explained that many families in deprived urban neighbourhoods are 'multi-problem families', with many issues occurring at home. It was often hard for this teacher to emotionally address the fact that these children live their daily lives under these circumstances. The other teachers told a similar story. Teachers at the advantaged schools mentioned that they did not have trouble with this issue simply because the problem did not occur in their school or its neighbourhood. Almost all of their pupils were from rich, highly educated parents.

Conclusion

This study identified several problems that beginning teachers encounter in urban primary schools. The most prominent problems that the teachers identified were a high workload, significant stress and inadequate guidance and support. Other frequently mentioned problems were contact with parents (both highly educated and critical parents and non-native parents) and dealing with their personal insecurity. With regards to the problems identified in the literature as 'urban school problems', two issues were primarily recognised by the teachers as being problematic: 1) Too little time and capacity to pay sufficient attention to students 'at risk of academic failure', 2) Adapting to the differences in cognitive development and language development of children.

This study showed that teachers at advantaged and mixed schools experience problems that are, to a certain extent, different from the problems of urban teachers at disadvantaged schools. One major problem for the teachers from the advantaged and mixed schools was that they had difficulty applying differentiation to adequately teach both the better performing students and the students who are 'at risk of academic failure'. In addition, these teachers felt that they receive inadequate guidance and support from their schools. The main problem mentioned by the teachers from the advantaged schools

was that they had to deal with very demanding and critical parents. The teachers at disadvantaged schools primarily experienced problems that were related to their diverse student population, such as dealing with cultural diversity. The teachers from the disadvantaged schools recognised all of the challenges mentioned in the literature on urban teaching, whereas some of these challenges were not recognised by the teachers at the advantaged or mixed schools. This result is not surprising because this research primarily addresses teaching in disadvantaged schools.

The teachers believed that several of the problems discussed in this study were related to teaching in an urban school. The teachers identified the following characteristics of cities as being connected with these problems: the multicultural nature of cities; the large size of urban schools; the greater number of families from a higher economic status or, in contrast, of economically deprived families and multi-problem families; a greater number of non-Dutch speaking families and a greater number of children with learning difficulties or problem behaviour on the one hand and of gifted children on the other. Furthermore, some teachers noticed that the educational inspectorate more closely monitored urban schools. These teachers experienced this intensive monitoring as a source of extra stress rather than of support.

Discussion

This research aimed to contribute to our knowledge regarding teaching in urban schools. The results of this study identified several problems that teachers encounter in urban primary schools. Many of these problems were general problems that could also be experienced by non-urban teachers. Nevertheless, the teachers who participated in this study experienced these problems as related to the specific urban context in which they worked. For instance, the problem of parental contact is a problem that is also experienced by non-urban teachers (Veenman, 1987; Schuck et al., 2012). However, in this study, the problem specifically referred to the extreme involvement, demands and expectations of parents (at the advantaged schools) and to the diverse backgrounds of parents (at the disadvantaged schools). Thus, urban teachers appear to experience specific 'urban' problems. However, there were no teachers from outside of the city in our sample, so we cannot make a proper comparison.

Another important finding from this study is that there are differences between the problems teachers experience at different types of urban schools. The teachers from the disadvantaged schools recognised the urban challenges that were described in the literature on teaching in urban schools (e.g., Diffily & Perkins, 2002; Smith & Smith, 2006). However, the teachers at advantaged and mixed schools experience problems that are to a certain extent different from the problems of urban teachers from disadvantaged schools. It is important that the initial teacher education addresses the problems that teachers might experience in urban schools. However, because these problems are so diverse, teacher education cannot fully prepare teachers for all of the different types of problems; thus, it is also important that the urban schools themselves provide good support for their teachers.

This study underlines the value of good preparation and support for beginning teachers. Several teachers in this study did not perceive the challenges of urban schools as problems but instead as interesting challenges through which they could further develop themselves. These were the teachers who also reported receiving good preparation and support. Thus, adequate preparation and support through which teachers learn how to manage the issues of urban teaching can transform these issues from problems into interesting challenges for teachers.

This study has some limitations, and more research into urban teaching is needed. First, this study was a small-scale research project and the results cannot be generalised. The small-scale design did make it possible to obtain in-depth information about the perceived problems of urban teachers and the meaning of those problems for the teachers. It would be interesting, however, to conduct a large-scale quantitative study that compares the problems encountered by starting teachers at urban schools, suburban schools and rural schools and that determines precisely which problems are specific to starting teachers at urban schools.

Despite the limitations, this study provided an overview of some prominent problems faced by starting urban teachers in different types of urban schools. Previous research (Van Veen, Zwart, & Meirink, 2012) showed that it is important for the content of professional development and induction programmes to be focused on the problems that teachers encounter in the specific context in which they work. This study provided insight into the problems of beginning teachers at urban primary schools. The results of

Chapter 2

this study could be used to develop adequate preparation and support for beginning urban teachers.

This study underlines the value of a broader conceptualisation of teaching in urban schools. Teachers in schools in global cities experience different types of problems depending on the student population of their school.

CHAPTER 3

Contribution of a professional development programme to the quality and retention of beginning teachers in an urban environment¹

Abstract

This study examined the effects of a professional development programme aimed at equipping teachers for the challenges of teaching in urban schools. The contribution of the programme to teacher quality and teacher retention was evaluated using a mixed research design in which both quantitative (N=133) and qualitative (N=42) approaches were used. The results showed a significant effect of the programme on teacher knowledge and self-efficacy. Furthermore, teachers greatly appreciated the programme and they perceived a positive impact on their competences, self-efficacy and professional orientation. The opportunity to share experiences within a network of teachers was considered the most valuable element of the programme.

Keywords: teacher education, professional development, beginning teachers, teacher retention, urban teaching

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Introduction

Shortage of competent, qualified teachers is a significant problem in many, although not all, countries (Ingersoll, 2003; Moon, 2007). Teacher shortages have major implications for the quality of education and thus the potential development of children. Therefore, many studies have focused on the causes of teacher shortages and ways to reduce them.

Teacher shortages primarily result from a lack of young people entering the education profession and the propensity of new teachers to leave the profession after a few years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2003; Moon, 2007; Stokking et al., 2003). Teacher retention is a considerable problem in urban areas, particularly in disadvantaged schools (Ingersoll, 2003). For a variety of reasons, including violence and cultural differences, teaching in urban schools is difficult and challenging (Groulx, 2001; Haberman, 1995; Smith & Smith, 2006). This can lead to an outflow of teachers from these schools and from education in general.

This study evaluated the contribution of a professional development programme ('Mastery') aimed at preparing beginning teachers for the challenges of teaching in urban primary schools in the Netherlands to the quality and retention of beginning teachers in these schools. Teacher quality was assessed in terms of the teachers' a) competences; b) professional orientation; and c) self-efficacy. Teacher retention was evaluated on the basis of the teachers' a) job motivation and b) career choices. In addition, information was gathered regarding how the participants perceived the programme with respect to the active elements in the design of the programme.

Teaching in urban environments

Research has shown that teaching in urban environments differs from teaching in other environments (Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008). Teachers in urban environments have to teach in a complex environment where they encounter several challenges, like dealing with cultural differences and violence (Groulx, 2001; Haberman, 1995; Smith & Smith, 2006). Despite several initiatives intended to professionalise and motivate teachers to teach in urban schools, there are still teacher shortages in urban areas and beginning teachers are more likely to leave urban schools compared with non-urban schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003).

In contrast to most studies on urban teaching, in this study urban teaching is not only conceptualised as teaching in 'disadvantaged' schools where students come from culturally diverse and low socio-economic backgrounds. In our study urban teaching also refers to teaching in 'more advantaged' schools where most students are of Dutch heritage and have highly educated parents, and to teaching in 'mixed' schools where the student population is a mix of both Dutch pupils and students from culturally diverse backgrounds. This broad definition is used in this study because these different types of schools are characteristic of the situation in many Dutch large cities (Hooge, 2008).

Teacher quality in urban environments

Teaching in an urban environment places heavy and diverse demands on the quality of teachers. This study focused on teacher quality as assessed in terms of the teachers' competences, professional orientation and self-efficacy.

Teacher competences

Teaching in urban contexts demands specific competences. Research shows that teaching in large cities in the US demands that teachers be skilled in handling cultural diversity and language deficiencies (Groulx, 2001; Olmedo, 1997). A heavier appeal than in other schools is made on teachers' ability to collaborate and build effective relationships with people within and outside the school (Voltz et al., 2008). Furthermore, urban teachers must deal with violence and unsafe environments more often than other teachers (Smith & Smith, 2006). We found that the problems that urban Dutch teachers encounter partially depend on the types of schools in which they work. For instance, working in 'disadvantaged' schools demands that teachers be able to deal with cultural diversity, whereas teaching at 'more advantaged' schools demands that teachers can collaborate with highly educated parents (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Roosenboom, & Volman, 2013).

Teacher professional orientation

In today's society, teachers are expected not only to perform well within their own classroom but also to demonstrate professionalism that extends beyond the classroom. Thus, an extended professional orientation is an important criterion for teacher quality (Mahieu, Forest Diet, & Peene, 1999). Hoyle (1980) distinguishes 'restricted

professionalism', in which teachers focus primarily on their own classroom, from 'extended professionalism' in which teachers are involved in the school organisation and have an interest that extends beyond the classroom. There are indications that job satisfaction of teachers is positively promoted by shared responsibility and mutual support of the team of teachers, which is typical for extended professionalism (Mahieu, et al., 1999). We presume that an extended orientation is particularly important for working in an urban setting, as urban teachers must operate in a complex educational environment, where it is even more important that teachers support each other and that there is shared responsibility among teachers.

Teacher self-efficacy

This study follows the literature on 'teacher efficacy', which is defined as "the teacher's belief in her or his ability to organise and execute the course of actions required to successfully accomplish a specific task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 233). Self-efficacy affects not only teacher effort but also the extent to which the teacher can flexibly cope with mistakes and stress from dealing with demanding situations (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). Research also indicates that teachers with low self-efficacy are more likely to experience burnout than are teachers with high self-efficacy (Evers, Brouwers, and Tomic, 2002). Siwatu (2011) found that starting teachers have lower self-efficacy regarding teaching in urban areas than regarding teaching in suburban areas. According to Siwatu (2011), it is conceivable that teachers in urban areas who doubt their capabilities to manage daily challenges may be the ones who will leave the teaching profession after a few years of teaching.

Teacher professional development

Several studies have shown that professional development programmes can improve teacher quality and teacher retention (Borko, 2004; Gilles, Davis, & MacGlamery, 2009). Teachers who participated in professional development programmes remained in the profession longer than teachers who did not participate in such programmes (Gilles, et al., 2009). Although there is agreement regarding the importance of professional development programmes, it is not clear what form of professionalisation is most effective for teachers. There is a growing consensus that programmes situated in the

workplace are more effective than those situated outside the workplace, though there exists no unequivocal evidence to support this conclusion (Van Veen, Zwart, & Meirink, 2012). The content appears to be more relevant than the form, and programmes that primarily focus on classroom practice seem to have a greater effect on the development of teachers than programmes with a more general focus (Veen et al., 2012). Studies on new forms of professional development for teachers found that networks of teachers that allow teachers to exchange and discuss their experiences are promising ways for teachers' professional development and job motivation (Hofman & Dijkstra 2010; Angelides, Stylianou, & Leigh, 2007). However, previous research has not taken into account the effects of professional development programmes in different contexts. A specific context in which teacher professionalisation must be further investigated is that of the urban educational context (Freedman & Appleman, 2009).

Present study: purpose and research questions

This study examined the contribution of a professional development programme ('Mastery') to the quality and retention of beginning teachers in Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands (approximately 780,000 inhabitants). The programme aimed to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in urban primary schools and thus focused on specific competences required for teaching in an urban context, such as dealing with cultural diversity and language differences. The development of an extended professional orientation was also addressed. The research questions are:

1. What is the contribution of participation in the 'Mastery' programme to the *quality* of teachers with respect to
 - a. teachers' competences for teaching, particularly for teaching in a complex urban environment?
 - b. teachers' professional orientation (extended versus restricted professionalism?)
 - c. teachers' self-efficacy?
2. What is the contribution of participation in 'Mastery' to the *retention* of teachers with respect to
 - a. teachers' motivation to remain in the profession?
 - b. teachers' intended and actual career choices?

In figure 1, the basic conceptual model of this study is presented.

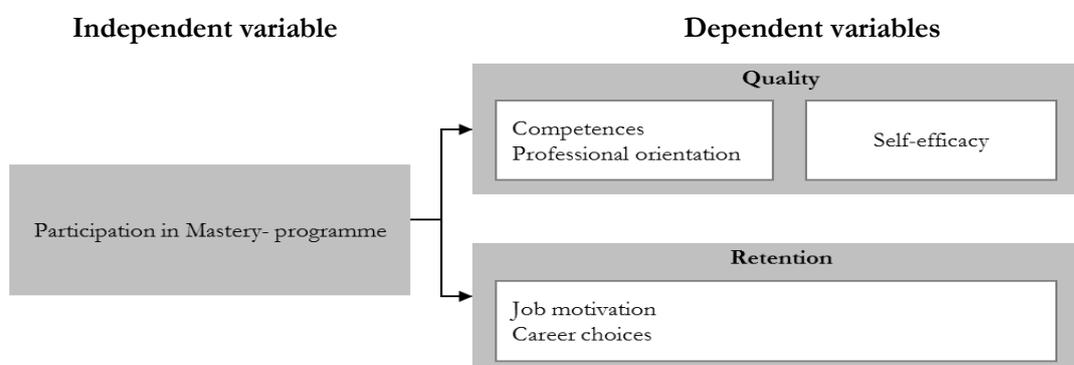


Figure 1. Basic conceptual model guiding the study.

To gain more detailed insight into the active elements involved in the professional development of the participants in the context of 'Mastery', the following question was formulated:

3. What do the participants perceive to be the crucial learning experiences that 'Mastery' provides?

The research questions were addressed in a quasi-experimental study (N=133) and a qualitative study that involved interviews (N=42).

Method

Research design

The core of this study was formed by a quasi-experimental design. The contribution of participation in the professional development programme to the different dependent variables (competences, professional orientation, self-efficacy, job motivation and career choices) was measured using a knowledge test and questionnaires (pre- and post-measures). To gather complementary information regarding teachers' evaluation of the programme and to obtain a detailed understanding of the active elements of the programme, interviews were conducted and analysed qualitatively.

'Mastery'

The intervention consisted of participating in 'Mastery', a professional development programme for beginning primary school teachers from Amsterdam. The programme, which was developed collaboratively by the teacher education institutes in Amsterdam, had a twofold purpose: to contribute to the *quality* and the *retention* of beginning teachers in an urban educational context.

The programme focused on the core competences required for teaching in an urban context, including dealing with cultural diversity and language deficiencies, cooperating within the school environment and ensuring safety. The intention was that participants would increase their expertise in these four areas as a result of their participation in the programme. The programme comprised four modules: 'school and environment', 'safety', 'language' and 'cultural diversity'.

The content of the programme was focused on the acquisition of skills necessary to meet the challenges of teaching in a complex urban environment - such as communicating with parents of different cultural backgrounds - and on developing an extended professional orientation.

The programme lasted one year and consisted of the following three components: group meetings (these involved theoretical input from experts regarding the four urban themes, opportunities for sharing experiences and group assignments), classroom application (participants apply new insights to their teaching practice) and lectures (in which experts explored substantive themes). Additionally, supervision was organised, offering a context for beginning teachers to share experiences and expertise.

The participants were divided into groups of approximately 15 members and the groups met once every two weeks. All participants were required to invest an average of four hours every two weeks.

Participants

In all, 133 teachers participated in the quasi-experimental study. The experimental group consisted of 66 teachers who taught at a primary school in Amsterdam. For these teachers, the intervention consisted of their participation in 'Mastery'. The control group comprised 67 teachers who did not participate in 'Mastery'.

The participants were not randomly assigned to the experimental and control conditions because it would have become too difficult to motivate those teachers not selected for participation in ‘Mastery’ to participate in the study. Instead, a non-random setup was used in which teachers who wanted to participate in ‘Mastery’ were all permitted to follow the programme; they formed the experimental group. Teachers who were selected for the control group were not familiar with ‘Mastery’, so they were not disappointed that they were not selected for participation in this programme. To derive clear conclusions regarding the effects of the intervention, a matching procedure was developed whereby the participants of both conditions were matched on several potentially interfering variables. These variables are:

Work environment

The experimental group consisted of teachers who worked in Amsterdam. Therefore, the control group included only teachers from one of the four major cities in the Netherlands. Almost all the teachers in the control group were from Amsterdam.

Potential

The teachers in the experimental group were nominated for participation in ‘Mastery’ by their principals; only teachers ‘with potential’ (that is, motivated and ambitious teachers) were selected. To get in both conditions teachers ‘with potential’, for the control group beginning teachers were selected who also participated in a professional development programme, but another programme than ‘Mastery’. We selected teachers for the control group from a database of the largest Dutch teachers’ union, as we considered this to be an indication of their active involvement in the teaching profession.

Furthermore, information regarding other potential interfering variables, such as years of teaching experience and gender was collected.

We compared the two conditions and the conditions appeared comparable in all characteristics (Table 1) except ‘teaching experience’ ($p < .01$). Teachers in the control group had more teaching experience than the teachers in the experimental group. Therefore, we controlled for teaching experience by adding this variable as a covariate to our model.

Table 1

Comparison of condition in terms of general characteristics of the teachers

	'Mastery' condition			Control Condition		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Teaching experience ^a	3.34*	2.04	64	4.90*	2.16	67
Gender ^b	0.94	0.25	63	0.94	0.24	67
School population (SES) ^c	2.52	1.30	64	2.49	1.12	67
School population (ethnic background of parents) ^d	2.78	1.27	64	2.94	1.13	67
Highest achieved level of education ^e	2.25	1.07	64	2.60	1.01	67
Place of teacher training ^f	0.36	0.48	61	0.29	0.46	67

*p < .05.

^a 1= 0.5 year, 1=1 year, 2=2 years, 3=3 years, 4=4 years, 6=5 years, 6=6 years, 7=7 years^b 0= male, 1= female^c 1= 0-30% pupils with lower SES, 2= 30-50% pupils with lower SES, 3= 50-70% pupils with lower SES, 4= 80-100% pupils with lower SES^d 1= 0-30% non-Dutch pupils, 2= 30-50% non-Dutch pupils, 3= 50-70% non-Dutch pupils, 4= 80-100% non-Dutch pupils^e 1 = lower secondary education, 2 = higher secondary education, 3= pre-university education, 4= other^f 0 = Inside a large city, 1 = Outside a large city

For the qualitative study, 21 teachers and 21 principals were interviewed. Teachers from 'disadvantaged schools', 'mixed schools' and 'more advantaged' schools were included in the sample for the interviews. From each type of school, seven teachers and their principals were randomly selected.

Instruments

Several questionnaires were used to measure the dependent variables. In the experimental group, the questionnaires were administered before and after completion of the programme. The teachers of this control group filled out the questionnaires at the same time as the teachers of the experimental group; thus, the period between the two measurements was the same for both groups (one year).

In addition to the questionnaires, interviews were conducted to gain more insight into the perceived effects of the programme and the elements of the programme that were effective in the professional development of the teachers.

Competences for teaching in an urban environment

Competences for teaching in an urban environment were operationalised as knowledge of ways of coping with language deficiencies, threats to safety, cultural diversity and various actors in the school. To measure these competences (in terms of knowledge), a knowledge test was developed by the educators of the programme and the researchers. We realise that knowledge is a poor operationalization of competence, but in the context of the programme this was the most efficient and feasible way to measure it. Because we are aware of the limitations of such operationalisation, we collected additional information regarding teachers' competences in the interviews. The knowledge test consisted of 54 multiple choice questions that addressed the four urban themes. The variable 'knowledge score' was calculated by computing the number of correctly answered questions. Cronbach's alpha was .70 for the pre-test and .71 for the post-test, which are considered adequate alphas (Kline, 1999). The following is an example of a question:

'The three pillars of language-oriented vocational education are as follows:

- 1= ask questions, generate answers and give instruction
- 2= provide context-rich work, provide interactive work and provide language support
- 3= give feedback, provide structure and use understandable language
- 4= explicate concepts, explain thought processes and formulate course objectives'

Professional orientation

The questionnaire that was used to assess professional orientation was developed by Jongmans, Biemans, and Bijaard (1998), based on Hoyle (1980)'s characterisation of teachers with a restricted or an extended professional orientation. The questionnaire consists of 13 items. The teachers were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with each of the 13 statements using a five-point scale that ranged from 'totally disagree' to 'totally agree'. Negative responses were interpreted to indicate a restricted orientation, while positive responses were interpreted to indicate an extended professional

orientation. The variable 'professional orientation' was calculated by taking the mean of the 13 items. Cronbach's alpha was .76 for the pre-test and .80 for the post-test. The following is an example of an item: 'Cooperation with other teachers is necessary for the adequate completion of teaching tasks'.

Teacher self-efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy was measured using the 'Attitude towards the teaching profession' questionnaire (Meijer & Van Eck, 2008). This questionnaire was translated and adapted from Kyriacou and Kunc (2007). The scale consists of nine items and teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the statements using a five-point scale, ranging from 'totally disagree' to 'totally agree'. Negative responses were interpreted to indicate low self-efficacy and positive responses were interpreted to indicate high self-efficacy. The variable 'self-efficacy' was calculated by taking the mean of the nine items. Cronbach's alphas was .86 and .88 for the pre-test and post-test, respectively. The following is an example of an item: 'I am satisfied with my performance as a teacher'.

Motivation to remain as a teacher

The job motivation of the teachers was measured using the 'Vision of teaching and job satisfaction' questionnaire (Meijer & Van Eck, 2008). The teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the 10 statements using a five-point scale that ranged from totally disagree to totally agree. Negative responses were interpreted to indicate low motivation and positive responses were interpreted to indicate high motivation. The variable 'motivation' was calculated by taking the mean of the 10 items. Cronbach's alpha was .71 for the pre-test and .78 for the post-test. The following is an example of an item: 'I am satisfied with my job as a teacher'.

Career choices

The career choices of the teachers were measured using questions about actual and planned career choices. The questions addressed the intention of teachers to remain in education, steps taken to orient into other sectors and the actual actions taken to leave

the education profession. The following is an example of an item: ‘How long do you expect to continue working as a teacher?’ (1= less than one year, 2 = one to five years, 3 = six to ten years, 4 = more than 10 years, 5 = my whole career).

Teachers’ experience of ‘Mastery’

To gather complementary information regarding teachers’ evaluation and perceived influence of ‘Mastery’ on the dependent variables and for a detailed understanding of the elements of the programme that played an important role in the professional development of the teachers, semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with the participants of the programme and their principals.

The interviews consisted of two parts. In the first part, the interviewer asked openly about the teachers’ experiences with the programme. In the second part, the interviewer specifically asked about the perceived influence of the programme on the dependent variables. Thereby, the participants were asked what elements in the programme played an important role in their professional development.

Data analysis

Quantitative data

Multilevel modelling was used to determine the effects of ‘Mastery’ on the different dependent variables. Measurement occasions (level 1) were treated as nested in teachers (level 2). The independent variables in the analyses were condition and measurement occasion, while the dependent variables were competences, professional orientation, self-efficacy, job motivation, and career choices. The independent variable ‘teaching experience’ was included in the analyses as a covariate. To facilitate interpretation, the scores of the continuous variable ‘teaching experience’ were mean centred (i.e., a value of zero refers to the overall mean for teaching experience). As the other independent variables were dummy variables (with scores of 0 and 1), there was no need to centre these variables. The assumptions for multilevel modelling were checked and no indications of violation were found.

Qualitative data

A content analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Responses to the questions were coded by the first author. The coding process was an interpretative and iterative process whereby the responses of the interviewees were coded and grouped together. The codes referred to the perceived effects of 'Mastery' on the dependent variables (for example, an increase in extended professional orientation) and to the elements of the programme that played an important role in the professional development of the teachers (for example, the opportunity for sharing experiences in a teacher network). Because of the interpretative and iterative nature of the data analysis, it was difficult to determine interrater reliability (Akkerman et al., 2008). To enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, the following procedures were followed:

1. All fragments that were, in the perception of the coder, difficult to code were discussed with another experienced researcher. These fragments and codes were discussed until consensus was reached and the coding was adjusted to the outcome of this discussion.
2. The outcome of the interpretation of the meaning was audited by a procedure whereby the codes of four (randomly chosen) scored interviews (10%) were checked and discussed in a peer review by two experienced researchers (Kvale, 2007). One of these researchers was the coder; the other researcher was not involved with the study. The researcher who did not participate in the study examined the different fragments and codes to determine whether he concurred with the assigned codes. Coding for 'competences', 'professional orientation', 'self-efficacy' and 'career choices' demonstrated a 100 % concurrence rate. However, coding 'motivation' was less uniform, with an 80 % concurrence rate. Accordingly, the codes for motivation were discussed until agreement was reached and the coding was adjusted to the outcome of the discussion.

Results

Descriptive statistics of the main variables

In table 2 the descriptive statistics of the dependent variables included in the study are presented.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables

	Pre-test		Post-test					
	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD	Min	Max
'Mastery' condition								
Knowledge	27.31	5.39	14	39	34.56	5.19	21	44
Professional orientation	4.19	0.33	3.54	4.92	4.19	0.40	2.85	5
Self-efficacy	3.81	0.37	2.67	4.89	3.92	0.42	2.89	4.89
Job motivation	4.10	0.36	3.44	4.78	3.83	0.33	2.89	4.44
Career choices	3.41	0.96	2	5	3.13	0.94	2	5
Control condition								
Knowledge	28.85	6.65	15	42	29.30	5.76	18	43
Professional orientation	4.37	0.34	3.54	4.92	4.42	0.34	3.69	4.92
Self-efficacy	3.98	0.53	2.44	2.89	3.90	0.54	2.56	5
Job motivation	4.06	0.45	2.89	4.89	3.67	0.49	2.67	4.67
Career choices	3.06	1.01	1	5	2.84	1	1	5

Evaluation of 'Mastery's' contribution to the dependent variables*Influence of 'Mastery' on teachers' competences*

In table 3 the outcomes of the multilevel analysis are presented. As the interaction effect between condition and measurement occasion was significant, it can be concluded that teachers' knowledge increased relatively more in the 'Mastery' condition from the pre-measurement to the post-measurement than it did in the non-'Mastery' condition. The standardised coefficient for the interaction effect was .48, which is considered to be a large effect (Cohen, 1992).

Table 3

Parameter estimates for multilevel models of teachers’ knowledge as predicted by measurement occasion, condition and teaching experience

	Knowledge			
	Coeff	SE	P	Std. Coeff
Measurement occasion	0.39	0.76	.61	0.03
Condition	-1.51	1.17	.20	-0.86
Teaching experience	-0.02	0.23	.93	-0.01
Measurement x condition	6.98	0.99	<.001	0.48
N	116			

The results of the qualitative analysis confirmed the conclusion of the quantitative analysis; in the interviews, the teachers and their principals were explicitly asked to identify, from their perspective, ‘Mastery’s effect on the competences of the teachers. The majority of the respondents indicated that the teachers developed several competences for urban teaching, such as dealing with cultural diversity and language deficiencies.

One teacher stated the following:

“Especially with ‘language’, I feel empowered in my profession. I know now better how to provide language education to non-Dutch children. Before participating in the programme, I was rather more doubting (may I describe a word in their native language or not?), but now I know better what stimulates language development.”

The teachers and principals of the more advantaged and disadvantaged schools were more positive about the influence of ‘Mastery’ on their competences than were the teachers from the mixed schools. The reasons for this difference, however, cannot easily be retrieved from the data.

Influence of ‘Mastery’ on professional orientation

The interaction effect between condition and measurement occasion was not significant (Table 4). This means that teachers’ professional orientation did not increase more in the

'Mastery' condition than in the non-Mastery condition. The main effect regarding teaching experience appeared to be significant. In general, teachers with more teaching experience appeared to score higher on the professional orientation scale than teachers with less teaching experience. The standardised coefficients for the predictor variables and the interaction effect were below .30, which are considered to be small effects (Cohen, 1992).

Table 4

Parameter estimates for multilevel models of teachers' professional orientation predicted by measurement occasion, condition and teaching experience

	Professional orientation			
	Coeff	SE	P	Std. Coeff
Measurement occasion	0.05	0.05	.31	0.06
Condition	-0.11	0.06	.05	-0.20
Teaching experience	0.04	0.01	.01	0.25
Measurement x condition	-0.04	0.06	.52	-0.05
N	131			

However, the results of the interviews showed that in the opinion of the respondents 'Mastery' did contribute to the development of a broader view on teaching. After participation in the programme, the teachers were more involved in the process of school development (they conducted for instance research within their schools), were more interested in theory and educational development and collaborated more with colleagues.

One teacher declared the following:

"The value of 'Mastery' for me was that I began to look beyond my own classroom; I became interested in policy and I joined the participation counsel."

The teachers and principals of the disadvantaged and more advantaged schools were more positive about the influence of 'Mastery' on the professional orientation of the teachers than were the teachers from the mixed schools.

Influence of 'Mastery' on self-efficacy

The interaction effect between condition and measurement occasion was significant (Table 5). Accordingly, it can be concluded that teacher self-efficacy increased more in the 'Mastery' condition from the pre-measurement to the post-measurement than it did for those in the non-'Mastery' condition, as there was a (small) increase in teacher self-efficacy in the experimental group and a (small) decrease in the control group (see Table 2). The standardised coefficient for the interaction effect was .17, which is considered a small effect (Cohen, 1992).

Table 5

Parameter estimates for multilevel models of teachers' self-efficacy predicted by measurement occasion, condition and teaching experience

	Self-efficacy			
	Coeff	SE	P	Std. Coeff
Measurement occasion	-0.09	0.05	.08	-0.02
Condition	-0.15	0.08	.07	-0.16
Teaching experience	0.01	0.02	.43	0.07
Measurement x condition	0.19	0.07	.01	0.17
N	131			

The results of the interviews confirmed the conclusion of the quantitative analysis; in the opinion of the respondents, 'Mastery' positively affected the self-efficacy of the teachers. After participating in the programme, the teachers felt more confident in their contact with parents and colleagues, in providing language education and in the creation of a safe school environment.

One teacher stated the following:

“I feel more confident about myself when giving language education. I know now that I am doing it right.”

Influence of ‘Mastery’ on job motivation

The interaction effect between condition and measurement occasion was not significant (Table 6). This means that teachers’ job motivation did not increase more in the ‘Mastery’ condition than in the non-‘Mastery’ condition. The main effect for measurement occasion appeared to be significant. In general, teachers’ scores regarding job motivation were higher in the pre-measurement than in the post-measurement (see Table 2). The standardised coefficients for the predictor variables and the interaction effect were below .30, which are considered small effects (Cohen, 1992).

Table 6

Parameter estimates for multilevel models of teachers’ job motivation predicted by measurement occasion, condition and teaching experience

	Job motivation			
	Coeff	SE	P	Std. Coeff
Measurement occasion	-0.40	0.05	<.001	-0.43
Condition	0.06	0.07	.42	0.07
Teaching experience	0.01	0.01	.41	0.06
Measurement x condition	0.10	0.07	.17	0.10
N	131			

The conclusion from the quantitative analysis is consistent with the results of qualitative analysis, as the majority of the respondents stated that ‘Mastery’ had no impact on teachers’ job motivation. Several respondents indicated that the teachers were very motivated to be a part of the teaching profession before they started with ‘Mastery’ and they were still motivated after completing the programme.

Influence of 'Mastery's' programme on career choices

There were no significant interaction effects regarding teachers' career choices. The p-values of the interaction effects of the different items were all $> .05$, indicating that the teachers' career choices did not increase more in the 'Mastery' condition than in the non-'Mastery' condition. This conclusion is consistent with the results of the qualitative analysis that the majority of the respondents indicated that 'Mastery' had no impact on the career plans of the teachers.

Evaluation of valuable elements of 'Mastery'

The quantitative results showed that the teachers who participated in the programme greatly appreciated the opportunity to do so. The teachers were very satisfied with expertise of the educators and the teacher network. However, the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that no strict requirements were enforced. For example, there were no checks to verify that homework assignments had been completed

The interviews revealed several elements of 'Mastery' that played an important role in the professional development of the teachers. Teachers mentioned that the most valuable elements of the programme were:

1. Modules

The different modules of 'Mastery' focused on the core competences required for teaching in an urban context. The teachers noted that the modules contributed to their urban teaching competences.

One teacher stated the follows:

"I can now better deal with parents of different backgrounds and I have more insight in how the school organisation works, because I've learned this in the different modules."

The content of the modules was not only focused on the classroom practice, but also on topics as the school organisation and schools' language policy . Accordingly, the teachers were inspired to look beyond their own classroom and developed an extended professional orientation.

2. Teacher network

Our study confirmed the conclusion of Hofman and Dijkstra (2010) that networks of teachers that allow teachers from different schools to exchange experiences are promising ways for professional development and job motivation of teachers. In addition, the results of this study indicate that being part of a network is very important for beginning teachers who work in a complex educational environment. Teachers who participated in 'Mastery' mentioned that, for them, the network was the most valuable element of the programme.

One teacher stated the following:

"What was most valuable for me is absolutely the knowledge of colleagues from other schools in other places in Amsterdam and how they experience things. To hear that sometimes their situation is comparable to your own situation so that you think 'we are not alone' and to hear from other schools and get ideas and approaches that work in these schools was valuable."

Discussion

This research aimed to contribute to our knowledge of teacher professionalisation and teaching in urban schools. The results of the study revealed several elements of professionalisation that are valuable for urban teachers. One of the most valuable elements of 'Mastery' for the participants was the opportunity to reflect on shared experiences as beginning teachers in urban schools. This finding is consistent with the finding of Hofman and Dijkstra (2010), who determined that establishing networks of teachers that allow teachers of different schools to exchange their experiences is a promising way for teachers' professional development and job motivation.

In fact, meeting teachers from other schools and exchanging experiences was such an important element in the success of the programme that it mitigates the conclusions from previous studies that posited that professionalisation activities for teachers are best situated in the workplace. This study showed that professional development programmes outside the workplace have a value of their own.

The results of the quasi-experimental study and interviews showed that 'Mastery' had a positive effect on teachers' competences and self-efficacy. Although the quasi-experimental study showed no effects of the programme on teachers' professional orientation, the interviews revealed that, according to the respondents, the programme challenged teachers to deal with educational issues that are beyond the ones they encounter in their daily teaching practice. This is an indication that the participants and their principals experienced a contribution of the programme to the development of an extended professional orientation and underlines the value of a professional development programme that has a broader focus than classroom practice.

The reason for the differences between the quantitative and qualitative results regarding professional orientation could be that there was a ceiling effect in the quantitative analysis, as both conditions had high scores on the professional orientation scale for the pre-test and post-test.

There was no impact of participation in 'Mastery' on teachers' job motivation or career choices. This lack of an impact could have been observed because the teachers who participated in the study were all motivated teachers before they started the programme, as evidenced by the fact that the teachers had very high scores on the motivation scale according to the pre-test (ceiling effect). This was also the case with the teachers from the control condition. Another reason that no significant differences were found between the two conditions regarding these (and other) dependent variables might be that the teachers of the control group were also participating in professional development programmes.

The present study has some limitations, and more research on the professionalisation of urban teachers is needed. In this study, we focused on motivated teachers, but it would also be interesting to investigate the contribution of such a programme to the quality and retention of less motivated teachers.

Furthermore, in this study, we focused only on the effects of a professional development programme on the quality and retention of teachers, but it would also be interesting to investigate whether the programme has an effect on pupil performance.

In this study, indications for differences among teachers from different types of urban schools were found. Accordingly, it would be interesting to further investigate

those differences in a follow-up research, as teachers of different types of urban schools may experience different problems and therefore may have different support needs.

Despite its limitations, this study demonstrated the value of a professional development programme for beginning urban teachers. The teachers considered the modules, which offered a broader focus than just the direct classroom practice, and the network wherein teachers could share their experiences and expertise to be the most valuable elements of the programme. We do not know whether these elements are in particular important for this specific group teachers. It seems reasonable to assume that these elements are also valuable for non-urban teachers. However, we do know from previous research that teaching in urban contexts is difficult and challenging for teachers, as they are confronted with specific urban problems, such as dealing with unsafe atmospheres in and around the school and dealing with parents from culturally diverse backgrounds. These are complex issues that extend beyond the walls of the classroom. Therefore, we assume that for urban teachers it is of particular importance to receive guidance with a broader focus than the classroom practice only and to have the opportunity to share experiences and expertise in a network of teachers who are confronted with similar challenges.

CHAPTER 4

The sustainability of teacher professional development

Abstract

This study investigated whether the positive effects of a professional development programme for urban teachers ('Mastery') were observed one year after the programme ended and which characteristics and activities in the schools of the participants contributed to those positive effects. The study included both a quasi-experimental study (N=72) and interviews (N=19). The study showed a significant effect of the programme on teachers' competences and professional orientation. The teachers and their principals considered an open culture in the schools as the most important factor for the sustainability of the programme's effects.

Keywords: teacher retention, teacher training, teacher professional development, professional learning community, organisational transfer climate

Introduction

Teacher retention is a considerable problem in urban areas, particularly in disadvantaged schools (Ingersoll, 2003). For a variety of reasons, such as the need to address diversity and language differences, teaching in urban environments is considered challenging and difficult for teachers (Groulx, 2001; Kooy, 2006). Teachers are often not well prepared for such situations (Erskine- Cullen & Sinclair, 1996; Çelik & Amaç, 2012), which can lead to an outflow of teachers from urban schools and education in general. Because teaching in urban areas is challenging, it would be expected for beginning teachers to be provided with additional support in the beginning phase of their career, for instance, in the form of a professional development programme that focuses on teaching in urban schools.

Several studies have shown that professional development programmes can contribute to the competences and job motivation of teachers (Borko, 2004; Gilles, Davis, & MacGlamery, 2009); however, it also appeared that it is not self-evident that the effects of professional development programmes will be maintained after completion of the programmes. Research has shown that professional development interventions should be permanent to become and remain effective, for instance, by creating follow-up activities (Yoon, 2009; Desimone, 2009).

According to several studies, the creation of a professional learning community (PLC) in schools, in which the focus is on teacher learning and collaboration, is a promising way to promote the continuous professional development of teachers (Little, 2006). It is also possible that PLCs contribute to the long-term effects of professional development programmes.

However, little is known about the characteristics of and activities in PLCs that contribute to the sustainability of professional development interventions. The present study investigated whether the positive effects of a professional development programme for urban teachers ('Mastery') were observed one year after the programme ended, whether PLC characteristics and activities in the programme participants' schools contributed to those positive effects, and if so, which characteristics and activities.

Professional development programmes for teachers

Many studies have focused on effective professional development interventions for teachers (see for instance Borko, 2004; Morge, Toczek, & Chakroun, 2010; Lee, Lewis, Adamson, MaertenRivera, & Secada, 2008; Gilles, Davis, & MacGlamery, 2009). In several of these studies, professional development interventions positively affected the learning of teachers and/or pupils. Professional development programmes appeared to contribute to teachers' knowledge (Borko, 2004; Ponte, Beijaard, & Wubbels, 2004; Hofman & Dijkstra, 2009). For instance, professional development programmes can help teachers develop rich and flexible knowledge regarding their subjects (Borko, 2004). Additionally, professional development programmes can contribute to teachers' teaching competence. For instance, Vogt and Rogalla (2009) observed that professional development intervention positively contributed to adaptive teaching competency. Furthermore, professional development interventions can contribute to self-efficacy of teachers (Hofman & Dijkstra, 2009). For instance, teacher professionalisation in a teacher network had a positive effect on the self-efficacy of teachers (Hofman & Dijkstra, 2009). Professional development programmes can contribute to job motivation and the retention of teachers (Gilles, Davis, & McGlamery, 2009; Hofman & Dijkstra, 2009). Gilles, Davis and MacGlamery (2009) observed positive effects of a professional development intervention for beginning urban teachers on job motivation and the retention of these teachers. Finally, professional development programmes can have a positive effect on student learning and student results (Domitrovich, Hest, Gill, Bierman, Welsh, & Jones, 2009; Morge, Toczek, & Chakroun, 2010; Doppelt, Schunn, Silk, Mehalik, Reynolds, & Ward, 2009; Wallace, 2009). For instance, Domitrovich et al. (2009) observed a positive effect of a professional development intervention with a focus on language, literacy and social-emotional development on pupils' social problem solving skills and communication and language use at home, amongst other skills.

Although several studies on teacher professional development have shown a positive effect of professional development programmes on the learning of teachers and/or pupils, it also appeared that it is not self-evident that the effects of professional development programmes will be maintained after completion of the programmes; interventions should be permanent to become and remain effective (Yoon, 2009;

Desimone, 2009). For instance, this could be realised by follow-up interventions and encouraging the on-going learning and collaboration of teachers.

Although research has shown that embedding professional development interventions in the school organisation is important for the success and sustainability of the programmes, this aspect is often neglected because many studies focus mainly on the effects of professional development interventions (Van Veen, Zwart, & Meirink, 2012). Therefore, it is important to investigate how professional development activities could be embedded in the school organisation to maintain and/or enhance the effects of the interventions in the long-term.

School organisation and professional development

In school organisational literature and workplace learning and learning in organisations literature, school organisational activities are described that might contribute to the continuous professional development of teachers and the lasting effects of professional development interventions.

Literature on learning in organisations shows that it is important that school organisations facilitate the *transfer* of learning outcomes from professional development interventions to the workplace (Hatala & Fleming, 2007; Lim & Morris, 2006; Gregoire, 1999; Blume,

Ford, Baldwin and Huang (2010) define transfer as a dynamic and complex process, which consists of two major dimensions: a) generalisation - the extent to which knowledge and skills acquired in a learning setting are applied to other settings, individuals and/or situations, and b) maintenance - the extent to which changes from learning experiences persist over time. To successfully transfer learning outcomes from professional development programmes to the workplace, it is important that teachers have opportunities to practice newly gained skills and knowledge in school organisations, that teacher learning is appreciated, for instance, by rewards and incentives (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Gregoire, 1999; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993) and that teachers receive sufficient support and feedback (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Gregoire, 1999). Supervisors and colleagues play a crucial role in the transfer process by providing support and feedback and showing their involvement (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Gregoire, 1999). According to Bruke and Hutchins (2007), the alignment between the policy of the organisation and

goals of the professional development programmes is important for the transfer of the programme to the workplace. Broad and Newstrom (1992) and Minter (1996) argue for partnerships between trainers, trainees and supervisors in the organisation. The transfer process also appears to be influenced by individual attributes of the participants (for instance, by the involvement and expectations of the participants (and his/her perception of the utility of the programme for the workplace) and the curriculum of the professional development programmes (for instance, by the relevance of the curriculum to work) (Gregoire, 1999; Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

The notion of transfer has been criticised in the literature as being too simplistic, based on replicative conceptions of learning, and disconnected from complex contextual factors that also influence the transition between learning and work contexts (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009). Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström (2003) indicated that the working and learning contexts influence one another and contribute to the learning process of the participants. Therefore, developers of professional development programmes and stakeholders in schools are both responsible for the successful transfer of learning outcomes from professional development programmes to the workplace.

Furthermore, it appears that it is important that school organisations create a *culture for teacher learning* for successful professional development (Van Veen et al. 2012; Assunção Flores, 2004). Concepts are elaborated in the literature on learning in organisations and the workplace that could be useful to understand such learning cultures. Research on learning in organisations has shown that a culture for learning refers to an open organisational climate, in which the employees collaborate and trust one another, feel safe to make mistakes and open communication is the norm (Runhaar, Sanders & Slegers, 2009; Weiss, 1999). Literature on learning in the workplace has shown that it is important that organisations provide sufficient support and feedback, opportunities to learn and access to learning resources (Ashton, 2004). Additionally, involved colleagues who support one another appeared to be important (Assunção Flores, 2004). The research of Geijsel, Slegers, Stoel and Krüger (2009) showed that school leaders play an important role: school leaders with a transformative leadership style who provided teachers with the security required to experiment, make mistakes and exchange tips appeared to positively affect professional development.

Several activities in school organisations that could foster the transfer of professional development interventions to the workplace and promote the on-going professional development of teachers, such as collaboration between teachers and opportunities for support and feedback, are typical for what has recently been referred to as *professional learning communities* (Little, 2006).

Although there are variations in how researchers define professional communities, most definitions encompass practices that are supportive for teacher learning, including observation, problem solving, mutual support and advice (Little, 2006; Grodsky & Gammoran, 2003). PLCs refer to close relationships between teachers, typically with the implication that these relationships are oriented toward teacher professional development (Little, 2006). Strong PLCs are characterised by an overall vision, in which teacher learning is considered relevant by both school leaders and teachers (Little, 2006). There is a collective focus on and shared responsibility for student learning, collective control over important decisions and collaboration between teachers (Grodsky & Gamoran, 2003; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Little, 2006; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Teachers in strong PLCs have access to new knowledge about teaching and learning and to the expertise of colleagues from in- and outside their school. Teachers provide one another feedback on individual performance and aspects of classroom and school practice (Little, 2006). Preconditions for the creation of strong PLCs are sufficient time, materials and space and access to the expertise of colleagues (Little, 2006). Furthermore, school leaders play an important role, which is to cultivate PLCs (Stoll et al., 2006).

Several studies have shown positive relationships between PLCs in schools and the on-going/continuous professional development of teachers (Little, 2006; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2004; Wilson & Berne, 1999). There are also indications that the success of professional development programmes is dependent on the quality of PLCs in schools (Little, 2006). Simultaneously, there are indications that when a school supports teachers' participation in high-quality professional development programmes, PLCs are strengthened (Little, 2006).

Although many studies have stressed the importance of PLCs in schools for the (on-going) professional development of teachers and success of professional

development programmes, it is not known which activities and characteristics contribute to the long-term effects of professional development programmes.

Professional development of teachers in urban environments

It is important for urban education that teachers participate in good and sustainable professional development interventions. Urban teachers must teach in a complex environment where they encounter several challenges. Urban teachers must address the problems that apply to all beginning teachers, such as classroom discipline and a high workload (Abbott, Moran, & Clarke, 2009; Veenman, 1984). In addition, beginning urban teachers must address the typical challenges of an urban context, such as cultural diversity and an unsafe atmosphere in and around school (Groulx, 2001; Knoblauch & Woolfolk, 2006). Despite several initiatives intended to professionalise teachers to teach in urban schools, teachers have still difficulties with teaching in urban areas. Beginning (high quality) teachers are more likely to leave urban schools compared to non-urban schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003; Tamir, 2013).

Teaching in an urban environment places heavy demands on the teacher quality. One important criterion for teacher quality is teacher competency. Teaching in urban contexts demands specific *competences*. Research shows that teaching in large cities in the US demands that teachers be skilled in handling cultural diversity and language deficiencies (Groulx, 2001; Olmedo, 1997). A greater appeal than in other schools is made on teachers' abilities to collaborate and develop effective relationships with individuals in and outside the school (Voltz, Collins, Patterson, & Sims, 2008). Furthermore, urban teachers must address violence and unsafe environments (Smith & Smith, 2006). It is important that teachers support one another because of the complexity of teaching in an urban environment and the heavy demands on teacher competences. Mutual support (including observation, feedback and collaboration) is an important feature of PLCs.

Another criterion for teacher quality is self-efficacy. Siwatu (2011) observed that beginning teachers have lower *self-efficacy* regarding teaching in urban areas than suburban areas. The research indicates that teachers with low self-efficacy are less motivated to experiment with pedagogical innovations/challenges and are more likely to experience burnout than teachers with high self-efficacy (Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002).

According to Siwatu (2011), it is conceivable that teachers in urban areas who doubt their capability to manage daily challenges may leave the teaching profession after a few years. There are indications from the literature that PLCs positively affect teachers' self-efficacy (Cowley & Meehan, 2002; Stegall, 2011). Stegall (2011) observed that teachers who participated in PLCs showed increased self-efficacy in instructional strategies and student engagement.

Finally, an important criterion for teacher quality is teacher *professional orientation* (Mahieu, Forest Diet, & Peene, 1999). Teachers are expected to not only perform well within the classroom but also demonstrate professionalism that extends beyond the classroom. Hoyle (1980) distinguishes 'restricted professionalism', in which teachers focus primarily on their own classroom and base their actions on experience rather than theory, from 'extended professionalism', in which teachers are involved in the school organisation and have an interest beyond the classroom. There are indications that the job satisfaction of teachers is positively promoted by the shared responsibility and mutual support of the team of teachers, which is typical for extended professionalism (Mahieu et al., 1999). We presume that an extended orientation is particularly important for working in an urban context because urban teachers must operate in a complex educational environment. In urban schools, it is even more important that teachers support one another and there is shared responsibility. PLCs could contribute to the development of an extended professional orientation, in the sense that the focus in those communities is not on own classroom practices but shared responsibility, mutual support and collaboration between teachers to reach common goals.

The present study: purpose and research questions

This study examined the long-term effects of a professional development programme ('Mastery') on the quality and retention of beginning urban teachers. The programme aimed to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching in urban primary schools. Previous research has shown positive effects of this programme on the competences and self-efficacy of teachers (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Zijlstra, & Volman, 2014). This study investigated whether these positive effects were also long-term and which characteristics and activities were typical of school organisations where teachers showed positive long-term effects of the 'Mastery' programme.

The research questions of this study were formulated as follows:

1. What are the long-term effects of participation in the ‘Mastery’ programme to the quality (competences, professional orientation and self-efficacy) and retention (job motivation and career choices) of teachers?
2. Which characteristics and activities are typical of school organisations in which teachers showed positive long-term effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme?

Method

Research design

The first research question was investigated using a quasi-experimental design with an experimental and control group. The long-term effects of participation in the ‘Mastery’ programme on the quality (competences, professional orientation, self-efficacy) and retention (job motivation and career choices) of teachers was measured using a knowledge test and questionnaires (pre-, post- and retention measures). Pre-measures (administered before the beginning of the programme), post-measures (conducted directly after completing the programme) and retention measures (administered one year after completion) were used.

The second research question was investigated through interviews. This qualitative method was chosen because we wanted to obtain a detailed understanding of the school characteristics and activities that were meaningful for the teachers such that the activities helped the teachers maintain and/or enhance the long-term effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme.

The ‘Mastery’ programme

The ‘Mastery’ programme was a professional development programme for beginning primary school teachers working in Amsterdam. The programme purpose was twofold: to increase the *quality* of teaching and contribute to the *retention* of beginning teachers in the urban educational context.

The content of the programme was focused on the acquisition of skills necessary to meet the challenges of teaching in a complex urban environment, such as collaborating with professionals both in- and outside the school environment, addressing aggressive

behaviour and language deficiencies of children, communicating with parents of different cultural backgrounds, and developing an extended professional orientation.

The programme was one year and consisted of the following three components: group meetings (these involved theoretical input from experts, opportunities for sharing experiences and group assignments), classroom application (participants apply new insights to their teaching practices) and lectures (in which experts explored urban themes). Additionally, supervision was organised, offering a context for beginning teachers to share experiences and expertise (for a more extensive discussion about 'Mastery', see Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Zijlstra, & Volman, 2014).

Participants

For the quantitative component of the present study, all 133 teachers who participated in the post-measurement were approached and asked whether they would like to participate in the retention measurement. In total, 44 of the 67 teachers from the control group and 28 of the 66 teachers from the experimental group completed the retention measurement. Whether the group of teachers who completed the retention measurement was comparable to the group who did not complete the measurement was determined for both the experimental and control groups by comparing the post-measurement scores. There were no significant differences between the teachers who completed the retention measurement and those who did not (p -values were all $> .05$).

The experimental and control group comprised teachers who taught at a primary school in Amsterdam. The experimental group participated in the 'Mastery' programme, whereas the control group teachers did not.

To derive obvious conclusions regarding the effects of the intervention, a matching procedure was developed whereby the participants of both conditions were matched on several potentially interfering variables. For this study, we determined whether the teachers who completed the retention measurement from the experimental and control condition were comparable regarding the potentially interfering variables, which were also measured in our previous study. The conditions appeared to be comparable for all characteristics (see Table 1).

Table 1

Comparison of the conditions in terms of the general characteristics of the teachers

	'Mastery' condition			Control Condition		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Teaching experience ^a	6.37	1.81	27	6.86	1.74	44
Gender ^b	0.93	0.26	28	0.98	0.12	44
School population (SES) ^c	2.23	1.24	26	2.50	1.15	44
School population (ethnic background of parents) ^d	2.54	1.27	26	2.66	1.22	44
Highest achieved level of education ^e	2.29	1.05	28	2.66	1.14	44
Place of teacher training ^f	0.30	0.47	28	0.30	0.46	44

^a 1= 0.5 year, 1=1 year, 2=2 years, 3=3 years, 4=4 years, 6=5 years, 6=6 years, 7=7 years

^b 0= male, 1= female

^c 1= 0-30% pupils with lower SES, 2= 30-50% pupils with lower SES, 3= 50-70% pupils with lower SES, 4= 80-100% pupils with lower SES

^d 1= 0-30% non-Dutch pupils, 2= 30-50% non-Dutch pupils, 3= 50-70% non-Dutch pupils, 4= 80-100% non-Dutch pupils

^e 1 = lower secondary education, 2 = higher secondary education, 3= pre-university education, 4= other

^f 0 = Inside a large city, 1 = Outside a large city

For the qualitative study, teachers were selected who showed positive long-term effects of the 'Mastery' programme. In total, ten of the 15 teachers who showed positive long-term effects of 'Mastery' wanted to participate in the study. These ten teachers and nine of their school principals were interviewed.

Instruments

Several questionnaires were used to measure the different dependent variables. The questionnaires were administered before, immediately after and one year after completion of the programme (pre-, post- and retention test). The questionnaires that were used for the retention test were identical to those administered for the pre- and post-test. The

period between the measurements was identical for both the experimental and control groups (namely, one year).

Competences for teaching in an urban environment

Competences for teaching in an urban environment were operationalised as knowledge of methods of coping with language deficiencies, threats to safety, cultural diversity and various actors in the school. To measure these competences (in terms of knowledge), a knowledge test was developed by the educators of the programme in collaboration with the researchers. We realise that knowledge is a poor operationalisation of competence, but in the context of the programme, this was the most feasible method of measurement. The knowledge test consisted of 54 multiple-choice questions that addressed four urban themes. The teachers were asked to choose the best answer from four alternatives. The variable 'knowledge score' was calculated by computing the amount of correct answers. Cronbach's alpha was .70 for the pre-test, .71 for the post-test, and .70 for the retention test.

Professional orientation

Professional orientation was measured by the questionnaire that was developed by Jongmans, Biemans and Beijaard (1998), based on Hoyle (1980)'s characterisation of teachers with a restricted or an extended professional orientation. The questionnaire consists of 13 items. The teachers were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with each of the 13 statements using a five-point scale that ranged from 'totally disagree' to 'totally agree'. Negative responses were interpreted to indicate a restricted orientation, whereas positive responses were interpreted to indicate an extended professional orientation. The variable 'professional orientation' was calculated by obtaining the mean of the 13 items. Cronbach's alpha was .76 for the pre-test, .80 for the post-test, and .76 for the retention test.

Teacher self-efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy was measured using the 'Attitude towards the teaching profession' questionnaire (Meijer & Van Eck, 2008). This questionnaire was translated and adapted from Kyriacou and Kunc (2007). The scale consisted of nine items, and the teachers were

asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the statements using a five-point scale that ranged from 'totally disagree' to 'totally agree'. Negative responses were interpreted to indicate low self-efficacy, and positive responses were interpreted to indicate high self-efficacy. The variable 'self-efficacy' was calculated using the means of the nine items. Cronbach's alphas were .86, .88, .87 for the pre-, post- and retention tests, respectively.

Motivation for teaching

The job motivation of the teachers was measured using the 'Vision of teaching and job satisfaction' questionnaire (Meijer & Van Eck, 2008). The teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the 10 statements using a five-point scale that ranged from totally disagree to totally agree. Negative responses were interpreted to indicate low motivation (for teaching), and positive responses were interpreted to indicate high motivation. The variable 'motivation' was calculated using the means of the 10 items. Cronbach's alpha was .71 for the pre-test, .78 for the post-test and .78 for the retention test.

Career choices

The career choices of the teachers were measured using several questions regarding actual and planned career choices. The questions addressed the intention of the teacher to remain in education (in this profession, at this school, in an urban environment), the steps taken to orient into other sectors and the actual actions taken to leave the education profession.

Characteristics and activities that contributed to the sustainability of the 'Mastery' programme

For a detailed understanding of the school characteristics and activities that contributed to the sustainability of 'Mastery', semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with ten programme participants, who reported positive long-term effects, and nine principals of these participants.

The interviews consisted of two sections. In the first section, the interviewer asked about the perceived influence of the programme on the dependent variables of the quantitative study: competences, professional orientation, self-efficacy, job motivation and career choices. The second section of the interviews focused on the characteristics and activities considered typical of a PLC that were performed in the schools where teachers reported positive long-term effects of the programme. The interviewer began with the question whether the respondents believed that it had been possible for the teachers to develop, apply and share the acquired expertise from the 'Mastery' programme within their schools. After this question, the interviewer asked which school activities and characteristics were, in the perception of the respondents, helpful for the teachers to maintain and/or enhance the effects of the programme. The respondents could spontaneously report on these school activities and characteristics.

Thereafter, the interviewer specifically focused on the school characteristics and activities from the literature that are considered important for the (on-going) success of professional development. These activities and characteristics were summarised in a checklist (see Table 2).

Table 2

Checklist of school characteristics and activities that were used in the second section of the interviews and times that they were recognised by teachers and principals

School organisational characteristics and activities from the literature	Teachers (N=10)	Principals (N=9)
Opportunities in the school to share newly gained expertise from the professional development programme with colleagues	10	8
Appreciation in the school for teachers' input from the professional development programme	10	7
Opportunities in the school to practice newly gained expertise from the professional development programme	8	9
Involved colleagues in the school who show their interest in the professional development programme	7	5
Alignment between the policy of the school and goals of the professional development programme	5	7
Support and feedback from colleagues in the school regarding the professional development programme	4	5
A culture for teacher learning in the school:		
- Teachers have access to new knowledge about teaching and learning	9	9
- Teachers collaborate with one another in the school	8	7
- Teacher learning is considered to be relevant by both school principals and teachers	7	7
- There is collective control over important decisions	6	9
- There is a safe atmosphere in the school (in which teachers feel free to make mistakes)	6	6
- There is a collective focus on and shared responsibility for student learning	6	7
- The school organisation is focused on teacher learning	5	6
- Teachers learn from one another in the school	4	6

The interviewer asked whether the participants recognised the activities and characteristics from the checklist in their own schools, for instance, whether colleagues showed interest and involvement regarding the ‘Mastery’ programme toward the teacher. The participants were asked to explain their answers with concrete examples to obtain an obvious picture of what happened in their schools. The interviewer also asked whether the respondents believed that what the teachers had learned from the programme was positively influenced in the long-term by the different school organisational characteristics and activities.

Data analysis

Quantitative data

Multilevel modelling was used to determine the effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme on the different dependent variables. Measurement occasions (level 1) were treated as nested in teachers (level 2). The independent variables in the analyses were condition (experimental or control condition) and measurement occasion, whereas the dependent variables were competences, professional orientation, self-efficacy, job motivation, and career choices. The assumptions for multilevel modelling were checked, and no violations were observed.

The effect sizes were calculated using the formula of Raudenbush and Liu (in Feingold, 2009, p.7), whereby we divided the coefficient for the interaction effect between the retention test and experimental condition by the pooled standard deviation of the dependent variable on the two measurement occasions (namely, pre- and retention test).

Qualitative data

A content analysis was employed to analyse the data from the interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A process of coding and categorising the data were utilised. The responses to the interview questions were examined and coded by the first author. The coding process was an interpretative and iterative process, whereby the responses of the respondents were coded and grouped together. The codes referred to the perceived effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme on the dependent variables (for example, an increase in extended professional orientation) and the PLC activities and elements that were

present in the school organisations where teachers reported positive effects of the programme (for example, the opportunity for sharing experiences with colleagues). It was difficult to determine inter-rater reliability because of the interpretative and iterative nature of the data analysis (Akkerman, Admiraal, Brekelmans, & Oost, 2008). To enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, the following procedures were followed for the interview analysis:

1. All fragments that were difficult to code, in the perception of the coder (first author), were discussed with another experienced researcher (second author). These fragments and codes were discussed until a consensus was reached and the coding was adjusted to the outcome of this discussion.
2. The outcome of the interpretation of the meaning was audited by a procedure, whereby the codes of two (randomly chosen) scored interviews (10%) were checked and discussed in a peer review (Kvale, 2007). The codes from the coder (first author) were verified by an individual who did not participate in the study. This individual examined the different fragments and codes to determine whether she concurred with the assigned codes. Coding for 'competences', 'self-efficacy', 'job motivation', 'career choices' and 'PLC activities and elements' demonstrated a 100 % concurrence rate. However, coding 'professional orientation' was less uniform, with a 91% concurrence rate. The codes that were less uniform were discussed until agreement was reached, and the coding was adjusted to the outcome of the discussion.

Results

Descriptive statistics of the main variables

The descriptive statistics of the dependent variables included in the study are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

The descriptive statistics for the dependent variables

	Pre-test		Post-test				Retention test					
	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD	Min	Max
'Mastery' condition												
Knowledge	27.31	5.39	14.00	39.00	34.56	5.19	21.00	44.00	32.29	5.34	23.00	47.00
Professional orientation	4.19	0.33	3.54	4.92	4.19	0.40	2.85	5.00	4.39	0.30	3.77	4.85
Self-efficacy	3.81	0.37	2.67	4.89	3.92	0.42	2.89	4.89	3.98	0.41	3.11	4.78
Job motivation	4.10	0.36	3.44	4.78	3.83	0.33	2.89	4.44	4.12	0.42	3.44	4.78
Career choices	3.41	0.96	2.00	5.00	3.13	0.94	2.00	5.00	3.07	1.02	1.00	5.00
Control condition												
Knowledge	28.85	6.65	15.00	42.00	29.30	5.76	18.00	43.00	28.56	6.04	15.00	44.00
Professional orientation	4.37	0.34	3.54	4.92	4.42	0.34	3.69	4.92	4.34	0.38	3.54	5.00
Self-efficacy	3.98	0.53	2.44	2.89	3.90	0.54	2.56	5.00	4.02	0.56	2.89	4.89
Job motivation	4.06	0.45	2.89	4.89	3.67	0.49	2.67	4.67	3.93	0.51	2.78	4.89
Career choices	3.06	1.01	1.00	5.00	2.84	1.00	1.00	5.00	2.77	1.10	1.00	5.00

Evaluation of the long-term contributions of the ‘Mastery’ programme to the dependent variables

The long-term contribution of the ‘Mastery’ programme to teachers’ competences

The outcomes of the multilevel analysis are presented in Table 4. There was a significant interaction effect between the retention test and experimental condition, which indicated that, given the initial difference between the conditions in the pre-test (in which the experimental condition scored lower than the control condition, see Table 3), teachers’ knowledge increased relatively more in the ‘Mastery’ condition from the pre-test to the retention measurement. The effect size was 0.72, which can be considered large (Cohen, 1992).

Table 4

Parameter estimates for the multilevel models of teachers’ competences predicted by measurement occasion and condition

	Knowledge		
	Coeff	SE	P
Measurement occasion 1 (pre-test)	28.74	0.85	.00
Measurement occasion 2 (post-test)	29.25	0.81	.00
Measurement occasion 3 (retention test)	28.75	0.92	.00
Condition (experimental)	-1.44	1.16	.22
Post-test * experimental condition	6.86	0.99	.00
Retention test * experimental condition	4.13	1.30	.00

The results of the qualitative analysis confirmed the conclusion of the quantitative analysis. The majority of the respondents indicated that the teachers developed several competences for urban teaching, such as dealing with parents (both highly educated parents or parents with culturally diverse backgrounds) and language deficiencies. Nearly all the teachers experienced a positive influence of the ‘Mastery’ programme on their communication competences. One teacher stated the following:

“Yes, I certainly do [experience a long-term influence of the programme], in the communication with colleagues. Through the module communication, I learned to say things in an adequate way, and - not immediately - but by doing this more often, I experience that I dare to do so. I notice that [...] when things go beyond my limit, I can say ‘I experience this and I do not like it’, and I encounter that people take me seriously.”

The long-term contribution of the ‘Mastery’ programme to teachers’ professional orientation

The interaction effect between the experimental condition and retention test was significant (Table 5). This result indicates that, given the initial difference between the conditions on the pre-test (in which the experimental groups scored lower on the professional orientation scale than the control group, see Table 3), teachers’ professional orientation increased relatively more in the ‘Mastery’ condition from the pre-test to the retention measurement. There was an increase (small) in teachers’ professional orientation in the experimental groups and a (small) decrease in the control group (see Table 3). The effect size appeared to be 0.58, which can be considered medium (Cohen, 1992).

Table 5

Parameter estimates for the multilevel models of teachers’ professional orientation predicted by measurement occasion and condition

	Professional orientation		
	Coeff	SE	P
Measurement occasion 1 (pre-test)	4.37	0.04	.00
Measurement occasion 2 (post-test)	4.41	0.05	.00
Measurement occasion 3 (retention test)	4.32	0.05	.00
Condition (experimental)	-0.18	0.06	.00
Post-test * experimental condition	-0.04	0.06	.57
Retention test * experimental condition	0.20	0.07	.01

The results of the qualitative analysis confirmed the conclusion of the quantitative analysis. In the opinion of the respondents, the ‘Mastery’ programme contributed to the

development of a broader view on teaching. Several respondents mentioned that the teachers were more interested and involved in the process of school development (for instance, they became members of project groups) after participation in the programme.

One teacher declared the following:

“I focus more on things outside my classroom. I became also more interested in teaching in Amsterdam, in what happens on other schools. I also joined the participation council, and by following ‘Mastery’, I became more interested in what we can change at the policy level.”

The long-term contribution of the ‘Mastery’ programme to teachers’ self-efficacy

The interaction effect between condition and the retention test was not significant (Table 6), which indicated that teachers’ self-efficacy did not increase more in the ‘Mastery’ condition from the pre- to retention measurement.

Table 6

Parameter estimates for the multilevel models of teachers’ self-efficacy predicted by measurement occasion and condition

	Self-efficacy		
	Coeff	SE	P
Measurement occasion 1 (pre-test)	3.98	0.06	.00
Measurement occasion 2 (post-test)	3.89	0.06	.00
Measurement occasion 3 (retention test)	4.02	0.07	.00
Condition (experimental)	-0.17	0.08	.04
Post-test * experimental condition	0.20	0.07	.00
Retention test * experimental condition	0.09	0.09	.35

However, the results of the interviews showed that, in the opinion of the respondents, the ‘Mastery’ programme positively affected the self-efficacy of the teachers. For instance, the teachers felt more confident in their contact and communication with parents and colleagues and in providing language education.

One teacher stated the following:

“I feel more confident. I can make more easily contact with parents..., that was something that we have learned in the module about communication, how you can handle that. Additionally, that you can more easily give advice to parents, that you know better how the process of language learning works with second language learners.”

The long-term contribution of the ‘Mastery’ programme to teachers’ job motivation

The interaction effect between the experimental condition and retention test was not significant (Table 7). This result indicated that teachers’ job motivation did not increase more in the ‘Mastery’ condition than in the non-‘Mastery’ condition from the pre-test to the retention measurement.

Table 7

Parameter estimates for the multilevel models of teachers’ job motivations predicted by measurement occasion and condition

	Job motivation		
	Coeff	SE	P
Measurement occasion 1 (pre-test)	4.06	0.05	.00
Measurement occasion 2 (post-test)	3.67	0.05	.00
Measurement occasion 3 (retention test)	3.95	0.06	.00
Condition (experimental)	0.04	0.07	.53
Post-test * experimental condition	0.11	0.07	.14
Retention test * experimental condition	0.07	0.09	.42

Although the quantitative results showed no influence of the programme on the job motivation of the teachers, several respondents of the interviews mentioned that the programme positively affected the motivation of the teachers. These respondents explained that the programme provided teachers with (new) inspiration or energy for teaching and/or insights into the attractive aspects of the education profession.

One teacher stated:

“Yes, I have to say that it is a very hard job, but I experienced that... the programme gave me new energy.... it gave me the energy to do things better, I became motivated through that.”

Another teacher explained:

“Yes, ‘Mastery’ showed me what I really like about teaching. I know now that I am really interested in the behaviour of children and in the contact with the children. The programme has given me clarity in what I really like.”

The long-term contribution of the ‘Mastery’ programme to teachers’ career choices

There were no significant interaction effects regarding teachers’ career choices. The p-values of the interaction effects of the different items were all $> .05$, thus indicating that the teachers’ career choices did not increase more in the ‘Mastery’ condition than in the non-‘Mastery’ condition from the pre-test to the retention measurement.

However, several respondents of the interviews experienced a positive contribution of the programme to teachers’ career choices. According to these respondents, the programme stimulated the teachers to think more about their professional development and encouraged them to develop themselves in a certain direction (for instance, using follow-up courses).

One school principal stated:

“Yes, I know for sure that the ‘Mastery’ programme influenced her career choices because she followed a management course, so she orientated and searched more for a course on that.”

School characteristics and activities

The majority of the teachers and principals mentioned that it was possible in their schools to develop and apply what teachers had learned in the ‘Mastery’ programme in their schools. These teachers and principals recognised from the literature that there were *opportunities to practice the newly gained expertise from the programme* in their schools (see Table 2). The teachers experienced sufficient opportunities to practice newly gained competences (for example, they could practice their newly gained communication competences in parent conversations) and were able to apply and develop their newly gained insights by fulfilling new tasks and roles at their schools. For instance, teachers became members of working groups that were responsible for educational innovations in the schools. Additionally, several teachers indicated that they had the opportunity to

develop their expertise from the 'Mastery' programme in follow-up courses, which was confirmed by their principals. The majority of the teachers and principals believed that the opportunity to practice newly gained expertise in their schools was important for developing, applying and sharing expertise from the 'Mastery' programme.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents mentioned that in their schools, it was possible to share the expertise from the 'Mastery' programme. All teachers and nearly all principals recognised from the literature that there were *opportunities to share newly gained expertise from the programme with colleagues* (see Table 2). At some schools, sharing was mainly informal, such as during lunch or coffee breaks, but at other schools, sharing also occurred during formal occasions, such as group meetings and seminars. Teachers shared their experiences with the programme with their colleagues and discussed the contents of the different modules. Several teachers indicated that there was an opportunity at their school to present about the 'Mastery' programme. Some respondents mentioned that the opportunity to present was initiated by the school principal, whereas others indicated that the teachers initiated the presentation. Many respondents believed that the opportunity to share newly gained expertise with colleagues had a positive influence on developing, applying and sharing what the teachers had learned from the 'Mastery' programme.

The *involvement of principals in the 'Mastery' programme* was also mentioned by several respondents. According to these respondents, transferring expertise from the 'Mastery' programme to the workplace could be accomplished if the principals were involved in the programme. For instance, transferring expertise could be accomplished by programme assignments that were performed by both teachers and principals. Four teachers and five principals recognised the *'support and feedback from colleagues regarding the programme'* aspect from the literature (see Table 2). These respondents indicated, for instance, that colleagues and principals helped teachers perform the assignments from the 'Mastery' programme in the school or that the principals provided teachers with the opportunity to participate in follow-up courses, in which the teachers could develop competences from the 'Mastery' programme. However, although the schools were the 'good' examples, many teachers did not recognise sufficient support and feedback at their schools. These respondents indicated, for instance, that the expertise from the 'Mastery' programme could have been sustained and further developed in their schools if the school principals had adapted a more active and stimulating role. The respondents explained that the

initiative to further develop the expertise from the programme was mainly the responsibility of the teachers themselves, but it would have helped if the principals had more actively stimulated the teachers to share and expand their ideas, for instance, by asking the teachers to provide a presentation about the 'Mastery' programme for the team or reflecting with the teachers on the acquired expertise from the programme (for instance, during conversations regarding the functioning of the teachers).

Furthermore, the respondents considered *the involvement of teachers and their newly acquired expertise in important school organisational developments* as important for the further development of the acquired expertise from the 'Mastery' programme. These respondents explained that the participation of teachers in school organisational development groups helped the teachers to apply, develop and share their expertise from the 'Mastery' programme. With the involvement of teachers in important school organisational development, teachers felt that their participation in the programme was not only something that they had performed for themselves but also had value for the school organisation. Consistent with this result, five teachers and seven principals recognised from the literature that there was an *alignment between the policy of the school and goals of the programme* (see Table 2), which could be considered helpful for the involvement of teachers and their expertise in important school organisational developments. These respondents indicated that the content of the 'Mastery' programme was broad; therefore, there was always a type of connection between the programme and school. Several respondents mentioned that the 'Mastery' programme focused on the development of a broader teaching view, which was something considered important in the schools. However, one-half of the teachers were less positive about the alignment between the programme and school policy. These respondents were not completely negative, but mentioned that some topics of the 'Mastery' programme did not fit the methods of their school or school population. According to these respondents, it was difficult to apply, develop and share the content of the 'Mastery' programme, which did not connect to the situation at their schools.

The majority of the teachers and principals responded to the open question regarding the school activities and characteristics, that an *open culture*, in which teachers could share their ideas and expertise from the 'Mastery' programme with colleagues and the input and expertise from teachers of the 'Mastery' programme was seriously

considered by colleagues and principals, was most important for the development of the acquired expertise from the programme. According to the respondents, this open culture was more important than specific conditions (such as enough space, money and time) or activities (such as follow-up courses). The majority of the teachers and principals recognised the aspect of *involved colleagues in the school who showed interest in the programme* from the literature (Table 2). Involvement was mainly expressed in what several respondents called ‘small’ things, such as asking what the teachers had performed during meetings of the ‘Mastery’ programme or the presence of principals at the graduation ceremony. According to the respondents, involvement and interest from colleagues was important to develop, share and apply the expertise from the programme because it provided the teachers the feeling that what they do and know is appreciated and important for themselves and others at the school. However, some of the respondents explicitly mentioned that too much involvement would be counterproductive because it would provide teachers the feeling of being patronised.

Additionally, *effective communication among team members* was mentioned by several respondents. According to these respondents, it was important that teachers and school principals provide one another with information, advice and feedback in an effective manner. Several principals mentioned that teachers who participated in the ‘Mastery’ programme could communicate their insights and advice from the ‘Mastery’ programme in an appropriate manner. Hereby, other team members were inspired.

Furthermore, an *affiliation with the individual needs of teachers* was considered important by some respondents. Some teachers were not able to immediately apply or share their newly acquired knowledge from the Mastery programme at their schools, for instance, because of personal reasons (such as reintegration after pregnancy or burnout). For these teachers, it was important that principals provided sufficient time, space and guidance to find their way (back) into their schools. These respondents explained that it is important that school principals not only ‘hunt’ for new expertise from professional development programmes but also listen carefully to the individual needs of teachers.

All teachers and the majority of the principals recognised from the literature that there was an *appreciation in their school for teachers’ input from the programme* (see Table 2). In particular, because teachers could substantiate their input from theory they acquired from the ‘Mastery’ programme was appreciated. Appreciation for the teachers’ input was

mainly expressed in compliments towards the teachers and in seriously listening to the input of the teachers but not an increase in salary. According to many respondents, appreciation for input from the 'Mastery' programme was important to develop, apply and share what the teachers had learned from the programme.

The majority of the principals recognised all the different aspects of a '*culture for teacher learning*' in their schools (see Table 2). The teachers also recognised several of these aspects. However, although the schools were the 'good examples', about two aspects of the culture for teacher learning, namely: '*the school organisation is focused on the learning of teachers*' and '*teachers learn from each other*', less teachers were positive. The teachers who did not recognise the first aspect indicated that they had the opportunity to follow professional development programmes in their schools, but there was no plan of how the acquired expertise would be used in the school. The other aspect of the learning culture was recognised by only four teachers. These teachers mentioned that their schools had plans to allow teachers to learn from one another, but these plans were often not realised for practical reasons.

Furthermore, it was remarkable that nearly all principals recognised the aspect '*There is collective control over important decisions*' in their schools, whereas fewer teachers experienced this collective control. Teachers who did not recognise this aspect mentioned that they had the opportunity to provide input regarding important decisions, but their input was not taken seriously by the school management because management makes the final decisions and these decisions are occasionally different than those of the teachers. Finally, although the schools were 'good examples', it was remarkable that the atmosphere at several schools was typified as 'unsafe', which was related to the fact that many experienced teachers in the school were not willing to change their working methods. Hereby, beginning teachers were hampered in sharing their new ideas and input with the team. The principals of these schools attempted to change this 'old culture', for instance, by emphasising the importance of new input from beginning teachers on the team and the resignation of several experienced teachers. However, this culture change, according to the respondents, was a complicated and long process. However, many respondents mentioned that a culture for teacher learning was realised in their schools, which helped teachers develop, apply and share their expertise from the 'Mastery'

programme. In such an open learning culture, the teachers felt comfortable, appreciated, and motivated to share and develop their expertise.

Conclusion

Long-term effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme

The results of the quasi-experimental study showed that the ‘Mastery’ programme had a positive long-term effect on the competences and professional orientation of the teachers. The interview results confirmed this conclusion. Nearly all teachers experienced a positive influence of ‘Mastery’ on their communication competences, whereas this competence was not mentioned in our previous study on the short-term effects of ‘the programme (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Zijlstra, & Volman, 2014). One reason for the different outcomes might be that the development of a communication competence requires a longer period of time and practice. This reason was explicitly mentioned by one of the respondents of the interviews.

A positive quantitative effect of the ‘Mastery’ programme on the professional orientation of the teachers was not observed in the post-measurements (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Zijlstra, & Volman, 2014). Here, this result might also indicate the development of a professional orientation requires more time and can therefore only be measured after a longer period.

The quasi-experimental study showed no positive long-term effects of the programme on the self-efficacy of the teachers, which contrasted with the outcomes of our previous study (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Zijlstra, & Volman, 2014). One reason for the difference might be that teachers developed a broader professional orientation in the longer term, and participated in new roles and tasks in their schools, which could lead to a decrease in self-efficacy because these tasks were new.

The quantitative results showed that participation in the ‘Mastery’ programme had no effect on the teachers’ job motivation or career choices. The absence of an effect could be because the teachers who participated in the study were all motivated before they began the programme, as evidenced by the fact that the teachers had high scores on the motivation scale in the pre-test (ceiling effect). This high motivation was also the case with the teachers from the control condition who followed different professional development programmes than the ‘Mastery’ programme.

Although the quantitative results of this study showed no long-term effect of the programme on self-efficacy, job motivation and career choices of the teachers, the interviews revealed that, according to several participants of the interviews, the programme did contribute in the longer term to the self-efficacy, job motivation and career choices of the teachers. One reason for the differences between the quantitative and qualitative results could be that there was a ceiling effect in the quantitative analysis because both conditions had high scores on the pre- and retention test scales.

School activities and characteristics

The results of the interview study showed that in schools where teachers reported positive long-term effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme, teachers experienced sufficient possibilities to apply, share and further develop the acquired expertise from the ‘Mastery’ programme within their schools. The school organisational characteristic that was considered most important for the sustainability of the programme’s effects was an *open culture*. Other school organisational characteristics and activities that were considered important by the respondents included *the involvement of principals in the programme, the involvement of teachers and their acquired expertise in school organisation developments, effective communication among team members, and affiliations with the individual needs of teachers*.

The study showed that in schools where teachers reported positive long-term effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme, the majority of the school organisational conditions and activities that were identified in the literature as important for the (on-going) success of teacher professional development were recognised by the teachers and principals. There were possibilities to practice and share expertise, appreciation for teachers’ input from the programme and involved colleagues who showed their interest in the programme. In the literature, a ‘culture for teacher learning’ was also identified as important for the (on-going) success of teacher professional development. Many different aspects of this learning culture were recognised by the respondents. These respondents believed that a culture for teacher learning was realised in their schools and, in their opinion, this culture helped the teachers to develop, apply and share their expertise from the ‘Mastery’ programme within the schools.

Discussion

This research aimed to contribute to our knowledge of teacher professionalisation. The study showed the long-term contribution of a professional development programme to the quality and retention of beginning urban teachers and identified several school characteristics and activities that were valuable for the sustainability of the professional development intervention.

One important finding of this study was that in schools where teachers reported positive long-term effects of the 'Mastery' programme, several school organisational characteristics were present and activities were undertaken that were perceived as valuable for the application, sharing and further development of what teachers had learned from the 'Mastery' programme. This result is an indication that school organisations play an important role in the sustainability of professional development interventions. Many studies on teacher professionalisation focus on the effects of professional development interventions (see, for instance, Vogt & Rogalla, 2009; Morge, Toczek, & Chakroun, 2010), but this study showed that it is also important to focus on embedding these interventions into school organisations.

This study identified which activities and characteristics of school organisations were perceived as valuable for the sustainability of professional development interventions. The respondents considered an *open learning culture* the most important, in which the teachers could share their expertise with colleagues and teachers and principals seriously considered their expertise. This outcome was consistent with the results of previous research, in which the value of an open learning culture for the success of (on-going) teacher professional development was emphasised (see, for instance, Assunção Flores, 2004; Little, 2006; Tamir, 2013).

The study also emphasised the role of good leadership in the sustainability of professional development interventions. Although the study included 'good examples', some teachers mentioned that expertise from the 'Mastery' programme could have been developed, applied and shared if the principals had adapted a more stimulating role. For instance, it would have helped if the principals incorporated the teachers and their acquired knowledge into important school developments. This result was consistent with the outcomes of the study of Snoek (2013), who concluded that in schools where the transfer of a professional development programme occurred successfully, the teachers felt

that their expertise was acknowledged and used by their principals in the development of the school organisation.

Another important result was that the 'Mastery' programme showed different long-term than short-term effects. We only observed a significant positive, long-term effect of the programme on the professional orientation of the teachers, and teachers only reported a positive effect of the programme on their communication competences in the long-term. This not only emphasises the importance of short-term research but also the long-term effects of professional development interventions. Several studies on professional development interventions only include pre- and post-measurements and no long-term measurements (see for instance, Vogt & Rogalla, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Therefore, the effects of professional development interventions on competences that require more time to develop were potentially not measured in these studies. This reasoning might also be why research on effective professionalisation often suggests that professional development programmes that focus on daily teaching practice are more effective than programmes with a more general focus (Van Veen, et al., 2012) because competences related to direct classroom practice are measurable after a relatively shorter period than broader competences. However, this study showed that interventions with a broader focus than classroom practice could contribute to the long-term development of broader competences (such as communication competences) and a broader professional orientation and therefore emphasises the value of a professional development programme that has a broader focus than only classroom practice.

This study has some limitations, and further research on teacher professionalisation is necessary. First, the interview study was on a small-scale, and the results cannot be generalised. The small-scale design made it possible to obtain in-depth information regarding the specific activities and conditions in schools where teachers reported positive long-term effects of the 'Mastery' programme and the perceived value of these activities and conditions. However, it would be notable to determine whether the outcomes of this study could be verified by a larger (quantitative) study.

Furthermore, we only focused on the long-term effects of a professional development programme on the quality and retention of teachers, but it would also be interesting to investigate whether the programme has a long-term effect on student performance.

Despite these limitations, this study provided insight into the long-term effects of a professional development programme and the school organisational activities and characteristics that were perceived as valuable for the sustainability of the professional development programme. The results can contribute to the knowledge of teachers, educators, educational support services, schools, school boards, and researchers on the organisation of sustainable teacher professionalisation.

CHAPTER 5

Induction of beginning teachers in urban environments: An exploration of the support structure and culture for beginning teachers at primary schools needed to improve retention of primary school teachers¹.

Abstract

This study aimed to gain insight into ways to enhance teacher retention. Principals and beginning teachers from 11 Dutch urban primary schools were interviewed about their schools' support structure and culture. Schools where teachers judged about the support they received positively and schools where teachers evaluated this support negatively were contrasted. The study revealed that all schools undertook support activities, such as offering beginning teachers a buddy or coach. However, at schools where teachers judged the support positively, these activities were performed more consistently and conscientiously than at the other schools. Furthermore, cultural rather than structural characteristics distinguished the schools.

Keywords: beginning teachers, teacher induction, teacher retention, urban teaching

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Introduction

For a variety of reasons, including a high workload and inadequate guidance and support, a great number of beginning teachers leave the teaching profession after only a few years of teaching (Buchanan, 2010; De Jonge & De Muijnck, 2002). The high turnover of novice teachers has resulted in a shortage of good qualified teachers in several countries (Ingersoll, 2003; Moon, 2007). Especially in urban areas, the outflow of beginners is relatively high (Ingersoll, 2003; Berndsen, Gemmeke, Hello & De Weerd, 2008). Teaching in an urban environment appeared to be challenging for teachers because they are confronted with complex issues such as cultural diversity and violence (Groulx, 2001; Haberman, 1995; Smith & Smith, 2006). This situation can lead to an outflow of teachers from these schools or from education in general. Research has shown that guidance in the workplace itself ('induction') may contribute to the retention of beginning teachers (Gilles, Davis & MacGlamery, 2009). Both the support structure and the support culture of a school contribute to effective induction practices and thus to the retention of beginning teachers (Assunção Flores, 2004; Davis & Higdon, 2008; Devos, Dupriez & Paquay, 2012; Howe, 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2002; Weiss, 1999). Support structure refers to the support activities that schools undertake to assist their beginning teachers, such as guidance from a coach, opportunities to gradually grow into the teaching profession and the provision of an introductory handbook. Support culture refers to the extent to which the culture of a school is supportive of beginning teachers, such as whether novices can easily approach colleagues for advice.

Research indicates that it is important for support practices to focus on the problems that teachers experience in the specific context in which they operate (Siwatu, 2011; Tamir, 2010). Therefore, it can be expected that urban schools provide specific forms of support. However, little is known about how support practices for novice teachers are actually organised at urban schools and whether this organisation matches the specific problems of beginning urban teachers (Jurasaitė-Harbison & Rex, 2010; Wang, Odell & Schwille, 2008). Therefore, this study investigated the support structure and support culture of 11 urban primary schools. By contrasting schools where teachers judged the support they received positively and schools where teachers evaluated this support negatively, we aimed to identify valuable elements in the support structure and culture of urban schools.

Teaching in urban environments

The challenges for beginning urban teachers

Research has shown that newly qualified teachers are more likely to leave urban schools compared with non-urban schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003). A major cause of the early outflow of novice teachers from urban schools is that teaching in an urban context is challenging for teachers. Novice teachers in urban contexts must address issues that apply to all beginners, such as classroom discipline and a high workload (Abbott, Moran & Clarke, 2009; Veenman, 1984). In addition, beginning urban teachers must address the typical challenges of an urban context.

An important challenge is that urban teachers must address *cultural diversity* (Groulx 2001; Erskine-Cullen & Sinclari, 1996). Urban teachers are confronted with children and parents from different cultures, backgrounds, and values and who speak languages other than the teacher's native language (Diffily & Perkins, 2002; Zeichner, 2003). According to Zeichner (2003), this increasing gap between the backgrounds of the students and the teachers makes it challenging to teach at urban schools.

Dealing with the school environment appears to be a major challenge for urban teachers. Urban teachers experience difficulties with highly educated parents or parents with non-native backgrounds (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Roosenboom, & Volman, 2014). Additionally, teachers in urban schools may feel anxiety about the students' use of violence at school and fear of the neighbourhoods in which they work (Smith & Smith, 2006).

Furthermore, urban teachers must manage relatively large *differences* between children in terms of character, behaviour, norms and values, and attitudes together with differences in students' cognitive and language development (Kooy, 2006; Swanson Gehrke, 2005). A major challenge appears to be second-language learners, which (is believed to be more common in urban schools because a higher percentage of families from ethnic minorities live in cities (Kooy, 2006).

The urban educational context in the Netherlands

The largest cities of the Netherlands can be considered as global cities (as many large cities in other countries), in which three types of urban schools can be found: schools

that primarily educate children with a high socio-economic status and a native background, schools that primarily educate children from a lower socio economic status and sometimes also from culturally diverse backgrounds, and schools where the student population is a mix of these pupils (Hooge, 2008). Beginning teachers in global cities are thus confronted with different types of student populations. We found that teachers in schools in global cities experience different types of challenges depending on the student population of their school (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Roosenboom, & Volman, 2014). A major challenge of the teachers from schools with children from high SES was dealing with highly educated parents, whereas teachers from schools with children from low SES and culturally diverse backgrounds primarily perceived challenges related to their diverse student population (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Roosenboom, & Volman, 2014).

Support needs of beginning urban teachers

Research among newly qualified urban teachers has shown that it is important for novices to receive guidance from an experienced ‘buddy’. Furthermore, it appears to be important for the content of support programmes to focus on daily practice. Research by Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Zijlstra and Volman (2014) has found that the opportunity to exchange experiences and expertise in a network of teachers contributes to the competence and self-efficacy of starting urban teachers. Good support practices are important for every teacher, but because of the specific challenges faced by beginning teachers in urban environments and the pressure on urban teachers, it is important for these teachers to receive good guidance and support.

Support structure

The support structure of schools refers to all activities that schools undertake to support their beginning teachers. One support activity that is mentioned in various studies on induction is guidance by an experienced teacher who acts as a coach (also referred to as a mentor, tutor or teacher tutor) (Davis & Higdon, 2008; Howe, 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2002). There are significant differences between schools in the purpose, length, structure, intensity, and expectations of guidance and in the selection and training of the coach (Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005). To be effective, the guidance of a coach or mentor should meet several requirements, such as a relationship of trust

between the mentor and teacher, sufficient time for coaching, training/education of the coach, and addressing the individual needs of beginning teachers (Gardiner, 2012; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005).

Another support activity that is described in the literature as a promising way to promote teachers' professional development and job motivation is the opportunity to share experiences and expertise in a network of teachers (Hofman & Dijkstra, 2010; Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Zijlstra, & Volman, 2014). Furthermore, opportunities to gradually grow into the teaching practice and to reflect with colleagues on experiences are effective activities that schools can organise to support their novices (Howe, 2006).

Support culture

A good support structure is not enough; a support culture is necessary for the professional development and job motivation of teachers. Devos, Dupriez, and Paquay (2012) investigated the influence of support culture on teachers' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as "the teacher's belief in her or his ability to organise and execute the course of actions required to successfully accomplish a specific task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 233). Research indicates that the role of self-efficacy is not clear: some authors think that teachers with low self-efficacy are less motivated to experiment with pedagogical challenges, whereas other researchers found potential benefits of teacher efficacy doubts for educational reform (Wheatley, 2002).

Evers, Brouwers, and Tomic (2002) found that teachers with lower self-efficacy are more likely to experience burnout than are teachers with high self-efficacy. Consequently, teachers with lower self-efficacy are more likely to leave the teaching profession because of burnout. According to Devos et al. (2012), self-efficacy is strongly influenced by the support culture of schools. A support culture in which teachers' intrinsic motivation, which relates to personal growth and a desire to work with children (Moran, Kilpatrick, Abbott, Dallat & McClune, 2001), is stimulated and in which colleagues show confidence in the beginning teacher has a positive effect on the self-efficacy of beginning teachers, in contrast to a culture in which teachers are not allowed to show their weaknesses and in which competition and comparison are predominant. Teachers' intrinsic motivation can be stimulated by a culture focused on a vision and mission and in which the individual development of teachers is encouraged (Minarik, Thornton & Perreault, 2003).

Johnson and Kardos (2004) distinguish three types of professional cultures that beginning teachers might experience at their school: veteran-oriented, novice-oriented, and integrated professional culture. In a *veteran-oriented* culture, the workplace norms are set by veteran teachers who protect individual autonomy. In such a culture, there is little professional interaction between beginning teachers and more experienced teachers, so beginning teachers cannot benefit from the knowledge and skills of more experienced colleagues. A *novice-oriented* culture is characterised by a relatively large number of beginning teachers who often have high ambitions and work long days. In such a culture, there is intensive contact among the beginning teachers, but due to the absence of more experienced teachers, beginning teachers must learn everything independently. Although the novice-oriented culture differs significantly from the veteran-oriented culture, the consequences for beginning teachers are the same: beginning teachers cannot benefit from the experience of teachers who have worked longer in the teaching profession because there are few opportunities for these novices to interact with experienced teachers. In an *integrated professional* culture, there is ongoing professional exchange among all teachers. Both new teachers and more experienced teachers can benefit from this culture. Beginning teachers can be included in the team and supported by more experienced colleagues, and more experienced colleagues can benefit from new insights and knowledge from the beginning teachers.

In an integrated professional culture, teachers feel jointly responsible for the provision of good education. Teachers are autonomous, but they do not work only independently. There is a strong belief that a school can best teach its students if teachers work together at different levels and support each other in achieving educational goals (Johnson & Kardos, 2004). Promoting cooperation between teachers and involving teachers in decisions contributes to teachers' feelings of being supported and their intention to remain in the teaching profession (Weiss, 1999). This situation is in line with the results of Assunção Flores (2004), who indicates that, in the opposite situation, teachers feel isolated and unsatisfied when there is little collaboration and support among teachers, which can lead to an outflow of teachers. When there is collaboration among teachers, teachers are more satisfied with their careers and are more likely to remain in the teaching profession (Fulton & Britton, 2011).

Williams, Prestage, and Bedward (2001) perceive the extent of collaboration between teachers as a continuum running from completely individual work through structured collaboration to spontaneous collaboration. Structured collaboration stems from organisational procedures and is related to agreements that the school makes about a certain way of working. According to Williams et al. (2001), school cultures in which teachers work together through structured or spontaneous collaboration are more likely to provide for the needs of beginning teachers than school cultures in which teachers work individually. The teachers who participated in the study of Williams et al. (2001) preferred spontaneous collaboration. Beginning teachers in such a culture can develop well and experience the greatest satisfaction. According to McCormack, Gore, and Thomas (2006), beginning teachers not only benefit from support activities, such as supervision or coaching, but also have a great need for informal, unplanned contact with colleagues.

Johnson and Kardos (2004) argue that support activities for beginning teachers (such as guidance from a coach and practical, day-to-day help) must be embedded in a good support culture. In schools where this embedding is realised, teachers feel better supported and more successful in their work, and they have higher job motivation than teachers in schools where this is not the case.

Present study: purpose and research questions

As described, beginning teachers in urban environments teach in a complex environment where they encounter complex urban challenges, such as the need to address diversity and language differences (Groulx, 2001; Haberman, 1995; Smith & Smith, 2006). However, it is unknown how teachers can best be supported and retained in urban environments. Despite several initiatives intended to professionalise and retain teachers in urban schools, teacher shortages in urban areas remain, and beginning teachers are more likely to leave urban schools compared with non-urban schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003). The aim of this study was to gain insight into ways to improve the retention of beginning urban teachers. This study investigated the support structure and support culture of 11 urban primary schools. We contrasted schools where beginning teachers positively judged the support they received with schools where teachers negatively judged the support they received. Although we are aware that a teacher's

judgement may reflect the match between the teacher's needs and the schools' support practices rather than the actual situation in the schools, we believe that our approach can yield insight into valuable elements of the support structure and culture in urban schools.

The research question was formulated as follows:

What are the characteristics of the support structure and support culture at schools where teachers positively or negatively judge the support they receive?

To answer the main research question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. What are the characteristics of the support structure at primary schools where beginning teachers positively or negatively judge the support they receive?
2. What are the characteristics of the support culture in primary schools where beginning teachers positively or negatively judge the support they receive?
3. To what extent are the support structure and culture in primary schools where beginning teachers positively or negatively judge the support they receive specifically focused on urban challenges?

Method

Design

A qualitative, descriptive study was conducted using 19 in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight beginning teachers and 11 principals from 11 urban primary schools in the Netherlands. A qualitative research method was chosen because we were interested in the participants' experiences of the support structure and culture of their school. By using a qualitative method, the participants were able to describe their experiences in detail.

Participants

In total, eight beginning teachers and 11 principals from 11 primary schools participated in the study (see Table 1).. The teachers and principals participated in interviews that lasted about one hour and were held - on a one-to-one-basis - in the schools of the participants.

All participants joined voluntarily in the study. The teachers who were selected for participation in the study were in the early stages of their teaching career. A teacher was considered 'beginning' when he or she had less than six years of teaching experience (Eliophotou Menon, 2012).

We attempted to obtain variation in our research group by selecting schools where teachers judged the support they received positively or negatively. Therefore, schools were selected from a database of 176 teachers who completed a questionnaire as part of the evaluation of a professional development course for beginning teachers and for whom information was available about their satisfaction with the support practices at their school. From this questionnaire, the following questions were used to select the schools: 'What mark would you give the guidance and support that you received as a beginning teacher at your school (on a ten-point scale that ranged from 1 'extremely poor support' to 10 'excellent support')?' and 'As a beginning teacher, did you receive guidance and support that was focused on teaching in an urban context (with categories 'no' or 'yes')?' On the basis of the information in the questionnaire, the schools were assigned to one of the following three categories:

1. Schools where teachers judged the support they received positively and where, according to the teachers, the support was focused on urban challenges.
2. Schools where teachers judged the support they received positively, but, according to the teachers, the support was not focused on urban challenges.
3. Schools where teachers judged about the support they received negatively and where, according to the teachers, the support was not focused on urban challenges.

Schools from category 1 and 2 received a score of 7 or higher for their support practices, whereas schools from category 3 received a score of 4 or lower. Schools were randomly selected from these categories and if a school did not want to participate, we selected another school. We attempted to have four or five schools in each category, but this was not always possible. In total, four schools in category 1, two schools in category 2, and five schools in category 3 participated in the study. The relationship with the urban context was included in the categories because the literature indicated that it is important for the support for beginning teachers to be connected to the specific challenges that they experience in the particular context in which they work—in this case, the urban context.

Only two teachers who completed the questionnaire also participated in this study. Therefore, the researchers asked the teachers who participated in this study for their evaluation of the support in their school. In some cases, a discrepancy occurred between the evaluation of the teachers who completed the questionnaires and the teachers who participated in this study. When there was a discrepancy, the researchers reclassified the schools based on the evaluation of the teachers who participated in the study.

Table 1

Characteristics of schools and interviewees

	School size	Student population	Interviewees	Sex Principal/Teacher	Years working as a teacher	Class of the beginning teacher (ranges from 1-8)	Evaluation of support based on questionnaire (category 1, 2, or 3)	Evaluation of support based on present study (category 1, 2, or 3)
School A	133 students	Disadvantaged ^a	Principal	Male			1	1
School B	225 students	Originally black, goes towards mixed	Principal + teacher	Female/Female	3	Middle grades	3	1
School C	375 students	Disadvantaged	Principal + teacher	Male/Female	6	Lower grades	1	1
School D	443 students	Mixed, with predominantly highly educated parents	Principal	Female			3	1
School E	487 students	Mixed	Principal + teacher	Female/Male	1	Middle grades	3	1
School F	135 students	Disadvantaged	Principal + teacher	Female/Female	4	Middle grades	1	2
School G	309 students	Mixed	Principal	Female			2	1
School H	191 students	Disadvantaged	Principal + teacher	Female/Female	5	Middle grades	1	3
School I	314 students	Mixed ^b	Principal + teacher	Female/Female	3	Lower grades	2	3
School J	304 students	Advantaged ^c	Principal + teacher	Male/Female	1	Middle grades	3	3
School K	402 students	Mixed	Principal + teacher	Female/Female	2	Lower and middle grades	3	3

^a Schools with children primarily of low socioeconomic status and sometimes culturally diverse backgrounds

^b Schools where the student population is a mix of both disadvantaged and advantaged pupils

^c Schools that primarily serve children of high socioeconomic status and native background

Variables and instruments

Where possible, the study began with a document analysis of the school, investigating all documents related to the support of beginning teachers. Interviews were subsequently conducted with the beginning teachers and/or principals of the schools. The interviews focused on the central concepts of the research questions, namely, the support structure, support culture, and urban educational context. The interviews began with some introductory questions about, for instance teachers' experiences and support needs. Thereafter, questions were asked about the school's support structure and culture. The concept of 'support structure' was operationalised through questions such as, 'Which structural activities does the school perform to support beginning teachers?'

The concept of 'support culture' was measured by questions such as, 'How would you describe your school's support culture?' Special attention was paid to characteristics that are typical of the integrated professional culture, the novice-oriented culture, and the veteran-oriented culture.

The beginning teachers were also asked for their experiences with their schools' support structure and culture, with questions such as, 'Through which support activities do you feel properly supported?' and 'Are you satisfied with your school's support culture?'

Finally, the participants were asked about the relatedness of the support practices with the urban context, such as, 'How does an ideal support practice for teachers in an urban environment look, according to you?' and 'Do you think that teaching in an urban environment requires specific guidance and support?'

Analysis

A content analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The documents on the support practices of the schools were analysed on the basis of the concepts 'support structure', 'support culture', and 'urban context'.

Data reduction of the interviews was performed by selecting segments that were relevant for answering the research questions. These segments were placed into main categories (which were based on the central concepts of the study: support structure, support culture, and urban context) and subcategories (for instance, 'integrated

professional culture’). Subsequently, codes were created for the different elements of the support structure and culture (for instance, ‘spontaneous collaboration’).

The outcomes of the analysis of the documents and interviews were summarised in a data matrix for each school and, eventually, in a data matrix for all schools together. In this way, we determined whether the information in the documents was in line with the information from the interviews. It appeared that the information in the documents was less extensive than the information from the interviews. The data matrices included information from both the documents and interviews, and the information in the documents was supplemented with the information from the interviews.

After creating the data matrices, patterns and answers to the sub-questions of the study were identified.

Validity and reliability

The interviews were recorded using a voice-recorder and were transcribed verbatim to prevent interpretation bias. After the researcher transcribed an interview, it was sent to the participant for a member check. The participants were asked whether they wanted to add or correct something; a total of 11 participants responded to this email and they did not ask for changes. The analyses were also evaluated by a second researcher, who determined whether the data from the interviews were interpreted appropriately by the first researcher. Subsequently, the first and second researchers independently assigned codes regarding the extent to which the support practice of the school was judged positively by the teachers who participated in this study. The inter-rater reliability was calculated, and the agreement appeared to be 91%. Finally, the researchers independently evaluated whether the professional culture of the schools could be interpreted in terms of a novice-oriented, veteran-oriented, or integrated professional culture. The inter-rater reliability for the evaluation of the professional culture was also 91%. The outcomes of the evaluations were discussed until agreement was reached, and coding was adjusted to match the outcome of this discussion.

Findings

The findings are discussed first for the schools where teachers judged the support positively and then for the schools where teachers judged the support negatively.

The support structure of schools where teachers judged the support practices positively

At schools where teachers judged the support positively, various activities were undertaken to support beginning teachers. Beginning teachers at these schools had the opportunity to *gradually grow into the teaching profession*. The principals mentioned that they thought carefully about the group of students that they assigned to their beginning teachers; usually, this was not a very difficult group. Furthermore, beginning teachers had fewer extra tasks (such as the organisation of the school's Christmas party) in addition to their regular teaching tasks in comparison with their more experienced colleagues. The principal of school G stated this as follows:

"They [novices] have one year exemption from additional tasks. Then it is just the classroom and the children and of course parental meetings and all those things, but no additional tasks as joining the participation council or party committees."

However, at two schools, the respondents indicated that beginning teachers had the same tasks as their more experienced colleagues. The beginning teacher of school B did not have difficulties managing the extra tasks; she appreciated being approached as a 'full' teacher. The school management of school B monitored whether the extra tasks put too much pressure on beginning teachers.

Furthermore, at almost all schools, there was a 'buddy' or a *coach* who was an experienced colleague. A buddy was usually an experienced colleague from a parallel group who was assigned to the novice teacher and to whom the novice could always go with (practical) questions. Beginning teachers appreciated the guidance of their buddy because they always had someone to go to with their questions. The conversations between the buddies and the beginning teachers were not always structurally planned, but the beginning teachers could always contact their buddies when they felt the need to do so. In addition to the support of a buddy, it was possible for beginning teachers to receive guidance from an individual coach. At schools E and G, the coaches were internal coaches, whereas at the other schools, external coaching was available. All coaches were specifically trained to support the teachers. The guidance of a coach was perceived as very valuable by the teachers because a coach could focus specifically on the support needs of the teachers. Usually, the support of the coach consisted of classroom visits and/or

reflective conversations. Additionally, video interaction guidance was provided by the coach or by the school's internal supervisor.

Classroom visits were held at all schools by the school management and/or the internal supervisor. Often, there were also classroom visits from other people, such as the language coordinator. At all schools, classroom visits were followed by a reflective conversation. In almost all schools, *collegial consultation* was possible. Teachers could make observations in other classrooms and learn from each other. The principals considered observations in other classrooms to be important and created opportunities for their teachers to conduct these observations. This was stated as follows by the principal of school A:

"We started with collegial consultations ... I [the principal] take care of the classroom and you [teacher] can observe another teacher. How does your colleague manage the things of which you think, hmmm, I do not know if I am doing that well?"

Guidance from outside the school could be arranged in all schools when beginning teachers indicated that they needed additional guidance. For instance, school C had an external contact with a language specialist who supported everyone in the school, including the beginning teachers. This language specialist provided guidance in the areas of language, but she could also provide support on other aspects. The principal of school C explained:

"Teachers receive guidance for language education from the language coordinator. She conducts observations in the classroom (...) and reflective conversations... She also provides guidance on other aspects, such as classroom management."

At several schools, an *external induction trajectory* was offered to the beginning teachers. These trajectories consisted of meetings with beginning teachers from other schools (in which experiences and expertise could be shared), individual guidance from a coach, and/or video interaction guidance. The teacher of school B appreciated the meetings with other novices:

"I like to talk to others [beginners from other schools] sometimes. You come quite close to each other when you show your weaknesses."

Other forms of guidance that were offered by the schools were an *introductory handbook* that described the rules and agreements about working at the school, *informal conversations* (with other teachers and/or the principal), and *interview/peer review meetings* (in which teachers could exchange experiences and expertise with beginners from other schools).

Furthermore, the schools focused on the specific problems of their beginning teachers. Each principal believed that the support activities of the school were tailored to the specific problems and support needs of the beginning teachers. The principal of school C argued that it was important for beginning teachers to not be treated equally because not every teacher is the same, and different people have different needs. In conversations with beginning teachers, the principal regularly asked what the teachers needed.

At all schools where teachers judged the support positively, beginning teachers had the opportunity to indicate what type of support they preferred. Classroom visits, video interaction guidance, and the guidance of a buddy and coach were considered the most valuable support activities by the respondents.

The support structure of the schools where teachers judged the support practices negatively

Schools where teachers made judgements about the support practice negatively also undertook various support activities to support their beginning teachers. However, compared to the schools where teachers judged the support positively, the support activities were performed in a different way.

The analysis of the schools' documents about their support practices revealed that at schools where teachers judged the support practices negatively, *the way that beginning teachers were guided in the school was less extensively formulated and documented* than at schools where teachers judged the support practices positively. For instance, in the documents of the schools where teachers provided negative judgements, only principals performed classroom observations, whereas the documents of the other schools described how many observations the principal performed each year and the focus of these observations.

The interviews showed differences between the schools. For instance, principals of schools where the teachers negatively judged the support indicated that, in principle,

they would not present a beginning teacher with a difficult group, but in practice, this was not always feasible. For instance, the beginning teacher of school K was placed with a difficult group, which she experienced as quite challenging:

"I had a very difficult group... In retrospect, I think if I had known, I do not know if I would have started. ...There have been times when I thought, what am I doing here? I am not able to do this at all."

These schools seemed to be less clear about what they expected from their novices. They provided their beginning teachers with *fewer or no extra tasks*; however, when the beginning teachers wanted to perform extra tasks, they were allowed to do so. The teacher of school J indicated that there was no monitoring from the school management to determine whether a beginning teacher could handle the situation. Rules and agreements about ways of working were not always formalised, although the teachers had a need for clarity. The principal of school I stated:

"There should be a document in which all the agreements about how it works are documented, but yeah, that is not there yet."

At almost every school, there was guidance from a *buddy* or a *coach*. Compared to the schools where teachers judged the guidance positively, the contact between the buddy and the beginning teacher was less intensive. The meetings usually took place when the teachers felt the need to talk with their buddy. According to the principals, the conversations had to be planned on a weekly basis to be effective. Due to time constraints, however, this was not feasible as, for instance, the teacher of school I declared:

".. at the beginning of the year, we had agreed that we would sit together every Friday, to plan the week, discuss what went well and wrong. But in the end, it took too much time."

At many schools, there were no conversations between the buddy and the beginning teacher at all. Additionally, beginning teachers said that most of the time, they had to take the initiative to have a conversation with their buddy. The teachers indicated that their buddies often had little time to support them. However, two beginning teachers received guidance from an *individual coach*. This guidance was perceived as valuable because the support was focused on the specific problems of the teachers.

Classroom visits were performed by the school management, internal supervisor², and sometimes other people who were involved with the school. The internal supervisor provided guidance specifically for children who needed extra care. The principal of school J admitted that the reflective conversations after the classroom visits did not always occur because of time constraints. Two principals indicated that they regularly walked into classrooms and had *informal conversations* with the teachers, but there were no official classroom visits.

Collegial consultation was possible at two schools; in practice, however, this rarely occurred because there was not enough time or it was not possible to arrange a substitute teacher for the group: . The teacher of school D stated this as follows:

“Yes, there are [collegial consultations], however, only a few ... (..) there is not much opportunity, because there are not many people who can replace the classroom...”

External support could also be hired. The difference at schools where teachers judged the guidance positively was that guidance was only used when a problem arose. Thus, the schools solved problems only retrospectively. Teachers felt that they had to produce good arguments when they needed external support.

At two schools, an *external induction programme* was offered to the novice teachers. These programmes consisted of meetings with other teachers (in which novices from different schools could exchange experiences and expertise) and workshops (for instance, about communication techniques). The experiences with the external induction trajectories were mixed; one teacher explained that the induction programme was not connected to her specific needs and she did not see its value, whereas another teacher appreciated sharing experiences and expertise with other novices.

In Table 2, the support activities of the schools are presented.

² Internal supervisors in primary schools in the Netherlands are responsible for the care system of the school and the development of the educational vision and pedagogical and didactic approach of the school (Groeneweg, 2004).

Table 2

The support structure of urban primary schools

Support activities	School A (cat. 1)	School B (cat. 1)	School C (cat. 1)	School D (cat. 1)	School E (cat.1)	School F (cat. 2)	School G (cat. 2)	School H (cat. 3)	School I (cat. 3)	School J (cat. 3)	School K (cat. 3)
Protocol beginning teachers	x			x	x					x	
Classroom visits principal	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Classroom visits internal supervisor	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x			x
Classroom visits others		x			x	X	x				x
External classroom visits	x				x		x	x			
Guidance from a buddy	x	/	x	x	x	X		x	x	x	
Collegial consultation	x		x		x		x	x		x	
Guidance from individual coach (internal or external)	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Fewer additional tasks	x			x				x	x	x	
No additional tasks					x	x	x				x
External induction trajectory		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	
Intervision/peer review meetings		x		x		x		x		x	
Video interaction guidance		x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x
Informal conversations		x			x	x	x			x	x
Reflective conversations	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Guidance for children who need extra care	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	?	?	x	x
Introductory handbook	x	x	x		x	x	?	?		x	
Parental contact support	x		x	x	x						
Language differences support	x	x	x								
Cultural diversity support								x			
Individual differences support		x			x						

'x': support activity was performed by the school, '/': support activity was partly performed by the school, '?': not explicitly mentioned during the interviews whether the support activity was performed by the school

The support culture of schools where teachers judged the support practices positively

The respondents who judged the support they received positively described the support culture as ‘open’. Everyone wanted to help each other, and beginning teachers could always go to colleagues with their problems and questions. The teacher of school C described this as follows:

“.. it [the culture] is open. (...) and they ask how you are doing and whether they can help you or when you run into difficulties, you can always go to someone with your questions.”

Teachers felt they were not judged for making mistakes, but they had the opportunity to *learn from their mistakes*. Furthermore, teachers indicated that they were allowed to find their own way of teaching. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to learn from others and to make mistakes. At school C, the principal and teacher indicated that colleagues *collaborate to achieve educational goals*. The beginning teacher felt that she was not alone but that she performed her teaching job together with her colleagues. The teachers were dependent on each other to achieve the educational goals. The principal indicated that teachers were allowed to take initiative as long as a continuous line in the school could be realised. The principal had *full confidence in her teachers* and said that she would support them. These characteristics are typical of an *integrated professional culture*.

In all of these schools, there was (structured or spontaneous) *collaboration* between colleagues. The teacher of school C stated that cooperation arose spontaneously at her school. Teachers realised that when they collaborated, it saved significant time and effort. Collaboration between new and experienced teachers was promoted by linking an experienced colleague (‘buddy’) to a beginning teacher, giving the beginning teacher a strategic place in the building (so that the teacher could easily make contact with other teachers), and placing beginning and more experienced teachers together in work groups.

Furthermore, teachers could indicate that they *needed additional training*. At four of the five schools, teachers were explicitly encouraged by their principal to pursue additional training.

Beginning teachers in these schools were also invited to *think about important school decisions*. Beginning teachers were taken seriously, and no distinction was made between

beginning and experienced teachers. According to the principal of school C, novices were valuable for the school because they brought new knowledge and insights. Only the principal of school D thought that beginning teachers should focus on their own classroom in their first year. According to this principal, thinking about important decisions required teachers to think beyond their own classroom which was difficult for beginners.

At schools where teachers judged the support they received positively, colleagues *showed interest in each other*. Beginning teachers could share their experiences and were *involved in the team*. Colleagues asked how the beginning teachers were doing and offered their support. Novice and more experienced teachers shared information with each other and learned from each other. The experienced teachers assisted the beginners when necessary, and the principals offered their support. Beginning teachers did not feel alone, which was very important for them.

The support culture of schools where teachers judged the support practices negatively

The support culture at schools where teachers judged the support they received negatively differed from schools where teachers provided positive judgements. The culture seemed to be experienced as less open by both the teachers and the principals. At three schools, the culture was described as ‘familial’. Two teachers, for example, stated that there was considerable gossip at their school:

"It seems quite open, everyone is very spontaneous (...), but I did notice that there is gossip. (...) so, saying to your closest colleague that someone else is doing it wrong or that you do not like something, but not [saying it] to the person himself..."

Furthermore, *collaboration* between teachers was primarily structured and not spontaneous. If spontaneous collaboration occurred, it was mainly because people were friends with each other, not because of professional reasons. Two teachers stated that not all of their colleagues were willing to collaborate. These teachers stated that their colleagues said that they would offer support, but in practice, they never had time. Experienced teachers did not share their expertise with new teachers. These aspects were characteristic of a *veteran-oriented culture*.

It is striking that in three of the four schools, beginning teachers said they were reluctant to express their ideas because they felt that they were not taken seriously:

"I remember in the beginning, when my principal asked me to give a presentation, that they [the older colleagues] really looked at me as, yeah, you know ... They did not take it seriously."

Another striking point is that beginners felt that they *could not develop themselves freely*. The teacher of school J had the impression that beginning teachers were not taken seriously. This was also recognised by the principal of school H, who believed that the teachers criticised each others' ideas. The teacher of school H also explained that when starting teachers took initiative, colleagues were suspicious.

Furthermore, beginning teachers experienced difficulties in obtaining adequate support from colleagues. They said they had to ask many times before they received support.

"(...) so that [group] was quite large, and there were many 'difficult' children. At one point, I had the feeling, 'I cannot handle this anymore'. It was a tough class, and I quite often indicated [that I needed extra guidance], but I received no support at all. At one point, (...) I told them that I would become ill if I did not receive support within a month. And then, finally, someone came, but I really had to... yes, that was annoying."

The *initiative for guidance came primarily from the beginning teacher*. There was no structural support, although the interviewed teachers indicated that they had a need for this. The teacher of school J thought that the support was not adequate for beginning teachers who did not ask questions. All respondents who judged about the support they received negatively recognised that they had to request guidance. The principals indicated that they had too little time to give optimal support to their beginning teachers.

A similarity among the schools where teachers positively judged the support was that it was accepted that *teachers may learn from their mistakes*.

In Table 3, the different culture elements for each school are presented.

Table 3

The support culture of urban primary schools

Elements of the support culture	School A (cat. 1)	School B (cat. 1)	School C (cat. 1)	School D (cat. 1)	School E (cat.1)	School F (cat. 2)	School G (cat. 2)	School H (cat. 3)	School I (cat. 3)	School J (cat. 3)	School K (cat. 3)
The ability to easily approach colleagues	x	x	x	x	x	/	?	x	x	x	x
Interest and support from colleagues	x	x	x	x	x	/	/	/	x	/	x
Opportunities to develop as a teacher	0	x	x	0	x	x	0		x	/	x
Encouragement to develop as a teacher	x	x	x	x	/		x		/	x	
Permission to make mistakes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	/	x	x	x
Collaboration with colleagues	x	x	x	x	x	/	x	x	x	/	/
Collaboration between beginning and experienced teachers	?	x	x	x	x	/	x	x	x	/	/
Spontaneous collaboration	x	x	x	x	x		?	/	x	x	/
Unspontaneous/structured collaboration	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Encouragement to make investments	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	/	x	x
Working together on educational goals	x	x	x	x	x	/	x	/	x	x	x
Teachers need each other to achieve educational goals	x	x	x	x	/	x	x	/	x	x	x
Involvement in important decisions	x	x	x	/	x	x	x	x	/	x	x
Involved in the team	0	x	x	0	x	x	0.0	x	/	x	x
Taken seriously by the team	0	x	x	0	x		0		/	x	x
Valuation of culture	IPC	IPC	IPC	IPC	IPC	NOC/ VOC	IPC	VOC	VOC	VOC	IPC

'x' indicates that the culture element was present in the school

'/' indicates that the culture element was partly present in the school

'?' indicates that it was not explicitly mentioned during the interviews that the culture element was present in the school

'0' no teacher was interviewed, so an evaluation was not possible

'IPC' refers to an integrated professional culture, 'NOC' refers to a novice-oriented culture, 'VOC' refers to a veteran-oriented culture

The relation of the support practice to the urban context

Almost all respondents from the schools where teachers judged the support practices positively and half of the respondents at schools where teachers judged the support they received negatively believed that teaching in a large city was different from teaching elsewhere. One teacher explained this as follows:

"It is quite different. (...) What matters are the different cultures. (...) The kids come in here every day with many stories; these are very diverse. Plus that they all start with very different stories. You have to create all those connections. That is an extra dimension than that you come to school just to teach. There is also a great demand in the social field."

All of the beginning teachers experienced difficulties with parental contact. At schools that primarily included children with parents from culturally diverse backgrounds, this problem consisted of communication problems (due to language barriers) and low parental involvement. One teacher explained this as follows:

"I was used to high parental involvement, which is not the case here. At one point, I had a conversation, and then it turned out that this is not common for parents in this school because they rely on the expertise of the teacher and that if they [as parents] start getting involved, it is disrespectful."

School J is a school at which most children have highly educated parents. According to the teacher, these parents are very demanding:

"The parents are very demanding. (...) They keep an eye on everything that happens in the classroom, whether enough mathematics or language education is offered in the way that they think is good. They are themselves highly educated. So they also have a kind of understanding, or they think so anyway."

Furthermore, addressing language differences was experienced as difficult by several teachers because there were many non-native children. Two teachers stated that it was more difficult to create a safe atmosphere in the classroom in a large city because so many children with different backgrounds and stories are placed together.

The challenge of managing cultural differences was mentioned by only one teacher. This is remarkable because ten respondents indicated that it would be a good

idea to provide beginning teachers with more knowledge about the diverse cultures of their students. Most of the teachers were confronted with cultural diversity, but they did not perceive this challenge as a real problem.

Other problems that were noted by the teachers in the urban context were dealing with complicated family situations, assertive children, and the large number of care agencies. Managing different individual levels was sometimes perceived as a problem, but the respondents did not specifically relate this issue to teaching in a large city.

Schools where teachers judged the support they received positively focused on at least one of the problems related to the urban educational context. Several teachers explained that they were confronted with urban challenges, such as dealing with cultural diversity, but that they perceived these as challenges rather than real problems because they received adequate support regarding these issues. For example, the teacher of school C explained that there were many low(er) SES children at her school. These children have many problems at home that they bring to school, which makes it difficult for the teacher to create a safe atmosphere in her classroom. The teacher indicated that she received adequate guidance regarding this challenge from an individual coach and her principal. She could approach them with her questions, and they would immediately help her.

Support for challenges with 'parental contact' consisted of jointly preparing for parental conversations and offering support during the conversation itself. The principal of school C indicated that teachers were confronted with many different cultures and characters at her school. Sometimes parents reacted in a way that was difficult for the teacher to handle, such as threatening the teacher. It was important for colleagues to help each other. Methods that worked for a certain colleague were passed on to other colleagues. Furthermore, beginning teachers had the opportunity to jointly prepare and conduct conversations with a colleague.

Support for the challenge of 'dealing with individual differences between children' consisted of guidance from (internal) experts on these themes. Beginning teachers were often supported by the internal supervisor of the school regarding the challenge of 'dealing with language deficiencies'. At three schools, there was contact with an (internal) language coordinator/specialist. The schools that offered guidance on 'language deficiencies' were all schools with many children whose parents came from diverse cultural backgrounds.

No specific support was offered regarding the other urban problems that were addressed by the teachers. However, teachers mentioned that they could always go to their principals to receive support.

The principal of school B argued that schools in an urban environment must create a good support culture for beginning teachers. According to this principal, teaching in a large city was so complex that beginning teachers must have the opportunity to approach colleagues for support and to collaborate with their colleagues. The principal of school H also believed that teaching in an urban environment was very complex and difficult; therefore, there must be sufficient support for beginning teachers.

Schools where teachers judged the guidance they received negatively offered almost no support regarding problems related to teaching in an urban context. For instance, schools with relatively large numbers of children from immigrant parents did not offer specific support regarding language deficiencies.

Conclusion

Support structure

The comparisons between the schools at which teachers judged the support they received positively or negatively showed, superficially, no remarkable differences between the support structure and culture of the schools. All of the schools undertook various support activities for their beginning teachers. However, *the extent to which these activities were performed* consistently and conscientiously was different. For example, the guidance of a 'buddy' was a support activity in every school, but this guidance was often not realised because of time constraints in the schools where teachers judged the support negatively. In schools where teachers judged the support positively, the 'buddy' took more initiative. This finding is in line with the results of the research of Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005), who indicated that when the guidance of a buddy is taken seriously and enough time is invested, the guidance of a buddy can be valuable for novice teachers. This is especially the case at schools where the buddy is a specially trained coach or internal supervisor. All coaches at the schools where teachers judged the support positively received special training to learn how to support novices and had enough time for coaching. Gardner (2012) argues that it is important for teachers and their buddies to bond with each other, and this can only happen when enough time is available.

Furthermore, at the schools where teachers judged the support positively, the *rules and agreements about the way of working at the school were well documented*, so teachers knew what they could expect. In these documents, topics such as school rules, passwords for computers, and the method for ordering learning materials were described. Additionally, guidance for newly qualified teachers was extensively described in the schools' documents. Furthermore, *external support* could be hired if the teachers needed it. This approach showed that the principals of the schools were willing to invest in the professional development of the teachers. At schools where teachers judged the support negatively, the rules and agreements were not clearly formulated and documented, and external guidance was only possible when teachers already had issues, so problems were not prevented. Another remarkable difference was that the teachers who judged the support negatively indicated that there was no structural support at their school and little initiative for support from the school management or from colleagues, whereas at schools where teachers judged support positively, the *support was more systematically arranged and colleagues offered help more often*.

Support culture

Although there were differences in the support structure of the schools, the main difference between the schools appeared to be their support culture. There were large differences between the support cultures of schools where teachers judged the support they received positively or negatively. At schools where teachers judged the support positively, we found characteristics of an integrated professional culture. Teachers experienced an open culture in which they could easily approach their colleagues. The support culture at these schools consisted of collaboration between novice and more experienced teachers, encouragement of beginning teachers' development, and involved colleagues who took the novices seriously and who were open to discussing their experiences with beginning teachers. These elements are characteristic of an integrated professional culture (Johnson & Kardos, 2004).

At schools where teachers judged about the support they received negatively, the culture was less open than at the other schools. Novice teachers experienced difficulties in approaching their colleagues and felt that they were not taken seriously by their more experienced colleagues. This could lead to a feeling of isolation, which has a negative

influence on teachers' job motivation (Assunção Flores, 2004). Another characteristic of the schools where teachers judged the guidance negatively is that teachers reported that when they wanted to develop themselves, they felt criticised by colleagues. This situation contrasts with the schools where teachers judged support positively; at these schools, beginning teachers felt encouraged in their development and appreciated this encouragement. This finding is in line with previous research by Minarik et al. (2003), who stated that the encouragement of individual development/growth has a positive influence on the intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy of teachers. The culture of the schools where teachers judged the support they received negatively could be characterised as a veteran-oriented or novice-oriented culture (Johnson & Kardos, 2004).

Relation of the support structure and culture with the urban educational context

Schools where teachers judged the support practice positively focused on at least one of the urban problems that are present in the literature. These schools provided support for language deficiencies, parental contact, or creating a safe atmosphere in the classroom. According to the respondents, teaching in an urban environment is challenging and complex, and it is very important that there is an open culture in schools and that colleagues help each other.

Discussion

This study aimed to gain insight into the support structure and culture for beginning teachers at urban primary schools. We focused on characteristics of the support structure and support culture at schools where beginning teachers judged the support they received positively or negatively.

This study showed that in schools where teachers judged the support practice positively, support was focused on the specific urban challenges that the teachers experienced more than it was in the schools where teachers judged support negatively. The findings of the study are consistent with results from previous research that the support practice should focus on the specific problems that teachers experience within the context of their work—in this case, the urban educational context.

The respondents considered classroom visits, the guidance of a 'buddy' or a coach, and video interaction guidance were considered to be the most valuable support activities. In these activities, interaction and reflection take place between a supervisor and a beginning teacher. This result is in line with the findings of Howe (2006), who concluded that reflection is an important element of effective support.

An important finding of this study is that a good support *culture* is important for beginning teachers. Much of the literature on effective support for beginning teachers focuses on the support *structure*, or the support activities that schools perform to support their teachers (Davis & Higdon, 2008; Howe, 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2002). This study also underlines the value of a good support culture, which has a large influence on how teachers judged the support practice at their school. Elements of the support culture that were of particular importance for beginning teachers were (spontaneous) collaboration between novice and experienced colleagues, encouragement of beginning teachers' development, and involved colleagues who were open to discussing experiences with novices.

The study suggests that the complexity of teaching in an urban environment may be reduced by offering adequate support. The urban challenges that the teachers encountered in this study were not perceived as real problems as long as the teachers were adequately supported in these issues. According to several respondents, teaching in an urban environment is more challenging and complex than teaching outside the city. Therefore, it is important that urban schools create a good support structure and culture for their newly qualified teachers.

Limitations

This study has some limitations, and further research on urban teaching is needed. First, this was a small-scale study, and the findings cannot be generalised. The small-scale design made it possible to obtain insight into teachers' experiences with the support practices at their school and to obtain in-depth information about the elements of the support structure and culture that were valuable for beginning urban teachers.

Another limitation of this study is the way in which the schools were classified by the researchers into particular categories. An initial classification of the schools was made on the basis of questionnaires in which teachers evaluated the support practices of their

school. These questionnaires were administered in the context of the evaluation of a professional development course and not for the present study. The teachers who completed the questionnaires were not always the same teachers who participated in this research. In some cases, there appeared to be a discrepancy between the evaluations of the teachers who completed the questionnaires and the evaluations of the teachers who participated in this study. One reason for this discrepancy could be that the evaluation of the support practice is personal; how a teacher values or appreciates support reflects not only the actual support situation but also the match between the teacher's needs and the support given. Another reason could be that three to four years elapsed between the completion of the questionnaire and the present study. In the intervening period, schools could have made important changes in their support practices.

A distinction was made in this study between the support structure and culture, but structure and culture are not completely independent. For example, a school may offer the support activity 'guidance of a coach who is an experienced colleague'. This support activity leads to collaboration between novice and more experienced colleagues, which is also an element of the support culture.

Practical implications and further research

This study identified several elements of the support culture that are valuable for beginning teachers, according to the respondents. These elements are also found in the literature as characteristics of professional learning communities. It would be interesting to further investigate professional learning communities from the perspective of novice teachers.

Despite the limitations, this study provided insight in the support structure and culture of urban primary schools. The study identified several elements of the support structure and culture that were perceived as valuable for beginning urban teachers. The findings can contribute to the knowledge of teachers educators, educational support services, schools, school boards, and researchers on the organisation of valuable support practices for novice urban teachers.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions & Discussion

The general aim of this dissertation was to provide insight in how beginning teachers can be better equipped for teaching in urban environments. Increased knowledge/insight could lead to a more effective organisation of support practices for beginning urban teachers, which - in turn - could lead to an improvement of the quality and retention of beginning urban teachers.

In order to achieve the aim of this dissertation, four studies were conducted. Chapter 2 started with an exploration of the specific problems of beginning urban teachers. Thereafter, chapter 3 examined the effects of a professional development programme ('Mastery') that aimed to improve the quality and retention of beginning teachers in an urban environment. Chapter 4 investigated the long-term effects of the 'Mastery' programme and the school characteristics and activities that were undertaken in school organisations where teachers reported positive long term effects of the programme. Finally, the study in chapter 5 focused on induction at the workplace itself, in particular on the elements of induction that are of importance for beginning urban teachers.

In this final chapter, the main findings and conclusions of the studies are presented. Thereafter, the findings and contributions of the studies are discussed. Furthermore, limitations as well as implications for educational practice are considered.

Summary of the main findings and conclusions

In **chapter 2**, a study on the problems of beginning teachers in urban primary schools was presented. The central question was formulated as follows: What are the problems that beginning teachers encounter in urban primary schools?

To answer this question, an exploratory study was conducted using in-depth semi-structured topic interviews with 15 beginning teachers from primary schools in Amsterdam (the capital of the Netherlands) and Utrecht (one of the four major cities of

the Netherlands). Newly qualified teachers from urban primary schools were included in the study: beginning teachers from ‘disadvantaged’ schools where students come from low socio-economic and sometimes also culturally diverse backgrounds, as well as novices from ‘more advantaged’ schools where most students are of native heritage and have highly educated parents, and beginners from ‘mixed’ schools where the student population is a mix of both native students and students from culturally diverse backgrounds and of students with different SES backgrounds.

The most prominent problems that the novice teachers identified were a high workload, significant stress and inadequate guidance and support. Other frequently mentioned problems were contact with parents (both highly educated and critical parents and non-native parents) and dealing with their personal insecurity. With regards to the problems identified in the literature as ‘urban school problems’, two issues were primarily recognised by the teachers as being problematic: 1) Too little time and capacity to pay sufficient attention to students ‘at risk of academic failure’, 2) Adapting to the differences in cognitive development and language development of children. The problems appeared to be different for the different types of urban schools; teachers at disadvantaged schools primarily perceive problems related to the diverse student population, whereas teachers at advantaged and mixed schools experience problems such as dealing with highly educated parents and applying differentiation to adequately teach both the gifted and the lower performing students.

The teachers believed that several of the problems discussed in this study were related to teaching in an urban school. The results also showed that some of the teachers did not perceive the challenges of urban schools as problems but instead as challenges through which they could further develop themselves. These were the teachers who also reported receiving good preparation and support.

In the following study, described in **chapter 3**, the effects of a professional development programme (‘Mastery’) that aimed to improve the quality and retention of beginning teachers in an urban environment were examined. The content of the ‘Mastery’ programme was focused on the acquisition of skills necessary to meet the challenges of teaching in a complex urban environment - such as communicating with parents of different cultural backgrounds - and on developing an extended professional orientation. The programme lasted one year and consisted of the following three components: group

meetings (these involved theoretical input from experts regarding the four urban themes, opportunities for sharing experiences and group assignments), classroom application (participants apply new insights to their teaching practice) and lectures (in which experts explored substantive themes). Additionally, supervision was organised, offering a context for beginning teachers to share experiences and expertise.

The central research question of this study was: What is the contribution of participation in the ‘Mastery’ programme to the *quality* (in terms of competences, professional orientation and self-efficacy) and *retention* (in terms of job motivation and career choices) of teachers?

The core of this study was formed by a quasi-experimental design, with an experimental (N=66) and control group (N=67). The contribution of participation in the professional development programme to the different dependent variables (competences, professional orientation, self-efficacy, job motivation and career choices) was measured using a knowledge test and questionnaires (pre- and post-measures). The competences (in terms of knowledge of teaching in an urban environment) were measured through the knowledge test, the other variables (professional orientation, self-efficacy, job motivation and career choices) by using the questionnaires. To gather complementary information regarding teachers’ evaluation of the programme and to obtain a detailed understanding of the active elements of the programme, interviews were conducted with participants of the ‘Mastery’ programme and with their principals (N=42). These interviews were analysed qualitatively.

The results showed a significant effect of the programme on teacher knowledge and self-efficacy. Furthermore, teachers greatly appreciated the programme and they perceived a positive impact on their competences, self-efficacy and professional orientation. The teachers considered the modules, which offered a broader focus than just the direct classroom practice, and the network wherein teachers could share their experiences and expertise to be the most valuable elements of the programme.

Chapter 4 reports on the long-term effects of the ‘Mastery’ programme. We were also interested in the professional learning community (PLC) characteristics and activities that were undertaken in school organisations where teachers reported positive long term effects of the programme. The research questions of this study were:

1. What are the long-term effects of participation in the ‘Mastery’ programme to the

quality (competences, professional orientation and self efficacy) and *retention* (job motivation and career choices) of teachers?

2. Which characteristics and activities are typical of school organisations in which teachers showed positive long-term effects of the 'Mastery' programme?

The long-term effects were investigated in a quasi-experimental design (N=72), whereas the school characteristics and activities were examined through interviews (N=19). Ten teachers who reported positive long term effects of the 'Mastery' programme and their principals were interviewed.

The study showed a significant long term effect of the programme on teachers' competences and professional orientation. Although the quantitative results showed no long-term effect of the programme on self-efficacy, job motivation and career choices of the teachers, the interviews suggested that, participants of the programme and principals experienced a longer-term contribution to the self-efficacy, job motivation and career choices of the teachers.

In schools where teachers reported positive long-term effects of the 'Mastery' programme, several school organisational characteristics were present and activities were undertaken that were perceived as valuable for the application, sharing and further development of what teachers had learned from the 'Mastery' programme. The teachers and their principals considered an open culture in the schools, in which the teachers could share their expertise with colleagues and teachers and principals seriously considered their expertise, as the most important factor for the sustainability of the programme's effects.

Chapter 5 contains a report on a descriptive study of the induction of beginning teachers at urban primary schools. The study aimed to gain insight into the support structure and culture for beginning teachers at urban primary schools. The central research question was: What are the characteristics of the support structure and culture at primary schools where beginning teachers positively or negatively judge the support they receive?

Beginning teachers and principals from 11 primary schools in Amsterdam were interviewed about the support structure and culture at their school. The sample included schools where beginning teachers judged positively or negatively about the support they had received. Based on a comparison between the schools where teachers judged

positively or negatively about the support practice, valuable elements of the support structure and culture were identified.

The study revealed that all schools undertook support activities, such as offering beginning teachers a buddy or coach. However, at schools where teachers judged the support positively, these activities were performed more consistently and conscientiously than at the other schools. Furthermore, it can be concluded that cultural rather than structural characteristics distinguished the schools. A good support culture largely determined how teachers judged the support practice at their schools. Elements of the support culture that were of particular importance for beginning teachers were (spontaneous) collaboration between beginning and experienced colleagues, encouragement of beginning teachers' development, and involved colleagues who were open to discussing experiences with beginning teachers.

Overall conclusion

This dissertation provided insight in how beginning urban teachers can be better equipped for teaching in urban environments. The study identified several prominent problems faced by beginning urban teachers and showed the value and effective elements of both a professional development programme teachers outside the workplace and guidance at the workplace itself.

From this study, it can be concluded that newly qualified urban teachers encounter several difficult and complex issues that are to a certain extent related to teaching in an urban environment, in particular to the student populations of the schools. Teachers at disadvantaged schools primarily perceive problems related to the diverse student population, whereas teachers at advantaged and mixed schools experience problems such as dealing with highly educated parents and applying differentiation to adequately teach both the gifted and the lower performing students. These problems can be perceived by novice teachers as interesting challenges rather than problems if teachers receive proper guidance regarding these issues.

Furthermore, this dissertation demonstrated the value of two different ways of supporting novice urban teachers. First, the contribution of a professional development programme (outside the workplace) that aimed to better equip beginning teachers for

teaching in an urban environment was evaluated. Positive effects of the programme on teacher competences, self-efficacy and professional orientation were found. Furthermore, teachers greatly appreciated the programme and considered the different modules, which offered a broader focus than just the direct classroom practice, and the network wherein teachers could share their experiences and expertise to be the most valuable elements of the programme.

Second, this study showed the importance of guidance at the workplace itself and identified several elements of induction that are valuable for beginning urban teachers. The results showed that not only support activities, such as the guidance of a coach or buddy, but also a good support culture is of great importance for beginning urban teachers. In schools where teachers reported positive long-term effects of the 'Mastery' programme an open learning culture in the schools had been established: this was considered as the most important factor for the further development of what the teachers had learned from the 'Mastery' programme.

Discussion of the main results

Above, the main findings and conclusions of the four studies that constitute this dissertation have been summarised and integrated. In this section, the contributions of this dissertation, directions for further research and implications for educational science and for practice are discussed.

As was concluded, this study provided insight in how beginning urban teachers can be better equipped for teaching in urban environments. Previous research showed that it is important for professional development and induction programmes to focus on the problems that teachers experience in the specific context in which they operate (Siwatu, 2011; Tamir, 2010). This study identified several urban themes/problems that are important to address in support programmes for novice urban teachers. In contrast to previous studies (e.g., Castro, Kelly & Shih, 2010; Halvorsen, Lee & Andrade, 2009), in this study a broad conceptualisation of 'urban teaching' was used, in which we focused not only on 'disadvantaged' schools (where students come from culturally diverse and low socio-economic backgrounds), but also on more 'advantaged' schools (where most

students are of native heritage and have highly educated parents), and ‘mixed’ schools (where the student population is a mix of both native students and students from culturally diverse backgrounds). These different kinds of urban schools are characteristic for global cities and teachers must be prepared and equipped for teaching in these different types of schools. The inclusion of both disadvantaged, advantaged and mixed schools in this study made it possible to obtain a good overview of the diverse problems that urban teachers might experience. The results show that urban teachers experience different types of complex problems depending on the student population of their schools. Since the problems of novice urban teachers are so complex and diverse, teacher training cannot fully prepare teachers for teaching in an urban environment. Novices also need adequate guidance and support once they are working at a particular urban school. The results of this research gave insight in how this guidance and support may be organised.

Theoretical contributions

The study provided theoretical insights by identifying several elements of professional development and induction programmes that are valuable for beginning urban teachers. The research revealed elements of professional development programmes, and the support structure and –culture of schools (including professional learning communities) that are important for beginning urban teachers. An important finding of this study is that a network of novice teachers, in which teachers from different schools can exchange experiences and expertise, is highly valued by beginning urban teachers. This result confirms the conclusion of Hofman and Dijkstra (2010) that networks of teachers that allow teachers from different schools to exchange experiences are promising ways for professional development and enhancing job motivation of teachers. In fact, meeting teachers from other schools and exchanging experiences was such an important element in the success of the Mastery programme that it mitigates the conclusions from previous studies that concluded that professionalisation activities for teachers are best situated in the workplace. This study showed that professional development programmes outside the workplace have a value of their own. Through such programmes, beginners have the opportunity to meet other novices which is not always possible at their own school. The teachers in this study highly appreciated the contact with peers, because it enabled them

to reflect on their performance and experiences and to exchange substantive expertise. The contact with peers from other schools made it possible to transcend the situation in the own workplace; novices received information about the situation in other schools and also learned from the way of working in the schools of their peers. Network learning was thus found in this study as a valuable element of teacher professionalisation and should therefore be encouraged both inside and outside the workplace.

Another important finding of this study was that the broad focus of the different modules of the 'Mastery' programme was perceived as a very valuable element of the programme by the teachers. These modules were not only focused on the direct classroom, but also on topics as the school organisation, the language policy of schools and parents of different backgrounds. Accordingly, the teachers were inspired to look beyond their own classroom and developed as an extended professional. Therefore, the study underlines the value of a professional development programme with a broader focus than only classroom practice. In previous research on effective professionalisation it is often suggested that professional development programmes that focus on daily teaching practice (and in particular on subject content, teaching methods and/or the learning of pupils in a particular subject) are more effective than programmes with a more general focus. This study showed that the importance of a broad focus in professional development programmes. However, the link of the programmes with the daily practice should not be lost.

Furthermore, this study emphasised the importance of a good support culture for beginning urban teachers. Much of the literature on effective support for beginning teachers focuses on the support structure, or the support activities that schools perform to support their teachers (Davis & Higdon, 2008; Howe, 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2002). This study also underlines the value of a good support culture. A support culture that was characterised by spontaneous collaborations between novice and experienced teachers, encouragement of beginning teachers' development, and involved colleagues who were open to discussing experiences with beginning teachers, appeared to contribute to a positive judgment by teachers of the support practice at their school.

To summarise, this study identified several elements of valuable support for beginning urban teachers. We do not know whether these elements are in particular important for this specific group of teachers. It seems reasonable to assume that these

elements are also valuable for non-urban teachers. However, we do know from this research and from previous studies (e.g., Hooge, 2008; Severiens, Wolff & Van Herpen, 2013; Smith & Smith, 2006; Van Tartwijk, Den Brok, Veldman & Wubbels, 2009) that teaching in urban contexts is challenging for teachers, as they are confronted with specific urban problems, such as dealing with unsafe atmospheres in and around the school and dealing with students and parents from culturally diverse backgrounds. We added to these problems specific challenges associated with global cities, such as dealing with highly educated parents and applying differentiation to adequately teach both the gifted and the lower performing students. These are complex issues that extend beyond the walls of the classroom. Therefore, we assume that for urban teachers it is of particular importance to receive guidance and support with a broader focus than classroom practice only, to have the opportunity to share experiences and expertise in a network of teachers who are confronted with similar challenges and to experience an open culture in schools in which novices can easily approach colleagues for support regarding their questions.

Methodological considerations

In the studies on the 'Mastery' programme, teachers and principals were interviewed as couples. In this way, information regarding the effects of the programme was obtained from two different perspectives. This turned out to be an interesting approach, because the responses from the teachers and principals together enabled us to build up a fuller picture of the effects of the 'Mastery' programme than if only the teacher responses had been included. For example, by taking both perspectives into account, it became clear that the teachers who participated in the 'Mastery' programme not only acquired expertise for themselves, but also expertise that was valuable for the school organisation, an effect that may not have been revealed if only the teachers' perspectives had been taken into account. We therefore recommend to include not only the teacher's but also other perspectives, and in particular the principal's perspective, in studies into the experienced effects of professional development programmes.

Furthermore, we used both qualitative and quantitative approaches in this study. We found several differences between the quantitative and qualitative results. For instance, the quantitative results showed no significant short-term effect on professional orientation and no significant long-term effect on job motivation, whereas the teachers

and their principals mentioned during the interviews that they did perceive a positive contribution of the programme to teachers' professional orientation and job motivation. The reason for the differences between the quantitative and qualitative results may be found in a ceiling effect in the quantitative analysis, as both conditions had high scores on the professional orientation and motivation scales for the pre- and the post- tests. The broader focus of the interviews compared to the questionnaires could be another reason for these differences. For instance, the quantitative analyses regarding professional orientation only focused on the beliefs of the teachers, while the qualitative analyses also focused on their actions. For instance, teachers without changes in scores from pre-test to post-test on items regarding their professional orientation in the questionnaire (e.g. 'Cooperating with other teachers is necessary for the adequate completion of teaching tasks' and 'School policy is not only a task for school management') sometimes mentioned a change in concrete actions regarding their professional orientation during their interviews. They mentioned, for instance, that they collaborated more with colleagues in team groups as a result of the 'Mastery' programme or that they developed a language policy for their school. Thus, it could be that the 'Mastery' programme especially influenced the actions of the teachers themselves in the short term, whereas it did not influence their general opinions on teachers' roles. Thus, this study showed that it is important to perform both qualitative and quantitative measurements, as the qualitative results can deepen the quantitative results and vice versa.

Finally, in this study, we performed both a short-term and a long-term measurement. This appeared to be an interesting approach, because the long-term measurement revealed other effects of the 'Mastery' programme than the short-term measurement. We only measured a significant positive, long-term effect of the programme on the professional orientation of the teachers, and teachers only reported a positive effect of the programme on their communication competences and job motivation in the long-term. These effects would not have been observed if only a short-term measurement had been conducted. Immediate effects of the programme on these broader competences and on job motivation may probably not be expected, as also experience comes into play. Therefore, this study emphasises the importance of not only measuring short-term effects but also the long-term effects of professional development interventions. Several studies on professional development interventions only include

pre- and post-measurements and no long-term measurements (see for instance, Vogt & Rogalla, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Therefore, the effects of professional development interventions on competences that require more time to develop may not have been measured in these studies. This may also be the reason why research seems to suggest that professional development programmes that focus on daily teaching practice are more effective than programmes with a more general focus; increase of competences related to the daily teaching practice is measurable after a relatively shorter period than broader competences.

Limitations and future research

The present study has some limitations. First, the interview studies in this dissertation were small-scale. The small-scale design made it possible to obtain in-depth information about the problems experienced by beginning urban teachers and the valuable elements of support programmes; however, it is necessary to verify the outcomes of these studies in a larger (quantitative) study.

Second, many of the problems of teachers in urban primary schools that were identified in the first study were general problems that could also be experienced by non-urban teachers. Nevertheless, the teachers who participated in this study experienced these problems as being related to the specific urban context in which they worked. For instance, the problem of parental contact is a problem that is also experienced by non-urban teachers (Veenman, 1987; Schuck et al., 2012). However, in this study, the problem specifically referred to the extreme involvement, demands and expectations of parents (at the advantaged schools) and to the diverse backgrounds of parents (at the disadvantaged schools). Thus, urban teachers seem to experience specific ‘urban’ problems. However, there were no teachers from outside of the city in our sample, so we cannot make a proper comparison.

Furthermore, the quantitative results of the studies on the ‘Mastery’ programme showed that participation in the ‘Mastery’ programme had no impact on the teachers’ job motivation or career choices. The lack of an impact of the programme on these measures may have occurred because the teachers who participated in the study were all motivated teachers before they started the programme, as evidenced by the fact that the teachers had very high scores on the motivation scale according to the pre-test (ceiling

effect). This was also the case with the teachers from the control condition who followed other professional development programmes than the 'Mastery' programme. In the studies on the 'Mastery' programme we thus focused only on the professionalisation and retention of highly motivated teachers. It would, however, also be interesting to investigate the contribution of such a programme to the quality and retention of less motivated teachers.

Although the quantitative results showed no influence of the 'Mastery' programme on the job motivation and career choices of the teachers, several respondents in the interviews mentioned that the programme positively affected the motivation and career choices of the teachers in the long term. These respondents explained that the programme provided teachers with (new) inspiration or energy for teaching and/or insights into the attractive aspects of the education profession. Furthermore, the programme stimulated the teachers to think about their professional development and encouraged them to develop themselves in a certain direction (for instance, using follow-up courses). The qualitative findings are an indication that the participants and their principals experienced a positive contribution of the programme to teacher retention. As this finding cannot be generalised, further research on the actual number of teachers who stayed in the teaching profession several years after completion the 'Mastery' programme would be interesting.

Another limitation of this study is that we only focused on the effects of the Mastery programme on the quality and retention of teachers, not on the effects on student performance. Teaching in urban environment is very complex and requires high quality teachers who are motivated to stay as a teacher. Our initial interest was to investigate whether the 'Mastery' programme could contribute to urban teachers' quality and job motivation. Now we have found positive effects, it is interesting – as a second step - to investigate the impact of the programme on student outcomes.

The study showed that an open learning culture in schools is very important for the (long term) success of professional development interventions. Further research on how learning cultures can be created in schools is important. The results of this study indicated that school leaders play an important role: several teachers mentioned that expertise from the 'Mastery' programme could have been developed, applied and shared in the schools if the principals had adapted a more stimulating role. Geijsel, Slegers,

Stoel and Krüger (2009) also concluded that school leaders play an important role in the professional development of teachers. The results of their research showed that school leaders with a transformative leadership style who provided teachers with the security required to experiment, make mistakes and exchange tips appeared to positively affect professional development (Geijsel, Slegers, Stoel & Krüger, 2009). Further research on how school leaders can be best professionalised in this respect is important.

Finally, in this study, we did not focus on the professional identity of teachers, although this topic received more and more attention in research on teacher professionalisation in the last two decades (e.g., Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Olsen, 2008, 2010; Pillen, 2013). We focused in this study on teacher *quality* in terms of competences, professional orientation and self-efficacy and on teacher *retention* in terms of job motivation and career choices. These variables were the main focus of the Mastery programme and are important criteria for teacher quality and retention. However, recent research shows that beginning teachers will experience professional identity tensions (Pillen, 2013). These tensions may have severe consequences for teachers' learning and functioning and even cause teachers to leave the profession (Pillen, 2013). Therefore, it is of great importance to assist beginning teachers in the development of their professional identity. Previous research showed that 'peer contact' plays an important role in this process (Lankveld & Volman, 2011). Since contact with peers was such an important element of the 'Mastery' programme, it is interesting to further investigate whether such a programme could also support beginning urban teachers regarding their identity development.

Despite its limitations, this study identified some prominent problems of beginning urban teachers and demonstrated the value and effective elements of a professional development programme and induction for beginning urban teachers.

Implications for practice

In the Netherlands, much attention is currently being paid to the improvement of the support of beginning teachers (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2013; Arbeidsmarktplatform PO, 2014). All kinds of new induction arrangements are developed and implemented in schools. That support and induction are in need of improvement is evident as many newly qualified teachers in the Netherlands drop out

from the teaching profession within the first five years of their careers as teachers. This is a problem in the Netherlands, because many teachers will reach the retirement age the coming years and there are not sufficient new teachers to fulfill the vacant positions (CAOP, 2012). A great shortage of primary school teachers is expected in 2020, especially in the largest cities of the Netherlands (Centerdata, 2013; Algemene Onderwijsbond, 2013; Arbeidsmarktplatform PO, 2014).

The general aim of this dissertation was to provide insight in how beginning urban teachers can be better equipped for teaching in urban environments. Increased insight could lead to a more effective organisation of support practices for beginning urban teachers, which - in turn - could lead to an improvement of the quality and retention of beginning urban teachers.

The study underlines the value of good guidance and support for beginning urban teachers. The results show that the complexity of teaching, in this case of urban teaching, can be reduced by providing adequate guidance and support. Several teachers in this study did not perceive the challenges of urban schools as problems but instead as interesting challenges through which they could further develop themselves as long as they received adequate preparation or support regarding these issues. Thus, adequate preparation and support through which teachers learn how to manage the issues of urban teaching can transform these issues from problems into interesting challenges for teachers.

The research also shows how adequate support for starters can be organised. A major finding of the study is that network learning is important for beginning urban teachers. A promising initiative in this regard is the “Association of Mastery”. This association was set up by some teachers who participated in the Mastery programme and aims to promote the professionalisation of primary education from the bottom up, using teachers' experiences and expertise to share knowledge and inspire teachers (see <http://www.meesterschappers.nl>). Based on this study, it can be recommended to continue to invest in such initiatives. Also, the study clearly shows that professional development programmes (such as ‘Mastery’) are relevant for starters. Professional development programmes can provide novices with a network in which they can exchange experiences and expertise with other beginners who are confronted with the same challenges and such programmes can better equip teachers for their complex

teaching task, for instance, by contributing to the development of relevant teaching competences, in this case competences for teaching in a large city. Furthermore, the study shows that adequate support in schools themselves is of great importance for starting teachers. Thereby, it is important not only to focus on support activities, such as offering guidance from a coach, but also to invest in a good support culture.

To conclude; this research provides theoretical and empirical knowledge about the organisation of valuable support practices for beginning urban teachers. The focus in the study was on the European urban educational context, in which little research has been done before on urban teaching. The results of the study can contribute to the knowledge of teacher educators, educational support services, schools, school boards and researchers about the organisation of valuable support practices for beginning urban teachers.

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Samenvatting

Inleiding

In veel landen is het een uitdaging om leraren te behouden voor het onderwijs, met name in de grote steden (Ingersoll, 2003; Olsen & Anderson, 2007). Ook in Nederland hebben de vier grote steden (Amsterdam, Utrecht, Den Haag en Rotterdam) meer problemen bij het vervullen van onderwijsvacatures dan andere delen van Nederland (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2012). Tevens blijkt de uitstroom van beginnende leraren in de vier grote steden hoger dan elders (Vrielink, Ruis & Van der Ploeg, 1997; Berndsen, Gemmeke, Hello & De Weerd, 2008). Deze hoge uitstroom is een probleem, omdat de behoefte aan nieuwe leraren de komende jaren zal toenemen als een grote groep leraren met pensioen gaat (CAOP, 2012). In 2020 wordt een lerarentekort in het basisonderwijs verwacht, voornamelijk in de grote steden (Centerdata, 2013). Lesgeven in grote steden is lastig voor beginners, omdat ze geconfronteerd worden met complexe uitdagingen, zoals de omgang met culturele diversiteit en verschillen in taalontwikkeling (Smith & Smith, 2006; Severiens, Wolff, & Van Herpen, 2013). Dit kan leiden tot de uitstroom van leraren uit grootstedelijke scholen en uit het onderwijs in bredere zin.

De centrale doelstelling van dit proefschrift was inzicht te verkrijgen in hoe beginnende leraren beter toegerust kunnen worden voor het lesgeven in het basisonderwijs in een grootstedelijke omgeving. Daarmee beoogt het bij te dragen aan effectieve ondersteuningspraktijken voor beginnende leraren in grote steden, met als uiteindelijk doel een verbetering van de kwaliteit en het behoud van deze leraren voor het onderwijs. Vier deelstudies werden uitgevoerd om de doelstelling te realiseren. Deze deelstudies beantwoorden achtereenvolgens de volgende onderzoeksvragen:

1. Welke problemen ervaren beginnende leraren in het basisonderwijs in een grootstedelijke omgeving?
2. Wat is (op langere termijn) de bijdrage van deelname aan het professionaliseringprogramma 'Meesterschap' aan de *kwaliteit* en het *behoud* van leraren in het basisonderwijs in een grootstedelijke omgeving?
3. Welke kenmerken van de schoolorganisatie dragen bij aan positieve langetermijneffecten van 'Meesterschap'?
4. Wat zijn de kenmerken van de ondersteuningsstructuur en -cultuur op

grootstedelijke basisscholen waar beginnende leraren tevreden respectievelijk ontevreden zijn over de begeleiding die zij ontvangen?

In hoofdstuk 1 van dit proefschrift wordt de achtergrond van de problematiek geschetst en worden de onderzoeksvragen geïntroduceerd.

Samenvatting van de belangrijkste bevindingen

In **hoofdstuk 2** wordt een beschrijvende studie gepresenteerd die gericht was op het verkennen van de problemen van beginnende leraren in een grootstedelijke omgeving (onderzoeksvraag 1). Voor deze studie werden semi-gestructureerde interviews afgenomen met 15 beginnende basisschoollerares uit Amsterdam en Utrecht. Deze leraren waren allemaal werkzaam op een grootstedelijke basisschool: vijf leraren gaven les op basisscholen met overwegend leerlingen met lage sociaal-economische en soms ook cultureel diverse achtergronden, vijf leraren werkten op scholen met voornamelijk Nederlandse leerlingen van hoog opgeleide ouders en vijf leraren werkten op scholen waar de leerlingpopulatie een mix was van zowel Nederlandse leerlingen als leerlingen met cultureel diverse achtergronden en/of leerlingen met verschillende SES achtergronden.

De voornaamste problemen die de leraren noemden waren ‘een hoge werkdruk’, ‘een hoge mate van stress’ en ‘onvoldoende begeleiding en ondersteuning’. Andere problemen die de leraren veelvuldig beschreven, waren ‘het contact met ouders (zowel hoog opgeleide en kritische ouders als ouders met een niet-Nederlandse achtergrond)’ en ‘het omgaan met persoonlijke onzekerheid’. Van de problemen die in de literatuur beschreven worden als typische ‘grootstedelijke problemen’, herkenden de leraren voornamelijk het moeten ‘aansluiten bij verschillen in cognitieve ontwikkeling en taalontwikkeling van leerlingen’ en ‘te weinig tijd en mogelijkheden om voldoende aandacht te besteden aan risicoleerlingen’.

De problemen van de leraren bleken samen te hangen met het type grootstedelijke school waarop de leraren werkten. Leraren van scholen met overwegend leerlingen van lage SES en/of cultureel diverse achtergronden hadden voornamelijk problemen gerelateerd aan de diverse leerlingpopulatie, terwijl de leraren van de andere scholen problemen hadden als de omgang met hoogopgeleide en kritische ouders en het toepassen van differentiatie voor zowel de betere als minder presterende leerlingen.

De leraren relateerden verschillende van hun problemen aan het lesgeven in een grote stad. Ze hadden bijvoorbeeld moeite met het contact met ouders, wat volgens hen te maken had met de specifieke ‘stadse’ groep ouders op hun school (namelijk zeer kritische hoog opgeleide ouders of juist ouders met een niet-Nederlandse achtergrond). Sommige leraren bleken de uitdagingen van het lesgeven in een grote stad niet als problemen, maar juist als interessante uitdagingen te zien waardoor zij zich verder konden ontwikkelen. Dit waren de leraren die ook aangaven dat ze een goede voorbereiding en ondersteuning hadden ontvangen met betrekking tot deze problemen.

In **hoofdstuk 3** worden de effecten onderzocht van ‘Meesterschap’, een professionaliseringstraject dat beoogde beginnende leraren te ondersteunen bij hun werk in een complexe grootstedelijke context (onderzoeksvraag 2). Het doel van dit programma was enerzijds een verhoging van de kwaliteit van leraren in de grote stad en anderzijds leraren behouden voor het werken in een grootstedelijke onderwijscontext. De focus van het programma lag enerzijds op de ontwikkeling van de kernkwaliteiten die nodig zijn voor het lesgeven in een grootstedelijke omgeving, zoals de omgang met culturele diversiteit en taalachterstanden van leerlingen en anderzijds op de ontwikkeling van een brede professionele oriëntatie. Het programma bestond uit vier verschillende modules die een bredere focus hadden dan alleen de eigen klassenpraktijk. De centrale thema’s van deze modules waren: omgang met Culturele diversiteit, Taal, School & omgeving, en Veiligheid. ‘Meesterschap’ had de duur van een jaar en bestond uit de volgende drie onderdelen: groepsbijeenkomsten (waarin de vier inhoudelijke grootstedelijke thema’s verder werden uitgewerkt en uitgediept), toepassing binnen de eigen klas (waarbij deelnemers nieuw verworven inzichten toepasten in de eigen lespraktijk, waarna ze hun ervaringen bespraken tijdens de groepsbijeenkomsten) en tot slot een lezingenreeks (waarin experts inhoudelijke thema’s verdiepten en koppelden aan resultaten van onderzoek). Daarnaast vormde ‘Meesterschap’ een context voor beginnende leraren om ervaringen te delen en expertise uit te wisselen.

De kern van deze studie werd gevormd door een quasi-experimenteel onderzoek, met een experimentele en controlegroep. De experimentele groep bestond uit 66 leraren die lesgeven op een basisschool in Amsterdam. Voor deze leraren bestond de interventie uit deelname aan ‘Meesterschap’. De controlegroep bestond uit 67 stadse leraren die niet

deelnamen aan het professionaliseringstraject. De bijdrage van 'Meesterschap' aan de kwaliteit van leraren (in termen van competenties, professionele oriëntatie, self-efficacy) en het behoud van leraren (in termen van motivatie voor het beroep en loopbaanplannen) werd gemeten met behulp van een kennistoets en vragenlijsten. In de kennistoets werden de competenties van de leraren (kennis over het lesgeven in een grote stad) gemeten. In de vragenlijsten stonden de overige variabelen (professionele oriëntatie, self-efficacy, motivatie en loopbaanplannen) centraal.

In zowel de experimentele als de controlegroep vond een voor- en een nameting plaats. Om aanvullende gegevens te verzamelen over de gepercipieerde effecten van de opleiding en een gedetailleerder inzicht te verkrijgen in de werkzame elementen van het programma zijn interviews gehouden met zowel de leraren die deelnamen aan het programma (N=21) als hun directeuren (N=21).

De resultaten lieten een significant effect van het programma zien op de competenties en self-efficacy van leraren. Daarnaast werd het programma zeer gewaardeerd door de leraren. In de beleving van de leraren leverde het programma een positieve bijdrage aan hun competenties, self-efficacy en professionele oriëntatie. Dit werd bevestigd door de directeuren. De leraren beschouwden de modules en het netwerk waarin de leraren hun ervaringen en expertise konden delen met andere beginners, als de meest waardevolle elementen van het programma.

Hoofdstuk 4 rapporteert over de langetermijneffecten van het professionaliseringstraject 'Meesterschap' (onderzoeksvraag 2). We waren tevens geïnteresseerd in de schoolorganisatorische kenmerken en activiteiten die ondernomen werden op scholen waar bij leraren positieve effecten van het programma waren te zien (onderzoeksvraag 3). De langetermijneffecten werden onderzocht met behulp van een quasi-experimentele studie (N=72), terwijl de schoolorganisatorische kenmerken en activiteiten onderzocht werden door middel van interviews (N=19). Tien leraren die positieve langetermijneffecten van het programma lieten zien en hun directeuren werden geïnterviewd.

De kwantitatieve studie liet een significant langetermijneffect van het programma zien op de competenties en professionele oriëntatie van leraren. Ondanks dat er geen significante langetermijneffecten van het programma op self-efficacy, motivatie voor het

beroep en loopbaanplannen werden gevonden, suggereerden de interviews dat het programma bij deze groep deelnemers - in de beleving van de participanten en hun directeuren - op de lange termijn wel degelijk had bijgedragen aan de self-efficacy, motivatie voor het beroep en de loopbaanplannen van de leraren.

Op scholen waar bij leraren positieve langetermijneffecten van het programma waren te zien, werden verschillende activiteiten georganiseerd (zoals het betrekken van leraren en hun nieuw verworven expertise bij belangrijke schoolontwikkelingen) en waren verschillende schoolorganisatorische kenmerken aanwezig (zoals betrokken schoolleiders en collega's die interesse toonden in 'Meesterschap') die als waardevol werden ervaren voor het kunnen toepassen, delen en verder ontwikkelen van datgene wat de leraren bij 'Meesterschap' hadden geleerd. De leraren beschouwden een open cultuur, waarin ze hun expertise met collega's konden delen en waarin directeuren en collega's hun expertise serieus namen, als de belangrijkste factor voor het behouden en versterken van de effecten van 'Meesterschap' op de lange termijn.

In **hoofdstuk 5** wordt een beschrijvende studie gepresenteerd die gericht was op de begeleidingsstructuur en -cultuur op scholen waar leraren tevreden respectievelijk ontevreden waren over de begeleiding die zij ontvangen hadden (onderzoeksvraag 4). Beginnende leraren en directeuren van 11 basisscholen in Amsterdam werden geïnterviewd over de ondersteuningsstructuur en -cultuur op hun school. De onderzoeksgroep bestond uit scholen waar leraren de begeleiding die zij als starter hadden ontvangen negatief respectievelijk positief beoordeelden. Op basis van een vergelijking tussen scholen waar leraren negatief respectievelijk positief oordeelden over de ondersteuningspraktijk, werden waardevolle elementen van de ondersteuningscultuur en -structuur geïdentificeerd.

De resultaten laten zien dat op alle scholen ondersteuningsactiviteiten werden georganiseerd, zoals het bieden van begeleiding door een maatje of coach. Echter, op scholen waar leraren de begeleiding positief beoordeelden, werden deze activiteiten meer consistent en consciëntieus uitgevoerd dan op de andere scholen. Tevens werd in deze studie geconcludeerd dat voornamelijk culturele in plaats van structurele kenmerken de scholen van elkaar onderscheiden. De ondersteuningscultuur bepaalde in grote mate of de leraren de ondersteuningspraktijk op hun school positief waardeerden. Elementen van

de ondersteuningscultuur die in het bijzonder van belang waren voor de professionele ontwikkeling van beginnende leraren waren: (spontane) samenwerking tussen leraren, het stimuleren van de professionele ontwikkeling van leraren door de schoolleiding en betrokken collega's die open staan om ervaringen met beginnende leraren te delen.

In **hoofdstuk 6** worden de belangrijkste resultaten en conclusies van de afzonderlijke deelstudies gepresenteerd en bediscussieerd.

Theoretische bijdrage

Deze studie biedt inzicht in elementen van professionaliseringsprogramma's, en van de ondersteuningscultuur en -structuur van scholen (inclusief professionele leergemeenschappen) die belangrijk zijn voor startende leraren basisonderwijs in grote steden. Een belangrijke bevinding van dit onderzoek is dat een netwerk van beginnende leraren, waarin leraren van verschillende scholen hun expertise en ervaringen uit kunnen wisselen, zeer gewaardeerd wordt door beginnende leraren. Hoewel er een groeiende consensus lijkt te bestaan dat op de werkvloer gesitueerde vormen van professionalisering effectiever zijn dan vormen buiten de werkplek (e.g., Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010; Little, 2006), laat dit onderzoek zien dat professionaliseringsprogramma's buiten de werkplek een waarde op zichzelf hebben. Leraren kunnen bij dergelijke programma's starters van andere scholen ontmoeten, wat niet altijd mogelijk is op hun eigen school. De leraren in deze studie waardeerden het contact met andere beginners zeer, omdat het hen in staat stelde om gezamenlijk op ervaringen te reflecteren en om inhoudelijke expertise uit te wisselen. Het contact met beginners van andere scholen maakte het ook mogelijk om de situatie in de eigen school te overstijgen: leraren kregen informatie over de situatie in andere scholen en leerden van de verschillende manieren van werken in deze scholen. In deze studie bleek netwerken een waardevol element van professionaliseringsprogramma's. Deze manier van leren zou zowel binnen als buiten de werkplek aangemoedigd moeten worden.

Een andere belangrijke bevinding van dit onderzoek is dat de leraren de brede focus in de verschillende modules van 'Meesterschap' als een zeer waardevol element van het programma beschouwden. Deze modules waren niet alleen gericht op de directe klassenpraktijk, maar juist ook op onderwerpen als de schoolorganisatie, het taalbeleid en

de omgang met ouders van verschillende culturele achtergronden. Hierdoor werden leraren geïnspireerd om verder te kijken dan hun eigen klas en ontwikkelden zij een brede professionele oriëntatie. Deze studie benadrukt dan ook het belang van professionaliseringsprogramma's met een bredere focus dan alleen de eigen klassenpraktijk. Uit resultaten van eerder onderzoek naar effectieve professionalisering blijkt dat programma's met een focus op de dagelijkse lespraktijk (en in het bijzonder op vakken, vakdidactiek en het leren van leerlingen in een bepaald vakgebied) effectiever zijn dan programma's met een meer algemene focus (e.g., Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010; Van Veen, Zwart, & Meirink, 2012). Deze studie laat juist het belang zien van een brede focus in professionaliseringprogramma's, maar daarbij moet de link met de dagelijkse lespraktijk niet uit het oog verloren worden.

Verder wordt in dit onderzoek het belang benadrukt van een goede ondersteuningscultuur voor beginnende leraren. Veel literatuur over effectieve begeleiding van beginnende leraren richt zich op de ondersteuningsstructuur, oftewel de ondersteuningsactiviteiten die scholen ondernemen om hun starters te begeleiden (Davis & Higdson, 2008; Howe, 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2002). Deze studie onderstreept ook het belang van een goede ondersteuningscultuur. Een ondersteuningscultuur die wordt gekenmerkt door spontane samenwerking tussen beginnende en ervaren collega's, het stimuleren van de professionele ontwikkeling van beginnende leraren en betrokken collega's die open staan om ervaringen te delen met starters, bleek bij te dragen aan een positief oordeel van leraren over de ondersteuningspraktijk op hun school.

Deze studie heeft dus verschillende elementen van professionalisering en inductie in kaart gebracht die waardevol zijn voor beginnende leraren in een grote stad. Op basis van dit onderzoek kunnen we geen uitspraken doen over de vraag of deze elementen voor deze specifieke groep leraren belangrijker zijn dan voor andere leraren. Het lijkt aannemelijk dat deze elementen ook waardevol zijn voor leraren buiten de grote stad. Dit onderzoek en ook eerdere studies (e.g., Hooge, 2008; Severiens, Wolff & Van Herpen, 2013; Smith & Smith, 2006; Van Tartwijk, Den Brok, Veldman & Wubbels, 2009) laten wel zien dat lesgeven in een grote stad uitdagend is voor beginnende leraren, aangezien ze geconfronteerd worden met specifieke grootstedelijke problemen, zoals de omgang met onveilige situaties in en rondom de school en de omgang met leerlingen en ouders met

cultureel diverse achtergronden. Daaraan voegden we in dit onderzoek nog specifieke uitdagingen toe die gerelateerd zijn aan het lesgeven in ‘global cities’, zoals de omgang met hoog opgeleide ouders en het toepassen van differentiatie voor zowel de betere als minder presterende leerlingen. Dit zijn complexe problemen die de muren van de eigen klas overstijgen. Daarom veronderstellen we dat het voor leraren in grote steden van groot belang is dat zij ondersteuning ontvangen met een bredere focus dan de eigen klas, de mogelijkheid hebben om ervaringen en expertise uit te wisselen in een netwerk van leraren die met dezelfde uitdagingen geconfronteerd worden, en dat zij een open cultuur in scholen ervaren waarin beginners gemakkelijk bij collega’s naar binnen kunnen lopen om hulp te vragen bij hun problemen.

Beperkingen en vervolgonderzoek

Dit onderzoek kent een aantal beperkingen. Zo waren de interviewstudies kleinschalig. Hierdoor was het mogelijk om diepgaande informatie te verkrijgen en de ervaringen van de leraren en hun directeurs in detail te beschrijven. Echter, het is belangrijk om de uitkomsten van deze studies te verifiëren in een grootschaliger (kwantitatief) onderzoek.

Daarnaast waren er geen leraren van buiten de grote stad betrokken bij dit onderzoek. We weten daardoor niet of de problemen die in dit onderzoek beschreven worden specifieke ‘grootstedelijke’ problemen zijn of dat ze ook ervaren worden door leraren buiten de grote stad. Echter, de leraren die aan dit onderzoek deelnamen, relateerden hun problemen wel aan het lesgeven aan de grote stad. Het lijkt er dus op dat leraren wel degelijk grootstedelijke problemen ervaren, maar om een goede vergelijking mogelijk te maken, zou een vervolgstudie uitgevoerd moeten worden waarin zowel leraren van binnen als buiten de grote stad participeren.

Een andere beperking is dat de deelnemers aan het programma ‘Meesterschap’ leraren waren die voorafgaand aan de opleiding al heel gemotiveerd voor het onderwijs waren. Dit was ook het geval bij de leraren uit de controlegroep (die niet deelgenomen hebben aan het professionaliseringsprogramma). Het zou interessant zijn om in vervolgonderzoek te kijken wat de effecten van een dergelijk programma zijn op de kwaliteit en motivatie van minder gemotiveerde leraren.

Verder hebben we ons in dit onderzoek alleen gericht op de effecten van Meesterschap op de kwaliteit en motivatie van leraren, en niet op de effecten van het

programma op leerlingresultaten. Lesgeven in grote steden is erg complex en vereist leraren van goede kwaliteit die graag in het onderwijs werkzaam willen blijven. Onze eerste interesse was de vraag of ‘Meesterschap’ daadwerkelijk een bijdrage kon leveren aan de kwaliteit en motivatie van leraren in een grote stad. Nu we positieve effecten hebben gevonden, zou het interessant zijn om - als tweede stap - de impact van het programma op leerlingresultaten te bekijken.

Ondanks de beperkingen heeft deze studie enkele belangrijke problemen van beginnende leraren in kaart gebracht en heeft het licht geworpen op de effectieve elementen van een professionaliseringsprogramma en inductie voor beginnende leraren in de grote stad.

Praktische implicaties

Als antwoord op de uitval van beginnende leraren en het besef dat deze leraren nog niet over alle competenties beschikken die nodig zijn voor een goede uitoefening van het beroep, wordt in Nederland op dit moment veel aandacht besteed aan de verbetering van de begeleiding van beginnende leraren (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2013). Er worden allerlei nieuwe begeleidingsarrangementen ontwikkeld en geïmplementeerd op scholen. Dit onderzoek benadrukt het belang van een goede ondersteuning voor beginnende leraren. De resultaten laten zien dat de complexiteit van het lesgeven, in dit geval het lesgeven in een grote stad, gereduceerd kan worden door een goede voorbereiding en begeleiding. De leraren die aan dit onderzoek deelnamen beschouwden de uitdagingen van de grote stad niet als problemen, maar juist als interessante uitdagingen, als zij daarbij goed werden voorbereid en begeleid. Door een goede voorbereiding en begeleiding kunnen de problemen die leraren in grote steden ervaren dus getransformeerd worden tot interessante uitdagingen.

In het onderzoek werden grootstedelijke uitdagingen in kaart gebracht die een plek verdienen binnen begeleidingsprogramma's voor beginnende leraren in grote steden. De resultaten laten zien dat leraren op scholen in grote steden tegen verschillende complexe problemen aanlopen die in grote mate samenhangen met de leerlingpopulatie van hun school. Aangezien de problemen van beginnende stadse leraren zo complex en divers zijn, kunnen lerarenopleidingen leraren niet volledig voorbereiden op het lesgeven in grote steden. Beginners moeten ook goed begeleid en ondersteund worden als ze

eenmaal op een school in de grote stad werkzaam zijn. De resultaten van dit onderzoek geven inzicht in hoe deze begeleiding georganiseerd zou kunnen worden.

Een bevinding van dit onderzoek is dat netwerklere heel belangrijk is voor beginnende stadse leraren. Een interessant initiatief in dit opzicht is de ‘Vereniging van Meesterschappers’. Deze vereniging is opgezet door een aantal oud-deelnemers van ‘Meesterschap’ en heeft als doel de ‘professionalisering van het basisonderwijs vanuit de werkvloer, door gebruik te maken van elkaars ervaring en expertise en door nieuwe kennis en inspiratie op te doen’ (zie <http://www.meesterschappers.nl>). Vanuit dit onderzoek kan aanbevolen worden om in dergelijke initiatieven te (blijven) investeren.

Verder laat deze studie zien dat professionaliseringsprogramma’s (zoals ‘Meesterschap’) relevant zijn voor beginnende leraren. Professionaliseringsprogramma’s kunnen leraren een context bieden waarin ze ervaringen en expertise kunnen uitwisselen met starters die met dezelfde uitdagingen geconfronteerd worden. Tevens kunnen dergelijke programma’s leraren beter toerusten voor hun complexe onderwijstaak, bijvoorbeeld door bij te dragen aan de ontwikkeling van relevante competenties voor het lesgeven, in dit geval voor het lesgeven in een grote stad.

Tot slot laat dit onderzoek zien dat goede begeleiding in scholen zelf van groot belang is voor beginnende leraren. Daarbij is het belangrijk om niet alleen te focussen op ondersteuningsactiviteiten, zoals de begeleiding van een maatje of coach, maar ook te investeren in een goede ondersteuningscultuur.

Algemene conclusie

Dit onderzoek heeft theoretische en empirische kennis gegenereerd over de organisatie van waardevolle ondersteuningspraktijken voor beginnende leraren in een grootstedelijke omgeving. De focus lag in deze studie op de Europese onderwijscontext, waarin - anders dan in de VS - nog weinig onderzoek is gedaan naar het lesgeven in een grootstedelijke omgeving. De resultaten van deze studie kunnen bijdragen aan de kennis van lerarenopleiders, onderwijsadviesdiensten, schoolbesturen en onderzoekers over de organisatie van waardevolle ondersteuningspraktijken voor beginnende leraren in een grootstedelijke omgeving.

About the author

Lisa Gaikhorst was born on August 5th, 1982, in Delfzijl, the Netherlands. After finishing secondary education in 2001, she attended the abbreviated teacher training at CHN University Groningen (now Stenden University of Applied Sciences). From 2006 to 2009, she worked as a primary school teacher in Amsterdam. Besides her teaching job, she studied Educational Sciences at the VU University and wrote her master thesis on the support for beginning teachers in different types of primary schools. In 2008, she graduated cum laude and started as a staff member at the Onderwijscentrum VU. After she received funding from OnderwijsBewijs for a research project on beginning urban teachers, she started working on this project in 2009 as a PhD candidate at the VU University. In 2010, she moved to the University of Amsterdam (together with her promotor Monique Volman) where she continued her project. Lisa is currently working as a researcher and lecturer at the department of Child Development and Education at the University of Amsterdam. Her research interests include: beginning teachers, induction, teacher professional development, professional learning communities and urban teaching.

List of publications

Peer-reviewed publications

- Gaikhorst, L., Beishuizen, J.J., Zijlstra, B.J.H., & Volman, M.L.L. (2014). Contribution of a professional development programme to the quality and retention of teachers in an urban environment. *European Journal of Teacher Education*. doi: 10.1080/02619768.2014.902439
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Papers in progress

- Gaikhorst, L., Beishuizen, J.J., Roosenboom, B.H.W., & Volman, M.L.L. (submitted). The problems of beginning teachers in urban primary schools.
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Conference contributions

- Gaikhorst, L., Volman, M.L.L., Zijlstra, B.J.H., & Beishuizen, J.J. (2014). *Duurzame professionalisering van leraren* [Sustainability of teacher professional development]. Paper presented at the Educational Research Days (ORD), Groningen, the Netherlands.
- Gaikhorst, L., Beishuizen, J.J., Zijlstra, B.J.H., & Volman, M.L.L. (2013). *Professionalization of Urban Teachers*. Paper presented at the 15th Biennial Conference of the European Association of Research on Learning and Instruction (Earli) 2013, Munich, Germany.

- Gaikhorst, L., Volman, M.L.L., & Beishuizen, J.J. (2013). *Problemen en ondersteuningsbehoefte van beginnende docenten in een grootstedelijke omgeving* [Problems and support needs of beginning teachers in urban environments]. Paper presented at the Educational Research Days (ORD), Brussels, Belgium.
- Gaikhorst, L., Beishuizen, J.J., Zijlstra, B.J.H., & Volman, M.L.L. (2013). *Effects of a Professional Development Programme to the Quality and Retention of Urban Teachers*. Paper presented at the AERA in San Francisco, California.
- Gaikhorst, L., Volman, M.L.L., Beishuizen, J.J., & Zijlstra, B.J.H. (2012). *The contribution of a professional development programme to the quality and retention of teachers in an urban environment*. Paper presented at the ICO Fall school in Girona, Spain.
- Gaikhorst, L., Volman, M.L.L., & Beishuizen, J.J. (2011). *De effecten van een professionaliseringsprogramma op de kwaliteit en het behoud van beginnende leraren in een grootstedelijke omgeving: een quasi-experimentele studie* [The effects of a professional development programme on the quality and retention of beginning teachers in an urban environment]. Poster presented at the Educational Research Days, Maastricht, the Netherlands.
- Gaikhorst, L., Volman, M.L.L., & Beishuizen, J.J. (2011). *The problems and support needs of beginning teachers in urban primary schools: An in-depth study with semi-structured interviews*. Roundtable presented at the ICO Toogdagen in Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

Other publications

- Gaikhorst, L. (2014). Red de beginnende leraar. *Didactief*, 44(7), 40-41.

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