

Title: A Qualitative Case Study of Three Beginning Female Secondary Teachers' Beliefs and Their Classroom Practices

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The projected high rate of teacher turnover has become a current concern for school districts nationwide. With so many beginning teachers entering the profession, an understanding of their beliefs and practices is essential to for a successful education system. The current study examines the nature of beginning teachers' beliefs, the relationship between the beliefs and practices, and the origins of the beliefs.

The procedures used in gathering information for the three case studies are a questionnaire of beliefs, semi-structured interviews, observations and audiotaping. Data are analyzed through reduction procedures such as categorization and pattern identification. In addition, cross-case analysis is utilized.

Results of the case studies indicate that beginning teachers have formulated belief/practice systems; however, each system is similar to the others yet also unique in its own right. Some are rigid; others are more flexible. Some are more developed than others. Another result indicates that experience, as a teacher is a major influence on beliefs. Lastly, this study indicates that beginning teachers vary in their methods of conflict resolution.

In conclusion, the findings of this study have implications for current educational practices. First, mentoring programs should focus on the individuality of beginning teachers' beliefs. Second, schools should examine beliefs of teachers prior to hiring. Last, teacher preparation should emphasize experience as early as possible in the program.