

The Nature and Extent of the Induction of Secondary School Novice Educators at Mvudi Circuit, Vhembe District in Limpopo Province

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ABSTRACT Novice educators are placed into classrooms on their own and are expected from day one to perform their duties like experienced educators. The assumption of this study is that induction of novice educators has not received the priority it deserves in the Limpopo Province and that many induction programmes have failed to guide novice educators. In this study, the main aim was to investigate the nature and extent of the induction of newly appointed educators at secondary schools in Mvudi Circuit. The researchers used quantitative research design, where questionnaires were used to collect data. A sample of fourteen newly appointed educators was purposefully sampled. The main finding shows that novice educators feel uncertain, anxious and frightened to work alone without support and guidance from veteran educators. The study came up with the following recommendations: Induction of novice educators must be done formally on arrival at the institution; personal and professional needs of novice educators must be met through induction; School managers or principals must support the novice educator by appointing mentors for them and must initiate long-term induction.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of inducting new educators in the teaching process is captured in the literature as significant for easing the settlement of educators into the job. Studies in various countries also show that induction of newly qualified educators is often inadequate and ought to be improved (Bolam 1995; Ingersoll and Smith 2004). Davis (2001) stated that novice educators are placed into classrooms on their own and are expected from day one to undertake duties and operations of more experienced educators, yet quality educator induction programmes are noted to greatly assist novice educators to adapt to the new teaching and learning environment. As Killeavy (2006) noted, "New teachers have generally had to sink or swim and learn by trial and error." According to Joiner and Edwards (2008), if beginner educators are left to survive their first year of teaching, they will create the same environment for incoming educators. This, in the end, will create a continuous cycle of "sink or swim" and cause attrition rates to continue rising.

According to Fabian and Simpson (2002), "induction is the process of introducing the employee to the organisation and the organisation to the employee; it begins at the time of

appointment." Its purpose is to help new staff achieve competence quickly through having the necessary knowledge, support and guidance to carry out his or her duties. Wong (2004) defined induction as a system which is wide, coherent, comprehensive training and a support process that continues for 2 or 3 years and then seamlessly becomes part of the lifelong professional development program of the district to keep new educators teaching and improving toward increasing their effectiveness.

There are a number of authors and researchers who wrote about the aims of induction. The following paragraphs discuss aims of induction according to different authors. According to Denim (2009), the aim of induction is to enrich school leaders, educators, newly qualified educators, novice educators and policy makers to develop and pilot a comprehensive induction and mentoring programme. According to Wong (2004), the following are the aims of induction; to solve the problems of loneliness of educators and lack of support; to help educators to improve in the academic standards and vision of the district; and to improve participation by all educators whether entering the profession from traditional or alternative pathways.

Fulton and Lee (2005) stated the following as aims of induction:

- § Improve educator retention: Most novice educators leave the profession and especially leave at-risk schools because of lack of support, a poor professional environment and a feeling of isolation;
- § Accelerate professional learning of new educators: Novice educators can learn skills for teaching and for classroom management at a quicker pace when they have professional support and information from experienced colleagues;
- § Create learning communities of experienced and novice educators: Induction is changing the culture in the school to allow for open observation and professional critiques of practice; and
- § Change the professional culture of a school: Getting all educators and principals involved in new educator induction can change beliefs about students or about teacher capabilities and roles.

Objective of the Study

This research investigated the nature and extent of the induction of secondary school novice educators at Mvudi Circuit, Vhembe District in the Limpopo Province.

METHODOLOGY

The paper was premised on a quantitative research design. The sample in this research paper were fourteen (14) secondary school teachers who have been in the teaching field for one to three years in Mvudi Circuit. The population was purposefully sampled as the researchers were targeting newly appointed educators. Data was collected using questionnaire and analysed using SPSS Version 21.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the issue of whether the teachers were inducted on arrival at the school as shown in Table 1, it was heartening to note that 64.3 percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were inducted. The fact that 21.4 percent of respondents had not received any induction on arrival is indeed cause for concern. This means that more than one fifth of the

teachers are just thrown into the deep end without any assistance to settle into the job. This might result in frustration as the new teachers struggle to settle into a new job on their own without any help. The fact that some teachers were unsure might imply that they did not probably understand the concept of induction.

Table 1: I was inducted on arrival at my institution

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	3	21.4
Agree	6	42.9
Not sure	2	14.3
Disagree	2	14.3
Strongly disagree	1	7.1
Total	14	100

Steyn (2004) also agreed that induction of novice teachers has not received the priority it deserved and that many induction programmes have failed to guide and help beginner educators in their transition into the profession. It is true that the teaching profession has a problem in this regard, and it needs more attention to rescue the novice educators that are struggling without proper induction. How can these teachers do their work properly without induction?

On the issue of whether the teachers benefitted from induction conducted on their arrival, as shown in Table 2, only fifty percent of respondents benefitted. Therefore, fifty percent of respondents never benefitted from induction conducted on arrival. It shows that respondents constituting more than half of the sample either agreed or strongly agreed that they benefitted from induction conducted on their arrival. The fact that fifty percent never benefitted from induction conducted on arrival is indeed cause for concern. How can someone work without being sure about his or her work?

Table 2: I benefitted from induction conducted on my arrival

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	2	14.3
Agree	5	35.7
Not sure	3	21.4
Disagree	3	21.4
Strongly disagree	1	7.1
Total	14	100

In another study done by Keengwe and Adjei-Boateng (2012), some participants expressed misgivings about how new staff orientation or induction was done in their schools citing one respondent who stated, “The orientation received as a beginning teacher was not enough, it was not properly planned.” As mentioned above, some teachers did not benefit from induction conducted on their arrival. It is true that induction or orientation received as a beginner teacher was not enough and not properly planned. That is why 21.4 percent of respondents disagree that they have benefited from induction on their arrival, and 14.3 percent of respondents were not sure whether they have benefitted from induction conducted on their arrival.

Table 3 shows that only sixty-four percent of respondents’ personal needs were met through induction, and this is bad because the other thirty-four percent of respondents’ personal needs were not met. This translates to more than half of teachers being frustrated because their personal needs were not met through induction. It also shows that educators just teach with no any assistance while fourteen percent of respondents are not sure whether their personal needs were met through induction. Without proper induction, learners are not given the necessary education at all. Heyns (2000) offered several possible explanations concerning the personal needs of novice educators. The first challenge faced by novice educators, according to Heyns (2000), is the financial problem because during their days as student educators, they were financially dependent on their parents or sponsors for living expenses, insurance, and transport and health care. It is true that novice educators are now facing the reality of life being independent financially without the support of parents. It can be difficult because some get jobs far away from home and need accommodation and transport, and all that requires finances.

Table 3: My personal needs were met through induction

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	3	21.4
Agree	6	42.9
Not sure	2	14.3
Disagree	2	14.3
Strongly disagree	1	7.1
Total	14	100

Table 4 shows that teachers’ professional needs were not adequately met as 14.3 percent of respondents strongly agree and 35.7 percent of respondents agree. It is a symbol which shows that only half of respondents’ (50%) professional needs were met. The other fifty percent of respondents are in the dark. This translates to half of educators being frustrated because their professional needs were not met through induction. If professional needs are not met, then those educators are in darkness throughout their profession. One of the professional challenges for novice educators was explained by Steyn (2004) that this reality shock stems, in part, from a lack of preparation for the demands of teaching as novices are confronted with unknown learners, staff, policies and procedures and an unknown curriculum and unfamiliar norms and traditions in the classroom and school.

Table 4: Professional needs were met through induction

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	1	14.3
Agree	8	35.7
Not sure	1	21.4
Disagree	3	21.4
Strongly disagree	1	7.1
Total	14	100

From the positive responses of teachers in Table 5, it can be seen that they are being introduced to all school stakeholders like School Management Team, Heads of Department, School Governing Body, and staff members. The percentage shows that 35.7 percent of respondents strongly agree and agree (35.7%) that respondents were introduced. Only 21.4 percent of respondents stated that there was not introduction. It is, however, good because it is not a large number of teachers who are not introduced

Table 5: On my arrival I was introduced to all stakeholders

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	5	37.5
Agree	5	35.7
Not sure	1	7.1
Disagree	3	21.4
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	14	100

to stakeholders, but those groups which were not introduced will not work well. How can new educators work without knowing their seniors? In reality, educators can do well by asking anything from their SMTs, HODs, seniors and other staff members. New teachers must also know the parent representatives (SGB).

Table 6 shows that only 35.7 percent of respondents were inducted in a planned way, but 64.3 percent of respondents were not inducted in a planned way when they arrived at their school. If educators are not inducted in a planned way, researchers assume that those educators would struggle a lot in their profession. A high percentage of 64.3 percent of respondents are in darkness because induction was not done in a planned way. If induction was not done in a planned way, then new educators (28.5%) are frustrated because schools are failing teacher would not be able to teach effectively. Steyn (2004) stated that beginner educators frequently complain that the pre-service preparation had not prepared them for actual teaching and that they lack sufficient knowledge and skills.

Table 6: I was inducted in a planned way when I arrived at my school

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	5	35.7
Not sure	5	35.7
Disagree	3	21.4
Strongly disagree	1	7.1
Total	14	100

Table 7 shows that only 7.1 percent of respondents strongly agree whilst 35.7 percent of respondents agree on this issue; it shows that senior staff members do not mind going to new educators' class and doing observations on their teaching. The new educators are just struggling

Table 7: My seniors do come to my class and do observation on my teaching

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	1	7.1
Agree	5	35.7
Not sure	2	14.3
Disagree	3	21.4
Strongly disagree	3	21.4
Total	14	100

without seniors' assistance. At least 14.3 percent of respondents are not sure, which means that things are not so smooth. On the other hand, 21.4 percent of respondents strongly disagree, meaning that the seniors do not go to teachers' classes to observe their teaching. Educators are just teaching on their own without senior educators' support. This is an indication that senior staff members ignore newly appointed educators. Newly appointed educators can do much better if someone is monitoring their work.

If seniors do observation to the classes, this can motivate teachers to work harder. In agreement with statements above, 42.8 percent of respondents disagree that they are not working well. At least 14.3 percent of respondents are not sure that their seniors observe their teaching. According to Wong (2004), an induction programme is regarded as a way of assisting and supporting a novice educator by an experienced educator at personal/emotional level. The focus on the mentoring system must be to stimulate professional learning by using a variety of approaches, for example, coaching, training, discussion and counseling.

In this case, novice educators must be guided by seniors in everything that takes place at school. It also shows that seniors are not doing observations in novice teacher's classes. No satisfactory support from the seniors is available, in general. To improve this, there must be mentors in each learning area to improve teaching and learning in schools.

Table 8 shows that there is an indication that managers support novice educators because about 78.6 percent and 14.3 percent of respondents strongly agree and agree, respectively, that they receive support from their school managers. Managers are supporting new educators. Only 7.1 percent of respondents were not so sure of whether managers assist them or not. This 7.1 percent of respondents who are not sure about whether they have support or not is

Table 8: I am supported by my school managers

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	2	14.3
Agree	11	78.6
Not sure	1	7.1
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	14	100

not a good indication because it shows that there is a challenge in schools. If managers are failing to give the necessary support, then novice educators will fail to execute their duties. In other words, managers are failing to lay a strong foundation for novice educators (Herbet and Worthy 2001; Podsen and Denmark 2000; Fry 2009; Okumus and Biber 2011).

There is need for school managers to make sure that as part of the preparation process to welcome new educators, they make the required resources available in order to minimize such frustrations. There is also need for school managers to give support to novice educators. The support will add value to the novice educators' performance in classes. It is also the manager's job to see to it that all novice educators are comfortable either in the classroom or at school. Wong (2004: 51) stated that the best strategy to enhance personal and psychological growth and self-esteem is to use peer mentoring. Peer mentoring brings the novice educators (from one school or from different schools) together, thus creating opportunities to network within and across schools.

Table 9 shows that peers are supportive to new educator as 71.4 percent agree and 21.4 percent of respondents strongly agree, respectively. It shows that peers show the way to new educators and are making teaching easier through the support they are giving. Only a minority of 7.1 percent of respondents strongly disagree on peer support. New teachers cannot perform well on their job without peer support. New educators can learn easily if they are copying from peers because peers can have a good influence to the co-workers.

Table 9: I am supported by my peers in my work

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	3	21.4
Agree	10	71.4
Not sure	0	0
Disagree	1	7.1
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	14	100

As seen in Table 10, on the issue of whether teachers knew what was expected of them from the first day of their teaching, fifty percent and 7.1 percent of respondents agree and strongly agree, respectively. This shows that the majority

Table 10: I knew what was expected of me from the first day of my teaching

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Strongly agree	1	7.1
Agree	7	50.0
Not sure	3	21.4
Disagree	2	14.3
Strongly disagree	1	7.1
Total	14	100

of educators do not know what was expected of them from the first day of their teaching. Some educators are just teaching without proper induction and with that in mind, it shows that learners will not benefit out of the teacher. At least 7.1 percent of respondents strongly disagree, showing that they do not know what was expected of them from the first day of their teaching. Learners are at risk because these educators do not know where to start their job from the first day. These teachers resume their duties without the necessary weapons, whereas 21.4 percent of the respondents disagree on this matter. Moreover, 21.4 percent of respondents are not so sure, which shows that they are not working in a supportive environment.

Results from a study by Kempen (2010) show that most of the participants reported lack of orientation with regard to administrative systems, school policies and procedures, and as a result, experienced feelings of uncertainty as to what they are expected to do. This shows that novice educators do not have the knowledge that is expected of them from the first day of their teaching. They are quite confused and never know what to do in the field of teaching.

The study finds out that novice educators were not inducted on arrival at their schools. It shows that novice educators are not properly welcomed and work as strangers at their respective schools. Some novice educators, even though they have received some induction, have not benefitted from the induction conducted on their arrival. This shows that induction was not done properly.

The novice educator's professional and personal needs were not met through induction. All the stakeholders concerned never took into consideration the professional needs of novice educators. Some novice educators were not introduced to all stakeholders, for example, Senior Management Teams (SMTs), Heads of depart-

ments (HOD), School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and the staff. The question that arises is, how can novice educators work with colleagues whom they were not introduced to them? They should know exactly where to get help. Senior staff members were not prepared to come to the novice educator's classes to do observation in this study. Novice educators need to be guided on whether they are doing the right thing or not through lesson observation. Managers and peers were not giving enough support and just left the novice educators to do things on their own, which is very wrong because novice educators need guidance in everything.

CONCLUSION

Novice educators are sometimes overloaded with activities they cannot keep up with. The extent to which novice educators received professional guidance and support in the form of induction at the initial year of teaching is low. The induction experience of novice educators is important in the development of personal and professional skills. Many novice educators report on poor working conditions in schools such as lack of facilities and resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Principals should involve novice educators in the process of identifying and planning for their development needs. In many schools, novice educators are not involved in any planning, whereas it is good for them to be involved. More experienced teachers should facilitate the entry of novice educators into the profession by welcoming them. If they are welcomed, they will be free and be open to seek guidance whatever they need it. Experienced teachers should be able to help novice educators on the issues of curriculum, school manuals and school records as well as on the issue of discipline. This will help nov-

ice educators to adjust and know exactly what it is expected of them.

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