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**Examining the consequences of inadequate induction for
beginning teachers**

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Abstract

Research indicates that many beginning teachers are not experiencing induction that reflects their needs (Sharp, 2005, unpublished manuscript). In addition, poor induction has a large impact on the perceptions beginning teachers have of their own teaching skills and standards, how they feel about their profession and their relationships with school administrators and students. As part of a larger study, beginning teachers from all Queensland government schools were invited to participate in this study. Twenty four beginning teachers participated in an online survey, which was designed to gauge their views of the induction they received in their first year of teaching and to actively examine the perceptions beginning teachers have on their competence as a classroom teacher, based on induction programs they participated in. Further, this paper focuses on the professional consequences for beginning teachers who receive inadequate induction during their first year of teaching, including consideration in leaving the teaching profession due to perceived inadequacies.

This paper looks thematically at the consequences of inadequate induction, from the perspectives of individual teachers. Their stories illuminate the need to ensure that government policies on employee induction are carried out in schools, which would then enable teachers to have positive perceptions and increased confidence in their abilities to carry out their professional duties. The paper concludes with recommendations for schools and Education Departments to better provide support for first year teachers.

Introduction

Many people find the transition between university and teaching difficult to adjust to and this is evidenced through the myriad of reports written, which seek to improve student teacher education at the university level. In order to achieve optimal success in the classroom however, beginning teachers need support that is set in place and delivered through schools,

so that they can be effective teachers. This is important so that beginning teachers can seek support based on their professional and practical needs, rather than a theorised need that they can only have whilst a pre-service teacher. As more and more teachers are leaving the profession after only a few years teaching, there is an increased need to offer an effective support network. This paper focuses on the consequences of inadequate inductions and provides recommendations for the Education Department and schools to offer effective professional support to beginning teachers.

The consequences reported here on inadequate teacher induction are based on the experiences of beginning teachers, who participated in an online survey set up for this research, who are still in the teaching profession. The research is intentionally narrow or bounded, so that teachers were able to express their views on their inductions and the consequences on their current practice. Part of the hypothesis of the greater research conducted on this topic, that is applicable to consequences of inadequate inductions is that this lack of support has negative effects on many aspects in the professional lives of beginning teachers, such as (but not limited to) a stressful classroom environment leading to less effective Behaviour Management; loss of motivation; consideration to and action in leaving the profession. The findings of this research are not intended to be generalisable; however they do provide an insight into this issue of beginning teacher induction, which could be explored with further research.

Focus

Research has revealed (McCormack & Thomas, 2003; Appleton & Kindt, 2002; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Bleach, 2001) that many beginning teachers struggle in their first few years of teaching when not provided with sufficient professional support, effective inductions and mentoring and dealing with the reality of classroom issues, sometimes referred to as 'praxis shock'. The research for this paper focuses specifically on Queensland schools where documents published by the Teachers Board of Registration identify that there are significant negative issues associated with inductions and in retaining beginning teachers in the profession. Participants of the online survey which constituted the data collection assisted in determining that there is the deficit in teacher induction, which is in accordance with published literature and research.

The research in this paper addressed the issue of beginning teacher induction in three ways. Firstly, by analysing the current policy document set out on employee induction. Secondly, a literature review on current research and reports on the topic of support through induction offered to beginning teachers was undertaken. Finally through the conduct of an anonymous online survey where beginning teachers in Queensland were invited to participate, it was determined that the experiences of beginning teachers in relation to receiving a quality induction in their first year of teaching was often inadequate.

Importance of study

For an effective beginning teacher induction to take place, teachers need to be viewed as adult learners in a work place, and treated as such, with much to contribute to professional discussions and the direction of their chosen career. A program that treats beginning teachers as empty vessels to be filled or in an authoritarian manner will likely not succeed in fulfilling the expectations and needs of beginning teachers. It is interesting to note that in a booklet printed by the Board of Teacher Registration, titled *Provisional Registration and Induction*, it devotes only three sentences to beginning teachers who experience no induction (2002, p. 3). Here, it recommends for teachers to approach their Principal (with the booklet, they suggest) to request an induction. With the difficulties many beginning teachers face in gaining permanent employment and the internal politics of schools combined with lack of confidence to approach their Principal, it is unlikely that many beginning teachers would feel able to make this request. Instead, the responsibility should not rest with beginning teachers to request a program of induction, but rather the Education Department, through District Offices and individual schools, should set in place measures to ensure that this important step in a teacher's career is carried out effectively. Research (Urzua, 1999; DeWert, Babinski and Jones, 2003) points out up to fifty per cent of beginning teachers leave the profession within seven years. It is vital then, that this problem of teachers leaving the profession is rectified. This research aims to investigate the impact of inadequate induction on beginning teachers in terms of their feelings of professional competence and career-satisfaction of teachers generally.

Overview of Literature

As teaching has become a more complex occupation in recent years, there is an ever-increasing need to ensure that beginning teachers are sufficiently inducted into their new career. The focus for this is how the employment sites—schools—can support beginning

teachers in the induction process. Whilst universities can provide theoretical underpinnings for teachers to apply; once in the practical setting of the classroom, support mechanisms need to be in place so that beginning teachers can receive adequate professional support. This cohort needs a sustained and quality approach to their induction, tailored to the practical environment they operate within.

The policy on the induction of beginning teachers is clear in its communicating the requirements of schools to ensure an appropriate induction is implemented. It states that, “Education Queensland is committed to ensuring that all employees appointed to new positions receive an induction that is appropriate to their needs and those of the department” (1996, p. 1). It calls on principals to ensure that the process of induction is effective and that the needs of the employee are sufficiently addressed. It does not however, provide a clear manual or program for how principals are to deliver inductions, instead providing general guidelines on content that can be incorporated, as appropriate. Subsequently, even though Education Queensland insists, through policy, that induction is to take place, it does not communicate how this is to occur. Instead it is up to individual schools to facilitate its own program, as deemed appropriate. The checklist outlined in Section 2 of the policy document is vague and is worded in a way that focuses on the attitude of inductees, principals and managers rather than appropriate practise and key characteristics of an induction. It does, however, state that a program must be implemented and calls on District Offices to assist with this, as needed. The overall characteristic of this policy on induction is one of vague guidance that is open to a variety of interpretations.

Recognising that the role of teachers has become a more complex one in recent times, a report published by the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, titled *Welcoming New Teachers*, identifies the need for induction programs to be implemented and to be flexible in catering for the individual needs of beginning teachers, stating “(T)he demands placed on schools and teachers have continued to increase” (1991, p. 2). This report goes on to advocate that the mentoring of a beginning teacher by an experienced teacher is effective and that this opinion was supported by the survey of beginning teachers the Board had conducted as part of broader research. Indeed, a commonality in published research (Bleach, 1999; Urzua, 1999; DeWert et. al., 2003; Gottesman and Jennings, 1994) supports the view that beginning

teachers need to be mentored or have a “buddy” in the form of an experienced teacher in order to make their professional transition into a teacher smooth and effective.

Importance of Induction Programs

There is evidence to suggest that professional support, through effective inductions, is not always provided and that, in fact, many beginning teachers are not receiving the level of support they need to function effectively in their roles. When writing up the findings of his research, Bleach (2001, p. 1) asserted that the induction of beginning teachers and mentoring is often left to the “whim of the individual local education authorities and schools.” Research conducted by the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration found many areas in need of improvement and made numerous recommendations to improve induction for beginning teachers. The report, *Welcoming Teachers*, found that only 44 per cent of beginning teachers had participated in a formal induction program (1991, p. 53). Subsequently, even though many educational experts and studies have found deficiencies in induction programs, there is reluctance on the part of authorities to properly enact policy or practice change, in order to improve the experience, retention and professionalism of beginning teachers.

Identifying the commonly held belief by many within schools and the broader community, Wragg, Haynes, Wragg and Chamberlin (2000, p. 20) write, that “incompetence is tolerated in teaching, but that in other walks of life, those who do not meet required standards are dismissed easily and without compunction.” Having professional support and guidance will assist in ensuring that professional standards are being met. In Fidler and Atton’s (1999) text, a discussion of experiences, difficulties and solutions in dealing with beginning teachers in the school setting takes place. They assert that, “newly appointed staff...are particularly likely to experience a period of poor performance” (1999, p. 117). One way they and others suggest (Bleach, 2001; Britton, Paine, Raizen and Pimm, 2003; Urzua, 1999) to ensure that this period of time is minimised is to have in place an effective induction to support beginning teachers. Parallel to other researchers, Filder and Atton assert the importance and value of mentoring beginning teachers with an experienced teacher.

Professional Support through Inductions for Beginning Teachers

Bleach makes note of the need to support beginning teachers effectively as “(R)esearch shows that newly qualified teachers...have a common fear about having to dive in at the deep

end” (2001, p. v). This text offers some very practical ideas for supporting beginning teachers in their new careers, including many practical and researched ways put forth that serve to provide effective support to beginning teachers. Bleach places a large emphasis on mentoring of beginning teachers as an effective approach to offering a balanced and quality induction program. He is, of course not alone in his call for mentoring to be incorporated as part of an effective induction to support beginning teachers. Fidler and Atton (1999), Urzua (1999) and Gottesman and Jennings (1994) all acknowledge the importance of managers in schools as being vital in the role of supporting and guiding the induction process. Research findings on the necessity of collegial support for a successful induction program has been implemented by Education Queensland, whereby policy states that school principals and or key leaders within the school are required to provide an induction program (Human Resources HR-04-3 Employee Induction, 1996).

Quality collegial support should be an important aspect of an appropriate induction program. The Federal Government commissioned report, *Preparing a Profession* (1998) asserts the importance of having a flexible, appropriate induction program which determines the level of expertise and theoretical knowledge graduating students have, and then builds on this by offering practical and professional support. *Preparing a Profession* acknowledges that, “(V)ery often beginning teachers are placed in difficult, hard-to-staff schools with little if any induction or support” (1998, p. 35). Other comments made in this report, of which beginning teachers were consulted with, raises serious issues about the quality of induction and the vacuum there exists that needs to be filled in ensuring beginning teachers are supported. The report states:

Often they (Beginning Teachers) are employed initially on a casual relief basis—again with little support. Ideally some of the matters covered...(in this report)...would be incorporated in a substantial program of induction while the beginning teacher was deployed in a stable, supportive school. Until and unless such induction can be guaranteed for graduates before they begin fully responsible professional practice, those matters will need to be covered...and we believe that quality induction programs should be available to all beginning teachers (1998, p. 35).

The aspects of induction raised are yet another indication that this research is necessary, relevant, timely and is a topic that needs to be addressed. In order to further investigate the alleged deficiencies in beginning teachers, the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration published a number of reports written by teachers and academics, after conducting research on a variety of aspects that affect beginning teachers, compiled in the text, *Knowledge and Competence for Beginning Teaching* (1994). Whilst, on a whole, not dealing specifically with teacher induction, there are some reports within the text that deal with the difficulties of being a beginning teacher and outcomes are effectively incorporated into the proposed paper. Previous research of the literature analysed on beginning teachers can be used in a similar context. On this issue of perceived deficiencies of beginning teachers in their role, Urzua identifies that “many beginning teachers experience feelings of isolation, inadequacy, and poor self-image” (1999, p. 231). It further explores this isolation and inadequacy by linking it to a statement made by a beginning teacher, “No one told me that other beginners had these problems. I was planning to quit because I thought I was a bad teacher” (1999, p. 231). Therefore it can be seen as important to have networks of beginning teachers who are able to meet and discuss issues pertaining to their jobs. Further, it is apparent that it is important to discuss the expectations that principals or their delegate have of beginning teachers to match their efforts to ensure a quality induction of beginning teachers to the workplace.

In order to gain an insight into how other countries successfully implement induction programs for beginning teachers, *Comprehensive Teacher Induction* (Britton et. al., 2003), provides best-practice examples of offering quality support to beginning teachers. Of significant note is the focus this text places on actual teacher induction once teachers have begun teaching in schools. It takes this approach, rather than to shift focus to the quality of teacher-education programs provided by universities, which so many other papers on similar subjects do. This text, along with others (for example Urzua, 1999) acknowledges, in depth, the need for quality teacher induction as being vital to the career development of teachers.

Darling-Hammond, Chung and Frelow (2002) in a research paper titled *Variation in Teaching Preparation*, surmise that when teachers feel well prepared when they first enter the profession, they are significantly more likely to (among other things) feel positive and competent about the quality of their teaching and have plans to remain in teaching. Through

the conduct of research, the authors found that one way this positive sense of self and teaching is achieved is through a continued model of support (2002, p. 286).

Methodology

A qualitative approach was taken for the data collection component of the research. Specifically, this was completed through online surveys which were then formed into individual case studies. Case study research methodology is widely used in educational research, and as Michael Bassey reports, “(C)ase studies allow generalisations...about an instance... Their peculiar strength lies in their attention to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right” (1999, p. 23). The methodology of case study research can be defined as a qualitative approach “...that provides a detailed account and analysis of one or more cases” (Johnson and Christensen, 2004, p. 376), and also as Bassey describes “...a step to action. They begin in a world of action and contribute to it” (1999, p. 23). Stake, in paraphrasing Lou Smith describes case study research as a “...‘bounded system’, to indicate that we are going to try to figure out that complex things go on within that system. The Case Study tells a story about a bounded system” (Stake, 1997, p. 406). The topic of beginning teachers could encompass a wide range of issues and sub topics; however, by ensuring that a ‘bounded system’ was set in place, and only the issue of professional induction support provided to beginning teachers investigated, then focused outcomes were able to be obtained.

Online Survey

This type of research is not usually conducted through online surveys, as the nature of case study qualitative research is narrative. Rather, data is commonly collected through the interviewing of participants, so that clarification of questions and responses can be obtained. The online survey does fulfill the requirements of the methodology as it enables participants to provide responses beyond simplistic, one word answers. The questions posed required participants to add extra information based on their personal experiences relating to their induction. The narrative responses of the participants, the adding of information to set questions, and provision for participants to include other experiences they felt relevant, ensured the quality of case study research was preserved.

Sturman (1997, p. 64) demonstrates that structured, written surveys are an acceptable manner to conduct a case study. The surveys were analysed as individual case studies, thus ensuring a narrative data analysis and the application of responses to the hypothesis is developed, maintaining a qualitative approach. Louis is in agreement with Sturman on the topic of case study research methodology. She affirms that it is acceptable to use written surveys as a form of data collection in case study research. Louis observes that a holistic approach must be taken, and the way the researcher collects, formulate and analyses data contributes to determining the type of research method, such as qualitative or quantitative, that has been followed (1982, p. 9).

Participant Selection and Description

Collecting data through an online survey ensured the anonymity of participants. In total, twenty-four (24) surveys were included in the research. Recruitment of participants was achieved through existing Education Queensland networks, via an email being sent to Principals of all Queensland state schools requesting they forward an email inviting participation to teachers in their school who had been teaching for five years or less. The research was conducted over a four week period and although a short timeline, this was considered adequate because it gave beginning teachers a defined period to respond within. Participants were recruited from a broad geographical area. It was considered important to ensure that not all participants come from the South-East corner of Queensland, but rather the population of participants was devolved and spread throughout the state, so that beginning teachers from rural, remote, coastal and metropolitan schools were represented in the survey (see figure 1.0).

The criteria for involvement in the online survey were that participants had to be teachers who had entered the teaching profession in the Queensland government school system within the past five years. Participants were required to read the Education Queensland policy, titled *Human Resources HR-04-3 Employee Induction*, agree to the consent form, read the Plain Language Statement, and volunteer approximately thirty minutes of time to complete the survey.

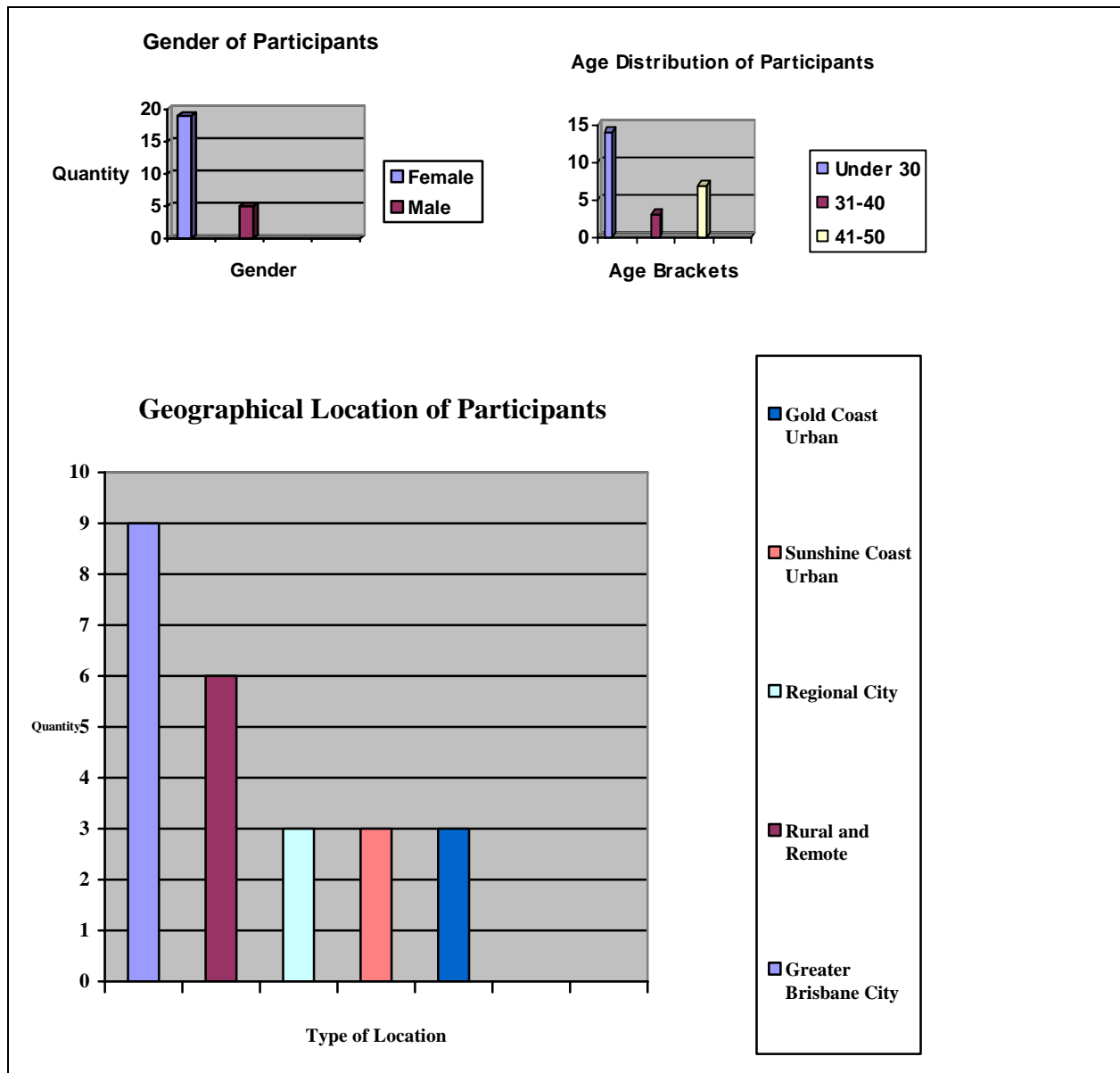


Figure 1.0 Gender, age and geographical location of participants

Results and Analysis

A number of themes emerged when analysing participant responses as part of the broader research conducted. However, for the purposes of this paper, only the themes which are relevant and applicable to the consequences of inadequate inductions will be discussed. It is apparent from the themes that emerged in this research that beginning teachers from many different locations and situations identify similar issues with their induction and their experiences as a beginning teacher generally. Even when not asked specific questions, common themes emerged across subsections resulting in a commonality of experiences encountered by beginning teachers being recorded. They were not restricted within the prescribed subsections of the online survey, but rather fell across several subsections. The

sub-themes which emerged from participant responses were—Collegial Support, Student Effects, Inadequate Induction, Content and Input of Induction, Mentoring, Feedback, Negativity towards the Department of Education and colleagues, and Senior and Experienced teacher roles.

Consequences of no induction

Of the twenty-four participants who responded to the online survey, a third claimed they did not receive an induction at all, based on their reading of the existing policy (see figure 2). This would appear that the professional standards of teachers are not being met and not taken seriously enough to ensure they are met. This lack of induction has negative repercussions for all stakeholders in education and is an issue that needs to be addressed and rectified. A selection of comments from some participants* to illustrate this point is presented here. Krystina writes of the lack of mentoring, “(N)o support was offered to me in my first two years of teaching. No programs or inductions.” Another participant, Kylie indicates that the lack of induction is widespread, and comments “I have taught now in 3 schools and not one has offered a orientation programme. Most things you find out by trial and error.” She further adds, “I am after 5 years still waiting for an induction programme.”

Q. 14 Did the school you were employed in during your first year of teaching ensure that the Education Queensland policy on induction was carried out?

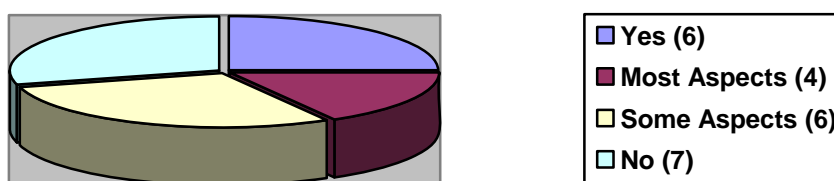


Figure 2 Q.14 Did the school you were employed in during your first year of teaching ensure that the Education Queensland policy on induction was carried out?

The experiences of Cassandra are interesting to illustrate here. Rural teacher, Cassandra, who did not receive an induction, discusses how information about students with special needs could have assisted in her development, and tells of the experiences she found “daunting” and could have assisted in her teaching. On the way her induction could have assisted in her

development, she writes, “(H)ow to deal when Specialists teachers ask you what do you want them to do with a specific child under their guidance. I found this very daunting...” However, Cassandra further explains that she has compensated for lack of induction by asking questions when possible by visiting teachers. She writes, “Due to the small school I was working in I had to learn, and the visiting AVT's and specialists were terrific. I am quite isolated at my present school and I have met some other teachers at Key Teacher Meetings.” Cassandra notes that even though she did compensate for her lack of induction it has still affected her teaching in some ways and openly discusses the difficulty she faced in her first semester of teaching, “It was very hard during my first 6 months and I very nearly threw it in, but my partner was a great support and helped me get through that period...”

Consequences of Inadequate induction

Many participants responded that their lack of, or poor quality, induction has led to their practice being affected negatively, unless they have consciously taken steps to compensate for this. Gold Coast based teacher, Katie’s induction assisted her in a “minimal” way and has instead compensated for her lack of induction by seeking professional development opportunities, “I did receive a brief induction, but I have always been keen to learn more to improve myself as a teacher so I always seek PD opportunities etc. anyway.” Katie draws on her personal motivation to assist her in becoming an effective teacher and to develop professionally.

Rebecca too identifies that an inadequate induction has had a negative effect, and writes that her lack of induction has constrained her professional practice and makes her feel “unprofessional” as a result. Rebecca explains here, “I sometimes feel a bit 'unprofessional' when necessary knowledge is not to hand and I am fumbling around.” On the issue of lack of induction affecting her negatively, Rebecca writes, “(M)any things are discovered by 'accident' or on a needs basis...”

By far more beginning teachers are provided with either no induction or an ineffective induction which does not adequately cater for the myriad of needs a beginning teacher has in their first year of teaching. The effects of this are wide ranging, from negative student learning effects; time consumed with beginning teachers trying to find information themselves with no support structure; to negative feelings towards colleagues, administration and the Education Department generally.

Ann was disenfranchised from her induction as it was “*very boring*” and did not cater to her needs as a professional as it did not adequately deal with the problems she was “*facing in my classroom at that particular school.*” From reading other responses from Ann’s online survey her apparent dissatisfaction with teaching seems to stem from not receiving an adequate induction that taught her coping skills in the classroom. This is backed up by her statement that, “*I’ve felt restricted and stressed with lack of support.*” Still on the topic of the content of inductions, the induction Nicole received was not catered specifically for beginning teachers, but rather for teachers of varying experience but new to the school. She writes, “*(In week 3 or 4 my induction with the Principal started. I am the only first-year teacher but was joined by 3 teachers who were new to the school...*” However, of benefit to Nicole is that she receives strong collegial support which has assisted her in receiving a smooth transition to becoming a teacher. She writes, “*A first-year induction program was practically non-existent. I think that perhaps the Principal expected the HOSES to do something. My HOSES has helped wherever possible and has been very supportive.*”

Commenting that her induction was not effective, Sarah’s situation is different to other participants as she started teaching part way through Term 1, thereby missing some induction, and added with the school’s lack of commitment to organise an effective program, Sarah writes, “*I began at the school part way through Term 1. One induction meeting was held before I arrived. They cancelled the second and discontinued induction meetings after that...*”

Sharon reports that whilst receiving “*most aspects*” of her induction, it was “*not effective*” and the content did not cater for her needs. She writes of her induction it was “*too wishy washy, spread out over too many weeks, I needed some of the information weeks before it was discussed in the induction program.*” She found the induction sessions themselves to be problematic and describes them as, “*sessions were usually very rushed and it was hard to work out what was needed and what wasn’t.*” Lack of or inadequate induction, as the data shows, can negatively impact on the self-worth and or professional-worth feelings of a beginning teacher, and the doubting of their own ability can lead to negative side affects, as identified by some participants. In support of this, Rebecca notes the value of induction program in increasing the confidence of beginning teachers, which can then have a positive

impact on teaching by writing, “*(C)onfidence and effectiveness can benefit even if no other aspect is.*”

Several more participants identified consequences of lack of effective induction in the online survey. Former banker and now Townsville-based teacher, Joel claims that his lack of induction has affected his teaching negatively as it did not provide him with the content he needed, and Joel writes it has affected him negatively due to “*(L)ack of practical skills*” that could have been received from an induction. Mooloolaba teacher, Mark is critical of the induction he received, claiming that knowing how to do menial tasks, such as operating the photocopier does not constitute an adequate induction. He writes of his induction not assisting his development, “*...(T)here was not enough Professional development involved unless one sees working the photocopier as PD...*” Even though the school did not operate an effective induction program, Mark did attend the annual state-wide beginning teachers’ conference in Brisbane and although he had to compensate for lack of induction by finding out a lot of information for himself at the school level, the Beginning Teacher’s Conference was helpful in gaining support of colleagues. “*It meant that I had to work out the important aspects for me in the school. I don’t feel it has negatively affected my professional growth.*” He continues, “*I completed the Beginning Teachers Conference and this gave me access to other teachers across QLD. I also had a mentor which I utilised as often as I was able last year.*” Mark does not go into great depth about his mentor, however it is interesting that he found the mentor experience useful, yet does not consider it to be an effective part of his induction, which could be due to his reading of the induction policy.

Nicole clearly sets high standards for herself and does not allow a lack of induction to impact negatively on her teaching, so while her induction did not assist her professionally and it initially affected her teaching, Nicole has compensated for this as, “*I am self-driven, but would have benefited from some things being explicitly discussed prior to my working it out myself.*” She also adds about this negatively affecting her “*(O)nly temporarily - as I said, I am self-driven so I’ll find my way.*” Nicole seems to need to emphasize that she has not allowed a lack of induction to affect her by working harder to ensure she is not professionally disadvantaged, which can be linked to other comments she makes.

Geographically Isolated Teacher Issues

The need for a quality induction program is even more apparent for beginning teachers in geographically isolated, remote or rural communities. Not only do many of these teachers have to cope with an entirely new living situation and a different culture to what they are accustomed to, they are also embarking on a new career. Starting his career in the remote area of the Torres Strait, former electrician Brett felt that his induction was inadequate. Whilst it covered Torres Strait Islander culture, it did not incorporate professional aspects of induction. He writes, “*(O)ur induction was mainly to do with cultural Torres Strait protocol. There was no induction re: my orientation of Ed Qld's processes and procedures.*” Brett received “*some aspects*” of an induction that were “*somewhat effective*” however Brett does praise the relaxed manner the induction took place. He describes it as being appropriate due to being new to the community and culture, “*(O)ur program was a very relaxed affair. This was good because we were all confused as we were all away from our normal suburban environments (we were all a bit dazed).....*” Brett does mention that his induction was a one-off occurrence that went for a full day (probably the pupil free day before school started), and that follow up occurred in the following way, “*(I)t was two weeks later that my Principal made a faint inquiry as to whether we had completed a form and sent it in. I said that I would check to see if such a form was in my induction kit.*”

Asserting that she did not receive an induction, Cape and Gulf teacher Caroline writes that “*(A)bout three weeks after my probation was over, a deputy came and viewed one of my lessons. She then wrote me a glowing report that included aspects that could not have been witnessed during half an hour.*” Based on no real evidence for receiving this “*glowing report*” Caroline expresses some cynicism in the induction program, which is further compounded by the fact that she had to sign off on induction before it was completed. She identifies that living in an isolated area was very difficult for her and was a situation she struggled to deal with, “*I was in an isolated area and was having a difficult time as it was. I wanted to pass probation and felt I had fulfilled all my obligations even though the principal and deputy had not fulfilled theirs.*” This lack of induction possibly compounded the problems Caroline felt she was having and added to her stress as a beginning teacher. However, after being transferred Caroline sees that some schools do conduct inductions, even if they are overloaded with paperwork, “*I have seen both ends of the spectrum in regards to induction. I had none, but the school where I am now seems to overload beginning teachers with many meetings and piles of paperwork.*”

Behaviour Management and Student Effects

It was identified that there are negative effects and consequences for student learning as a result of lack of induction received by some of the participants. Although not specifically asked about in the online survey, participants identified negative student effects as a by-product of inadequate inductions, thereby recognizing this issue as being important and one which had impacted on their teaching and the managing of student behaviour.

Brendon, who began teaching in a Brisbane school, identified his induction as being “*somewhat effective*”, and notes that he received useful feedback on his professional practice and received strong support from his colleagues. Taking into consideration all these factors result in Brendon seeming to be content in his position. He does mention however that his pre-service teaching experience was “*a very controlled environment, with less behaviour problems, etc as the supervising teacher is generally in the room, therefore many problems are not encountered.*” He identifies that behaviour management is more complex when teaching in a classroom without a supervisor.

Lack of support from experienced colleagues and not receiving an induction has led Krystina to experiencing a large amount of stress, which has had a negative impact on students and student learning, “*I have very little time to teach. I am often extremely stressed that I am very short with the children and feel I do not give them the care and attention they deserve.*” This is a clear demonstration of the negative impact lack of induction can create with teachers and their relationships and interactions with students. Krystina’s openness in her responses creates the understanding that she has reached a point of desperation and her professional needs are clearly not being met. This type of negative effect is also experienced by other teachers. Noting that she finds programming curriculum easy compared to engaging students, it is important to include that Kylie received no induction and has been to more than one school as a beginning teacher. The negative effects of teachers struggling to engage students in prepared curriculum could be addressed if a formal induction system was in place that catered for the needs of teachers. The flow-on effect would mean more meaningful learning experiences for students. Robert’s perception of teaching changed and he finds the teaching environment more stressful than anticipated. He also did not receive any induction program and limited useful feedback. Ann writes that when her induction did not support her in the areas she most needed, it resulted in her feeling stressed and this led to a negative impact on

her students. In her own words, Ann describes that she needed assistance in the classroom and more support, “*(N)eed to assist in the class room, find out where the problems are.*” Ann then adds, “*(L)ack of support and therefore causing stress...this is relayed back to the kids.*” She does acknowledge the positive aspects of her induction and says that her induction supported her teaching as it has “*(G)iven me different aspects and point of views to consider.*” Overall though, and especially given the fact Ann considers her weaknesses to have led to detrimental student effects, her induction needs to have improved greatly in order to cater for her and her students needs. Ann identifies that her lack of induction has constrained her professional development as a teacher.

Consequences of Ineffective Inductions

One third of participants claimed they did not receive an induction at all. This finding is alarming, as it can be determined that large sections of beginning teachers are not receiving the support they need. Data from online survey responses reveal that many beginning teachers face added stress when they do not receive an induction or when they have received an inadequate induction. Their feelings of competency diminish rapidly when left to fend for themselves, rather than being supported through a quality induction program. An added negative result of beginning teachers not receiving an induction, include not being aware of what the expectations of them are, and placing pressure on themselves to meet an expectation that they deem to be held of them. As Ann, a participant of the online survey wrote, she has “*been left to my own devices...I’m struggling and feeling stressed. I feel like I must get everything right, and I should know it all straight away.*”

These perceived deficiencies that beginning teachers hold is also consolidated by the findings of the literature review, whereby it has been determined that when teachers are unaware of their responsibilities and expectations it is usually the result of not receiving an induction, and the feelings of inadequacy increase. Other wide ranging effects from no induction or an inadequate induction include, negative student learning effects; time consumed with beginning teachers trying to find information themselves with no support structure; negative feelings towards colleagues, administration and the Department of Education. The data has clearly shown that lack of induction impacts on self-worth and the professional-worth feelings of beginning teachers and the doubting of their own ability can lead to negative side effects. This is demonstrated through this online survey response received from Krystina, “*I have very little time to teach. I am often extremely stressed that I am very short with the*

children, and feel I do not give them the care and attention they deserve.” In this case, and others as identified by participants, it can be determined that not receiving an induction has resulted in harmful outcomes as it has negatively impacted on students and their learning in terms of engaging and forming positive relationships with them.

Findings and Discussion

The research data has shown that those participants who did receive adequate inductions are more happy and content and feel more professionally equipped to deal with their roles as a teacher, than those who did not. They also have a lot more confidence in their abilities. Participants who did not receive an induction hold a lot of self-doubt as to their teaching ability. Whilst there is no proof that these participants lack teaching ability, the feeling that they do impacts negatively on their teaching. Support of colleagues has emerged as an important aspect of beginning teacher professional development. Whether as a formalised program of mentoring or by teachers compensating for lack of induction, this collegial support has crossed all subsections of the online survey to emerge as playing a critical role in the perception beginning teachers have of their own professional practice and their ability to cope with the demands teaching brings. By far more beginning teachers who responded to the online survey have set up informal mentoring networks for themselves rather than participating in a formal program. They identify that they are not receiving an adequate induction that fulfils their needs as beginning teachers, and have had to locate their own support in order to fill gaps and deficits. Overwhelmingly, the data gathered in this research has shown that participants received an inadequate induction, ranging from no induction received to a minimal standard of induction with no relevance to the needs of beginning teachers in the classroom or professionally.

Some schools put a lot of effort into the induction of beginning teachers, and consider it an important part of their responsibilities to this cohort. Groundwater-Smith et al write that some Queensland schools have adopted mentoring programs (1998, p. 148-9), however, these schools and examples of best practice models are too far in the minority and action needs to be taken to see that this is redressed so that all beginning teachers are exposed to an effective induction program in their first year of teaching that adequately caters to their needs as classroom teachers and professionals. Themes that emerged throughout the research process consistently showed a deficit in the provision and quality of induction programs delivered to beginning teachers.

Evidence from all methods of data collection, including the literature review, case studies created from online surveys and policy, indicate that the induction of beginning teachers is important. The research findings from literature and case studies point to the positive effects of a good quality induction as being the best way to support beginning teachers and the data has pointed out numerous benefits of this support of beginning teachers. Those participants who did receive an induction are far more content and satisfied with teaching, are aware of their responsibilities, know who they can approach for assistance and are confident in their teaching abilities, than those who did not. This finding has been consistent across literature and the case study. Therefore, it is necessary that current practices are altered to ensure that all beginning teachers receive the same level of support, thereby standardising the induction of beginning teachers in Queensland schools. As pointed out in, *Preparing a Profession* (1998), graduates need to be supported and at this stage the implementation of Queensland induction policies and subsequent procedures do not adhere to the advice of the Australian Council of Deans of Education on a state-wide scale. Most significantly, the advice not being adhered to is the support of beginning teachers through induction.

...incorporated into a substantial program of induction while the beginning teacher was deployed in a stable, supportive school...remains much that can only be learnt during the period of beginning teaching, and we believe that quality induction programs should be available to all beginning teachers (1998, p. 35).

Recommendations

In total, seven recommendations were made for action as a result of the research findings. This paper will not address them as they do not relate directly to the consequences of inadequate induction, but rather have all been constructed as they have been identified as being important and having an impact on beginning teachers, usually due to inadequate inductions. The seven recommendations called for changes to be made in mentoring options, increase in pre-service practical experiences, enhancing the role of experienced teachers in induction programs, support provided to school for induction and accountability of schools in delivering induction programs, induction programs to be set up for mid-year graduates, a review of the current policy and finally a review of the content of induction programs to increase flexibility and relevance to beginning teachers.

Conclusion

Many participants described that their lack of induction led them to struggle with the demands of being a classroom teacher. As one participant wrote in the online survey, “*I expected more support. I’ve been left to my own devices...I’m struggling and feeling stressed.*” It has become apparent over the course of the research that indeed there are deficits in the induction and professional support offered to beginning teachers. With high rates of teachers leaving the profession after only a few years of teaching, it is vital that all beginning teachers are appropriately supported in their first year of teaching. This is an important issue that needs to be addressed if quality teachers are to be retained.

Data has repeatedly demonstrated that when beginning teachers are inducted properly the flow-on student effects are positive, as teachers feel confident about their teaching, and they are more likely to have an accurate view of the expectations placed on them. The participating beginning teachers who responded that they did receive an adequate induction are far more likely to have feelings of high satisfaction in their position. It has been demonstrated that in states where policy changes have occurred, success has been achieved (Illingworth, 2004). A comprehensive and adequate induction needs to be provided to *all* beginning teachers, regardless of locality, teaching role and teaching status—contract or permanent.

It is evident from the findings of this research, that the policy written and set in place to ensure the professional development of beginning teachers through a quality induction program is not being enacted. Data that has been analysed as part of this research has drawn attention to the necessity of having an induction program in place that caters for the professional needs of beginning teachers. Quality inductions can not only ensure the professional needs of teachers are being met, but that quality teachers are being retained in the profession.

*pseudonyms have been used for all participants

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