

A comparative study of beginning teacher induction in Malaysia and Victoria (Australia): A review of the literature.

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Effective beginning teacher induction program is seen by many scholars as a vital support system for beginning teachers to negotiate the early years of their careers, which are characterized by many trials. This paper attempts to explore the beginning teacher induction practices in Malaysia and the jurisdiction of Victoria, Australia. The paper focuses on basic components of the induction programs and its unique features. Method used for this study is library research. The paper starts with history and definition of beginning teacher induction before discussing the challenges that beginning teachers endure in their early days. The paper then examines the beginning teacher induction programs in Malaysia and jurisdiction of Victoria, Australia. Finally, a comparison between Malaysian and Victorian induction programs are highlighted.

Keywords: Beginning teacher, beginning teacher induction program, Malaysia, Australia, Victoria

Introduction

In a globalised world, many countries around the world undertook some major transformations in their education systems as they entered the twenty-first century. One of the transformation is the introduction of induction program for beginning teachers. Over the last forty years, numerous studies were done by scholars across the globe on beginning teacher induction program from many perspectives. Today, many countries require beginning teachers to successfully complete an induction period before gaining full entry into teaching profession as a mean of ensuring and retaining a high quality teaching workforce (Ingvarson et al., 2014). There are many models of induction programs used around the globe to help acclimate beginning teachers into their new settings and roles.

First year in teaching is very complex as the challenges faced by beginning teachers are numerous (Ensign & Woods, 2016). Regardless of how good pre-service teacher education program has been, teachers in their first year face numerous complex problems (Moir & Gless, 2001). It is apparent that beginning teachers walk into a world full of challenges as they join teaching profession. Smith and Sela (2005) stated that pre-service teacher education program does not prepare beginning teachers for the complex reality they

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encounter in their first years of teaching. Even with an excellent pre-service program there are things that can only be learned on the job. Feiman-Nemser (2001) asserted that beginning teachers have to teach and learn to teach at the same time. Darling-Hammond (2010) stated that it is widely accepted that beginning teachers need support during their first few years of teaching.

Assisting beginning teachers in their development towards becoming competent professionals is vital in current education system. There is a consensus globally among scholars indicating excellent beginning teacher induction programs support beginning teachers to attain a high standard of professional practice (McCormack & Thomas, 2003). Hudson and Beutel (2007) reported that there is evidence suggesting that well-planned induction programs can assist beginning teachers to make successful transition into teaching profession. Wonacott (2002) posited that a high-quality induction program guarantees that beginning teachers learn desirable lessons from their early teaching experiences.

Malaysia stands out among other countries in the world with its multi-racial population, practising various religions and cultures. Victoria share a similar distinct of having one of the most diverse population among multicultural nature of Australian society. Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) point out that teachers today face multicultural students and they are required to serve all students equally. According to Lindgren (2005) beginning teachers are expected to independently organize and carry out their work while simultaneously adapt to the local culture and expectations of the school. Beginning teachers of a multicultural society need to be supported with strategies aimed to meet the challenges of teaching in a multiracial society. To meet these demands, Malaysia and jurisdiction of Victoria have designed comprehensive induction programs to support their beginning teachers with the aim of improving beginning teacher's practice and increasing student achievements.

In this paper, we attempt to accomplish four major purposes. First, the paper offers a brief history and definition of beginning teacher induction program. Secondly, the paper focuses on challenges faced by beginning teachers in teaching profession. Thirdly, the paper examines the beginning teacher induction programs in Malaysia and the jurisdiction of Victoria. Finally, this paper concludes by highlighting the comparison of beginning teacher induction programs in Malaysia and Victoria. The paper would offer some insight on the existing beginning teacher induction programs in Malaysia and Victoria, Australia.

Method

For the review, library research method was used. George (2008) describes library research method as identifying and locating sources that provide factual information and expert opinion on a research question. Data for the study comes from document analysis and literature review of the induction program practices held on a variety of library databases. Descriptions of beginning teacher induction programs in electronic article, hand-search studies, reports from major education database and teacher education journals such as ERIC, Scopus, ProQuest, Sage, Emerald and Taylor Francis were searched. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance to the study. The criteria for including in the study depend on the variables addressed. We used comparative analysis to examine the beginning teacher induction programs in Malaysia and jurisdiction of Victoria, Australia.

Beginning teacher induction history and definition

Beginning teacher induction has been described and discussed since the 1950s in USA (Serpell, 2000). It was long assumed that pre-service teacher preparation programs carried

the burden of ensuring that beginning teachers are well qualified to teach when they complete their pre-service teacher preparation programs. Since the 1980s, scholars have come to realize that pre-service programs are weak interventions when compared with on-the-job experience (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Interest in beginning teacher induction appeared to gain momentum in the mid-1980s and have continued to evolve since (Villani, 2009). Early supplementary-style programs concentrated on getting beginning teachers to be familiar with the “nuts and bolts” of their first teaching assignments. Over the last thirty years, extensive reform has taken place in beginning teacher induction programs (Ingersoll, 2012).

Induction phase are often reported as being a process or a specific stage in teacher development (Totterdell et al., 2008). Feiman-Nemser (2010) viewed induction period as development phase in a teacher’s lifecycle as well as a socialisation phase. According to Wong (2005), the beginning teacher induction is a highly organised and comprehensive form of staff development which involves many people and numerous components. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) define beginning teacher induction as a collective of programs involving orientation, support and guidance for beginning teachers. Beginning teacher induction in Malaysia is defined as a structured learning program to support the development of teacher professionalism to enhance teacher competency in career (Bahagian Pendidikan Guru, 2010). Kearney (2013), a leader in research on beginning teacher induction program in Australia defines beginning teacher induction as the primary phase in a continuum of professional development leading to the teacher’s full integration into a professional community of practice and continuing professional learning throughout their career.

Challenges of beginning teachers

For decades, education researchers and reformers have called attention to the challenges encountered by beginning teachers in school. Having to cope with myriad of tasks and complexities of teaching has long been recognized as a challenge for beginning teachers. It is universally recognised that being a beginning teacher is difficult (Kelly, Reushle, Chakrabarty & Kinnane, 2014). The challenges faced by beginning teachers are not uniform and vary depending on the school, district and the region (Fry & Anderson, 2011). Shayshon and Popper-Giveon (2016) found in their study that beginning teachers feel like strangers at their school as they are unfamiliar with the school’s norm, routine and culture.

Scholars around the globe uniformly agree that being a beginning teacher is challenging. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) viewed the initiation of beginning teachers into teaching profession as akin to a “trial by fire”, “sink or swim” or “boot camp experience”. Lindgren (2005) asserts that classroom reality in school can differ greatly from the pre-service training even with effective pre-service teacher preparation program. Murshidi, Konting, Elias and Fooi (2006) claim that the reality of school based teaching differs from beginning teachers’ expectations and this might induce the feeling of shock among them. There are abundant of accounts about difficulties faced by Australian beginning teachers (McCluskey, Sim & Johnson, 2011). Commonly encountered issues by beginning teachers are high expectations combined with entry shock, discipline and behaviour management issues, and relations with other staff and administrators (Fetherston & Lummis, 2012).

In any organisation being a new employee is always difficult. The difficulty is obvious in teaching profession as beginning teachers assume the full pedagogical and legal responsibility of their role from the very first day (Tynjälä & Heikkinen, 2011). Beginning teachers face imminent challenges in adjusting to full-time teaching, managing classrooms, establishing their professional identity and negotiating relationships with colleagues (Ewing & Smith, 2003). When beginning teachers join teaching profession, they bring with them new skills and techniques, enthusiasm and strong desire to make a difference in classroom.

However, beginning teachers have to adjust to teaching environment in school and navigate the rituals and norms of the staffroom culture (Ewing & Smith, 2003).

Many beginning teachers find the transition from being a pre-service teacher to in-service teacher overwhelming due to unrealistic demands imposed on beginning teachers. Pre-service teachers graduating from teaching institutions walk into school with the same responsibilities as more experienced teachers in the school (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The OECD's TALIS 2008 results showed that beginning teachers and experienced teachers have similar workload across most participating countries (Ben, Andrés & Steffen, 2012). First-year teachers assume responsibilities similar to those of experienced teachers while learning the job although they possess only limited experience and have undergone little preparation (Shoffner, 2011). In similar vein, Senom, Zakaria and Shah (2013) claim beginning teachers in Malaysia have the same responsibilities as of a teacher with many years of service. Senom, Zakaria and Shah (2013) further argue that beginning teachers in Malaysia even assume the role as panel head of subjects.

Beginning teacher induction programs in Malaysia and Australia (Victoria)

As beginning teachers walk into school they find themselves being placed in unique position as unlike the graduates of other professions, beginning teachers are required to assume the full responsibility of their role from day one. Beginning teachers need help as they have so many distractions and demands. Many experienced teachers view their first year as one of the most challenging year of their career (Hudson, Beutel & Hudson, (2009). An induction program is designed to provide the support required by beginning teacher to ensure smooth transition into teaching profession. Jackson and Davis (2000) stated that beginning teacher induction program is as significant as a pre-service teacher education program. Induction program is viewed as lifeline to encourage “more swimming” and “less sinking” among beginning teachers (Britton, Raizen, Paine & Huntley, 2000).

Malaysia

In Malaysia, teaching profession has undergone tremendous changes and had become the profession of choice for many (Khairani & Ab Razak, 2010). Teaching had been long viewed as a highly respected profession in Malaysia with a prescribed stable and long career path. Entering the world of high expectations of twenty-first century, Malaysia is striving hard to provide global class education for its citizens. High quality educational system is necessary in Malaysia for its citizens to compete in a globalised world. Hence, the need for high quality teaching has become imperative (Goh, 2012). The Education Ministry of Malaysia implemented a comprehensive beginning teacher induction program as of late year 2010 with the aim of increasing the quality of teachers in Malaysia.

Assuming the role of beginning teacher within the culture of the school is no easy task (Ensign & Woods, 2016). The Education Ministry of Malaysia acknowledged this fact and designed a comprehensive beginning teacher induction program named New Teacher Development Program to support beginning teachers in Malaysia throughout their first year. Beginning teachers will undergo the program with the objective of inducing beginning teachers with excellent work culture and gearing them towards performing tasks and responsibilities more systematically. The program is mandated for all beginning teachers in Malaysia and it focuses on Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Beginning teacher induction in Malaysia is responsibility of the Ministry of Education, State Department of Education, District Department of Education and school. Beginning teacher induction in Malaysia is school based, schools need to organise the

program in accordance with Beginning Teacher Induction Module prepared by the Ministry of Education. The schools are supervised by the State Department of Education and District Department of Education to ensure the program is well implemented. Schools are required to form beginning teacher induction committee under the leadership of the principal to systematically implement the program. The induction program outlines four key components which are orientation, mentoring, professional development and, evaluation and assessment. The program commences upon the beginning teacher joins the school and runs for a year. Orientation will be conducted for the first three months while mentoring and professional development activities will occur throughout the first year. The orientation phase is designed to assist beginning teachers in adapting to the environment and working culture of the school. This phase is viewed as a strategy to formally launch a beginning teacher's career into teaching profession. During the orientation phase, beginning teachers will be exposed to day to day task, file management and teaching responsibilities.

Mentoring by experienced teachers is a vital support system within the Malaysian beginning teacher induction program. Beginning teachers are mentored by experienced teachers teaching the same subject. Weekly mentoring meetings takes place with two teaching periods in mentee and mentor teaching timetable is allocated for formal mentoring. Mentoring is also done informally outside allocated time according to the beginning teachers' need. Mentor teachers are selected by school administration and the main task of mentor teacher is to coach and guide beginning teacher on professional conduct and teacher competency. Mentor teachers also assist in the socialisation process of beginning teacher into the school culture and develop self-confidence in beginning teacher.

The professional development is another prominent support system of Malaysian beginning teacher induction program. This support system promotes activities that contribute towards beginning teacher professional learning and provides opportunities for beginning teachers to improve their teaching practice. Beginning teachers are given professional training on pedagogical content knowledge, teaching skills and classroom management skills.

Evaluation and assessment is viewed as an important mechanism in measuring beginning teacher's career progression in Malaysian induction program. Formative evaluations and assessments are conducted periodically based on evidence gathered in beginning teacher's portfolio. Appraisals are conducted within the induction period by mentor teacher and school administrators using appraisal forms provided by the Ministry of Education. At the end of the induction program, beginning teacher's portfolio will be used as evidence in conforming beginning teacher to become a qualified teacher. Beginning teacher who satisfy all conditions will become a full-fledged qualified teacher with permanent job.

Victoria (Australia)

The call for effective beginning teacher induction in Australia rose to prominence in the 1990s (Kearney, 2016; Ramsey, 2000). Beginning teacher induction policies across Australia vary in regard to jurisdiction with wide variation in the quality of induction programs. In Australia, each of the education authorities in the various jurisdictions have their own specific policies and procedures for inducting beginning teachers into the profession. The beginning teacher induction programs in Australia are comprehensive as beginning teachers' needs are fully addressed (Li & Zhang, 2015).

In Victoria, induction program is school-based with jurisdiction's support and guidelines. Victoria views its beginning teacher induction program as the earliest stage within the continuum of professional learning. In Victoria, one-year induction program is mandated for all beginning teachers. The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) which was established

in 2002, is the authority for the regulation of the teaching profession in Victoria. Program for Supporting Provisionally Registered Teachers is implemented in Victoria to support beginning teachers in their first year. Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) supports and monitors the induction of beginning teachers from provisional registration to full registration through an evidence-based recommendation process.

The key components of Victorian induction program are orientation, mentoring, buddy support, feedback, professional development and assessment. The Victorian induction program starts with pre-service orientation which includes welcome and preparation phase. Pre-service orientation takes place before beginning teachers commence teaching and includes a welcome pack which contains information about the school and important policies. It focuses on welcoming beginning teacher into the school community and on the activities to support beginning teachers' transition into the school. In-service orientation occurs during the first term of employment. This phase focuses on supporting beginning teachers to develop their teaching practices and forming the base for further growth. Beginning teacher will be introduced to a buddy during orientation and the buddy will be the person who will guide and support beginning teacher with orientation to the school and the profession. The buddy system provides opportunities for sharing ideas between beginning teachers and their buddy.

In Victoria, mentoring is vital strategy in guiding beginning Victorian teacher to achieve full registration. Experienced teachers provide beginning teachers access to feedback on improving practice and engage in professional discussions. Mentor teachers support beginning teachers by providing training on the skills required to be positioned at a professional competency. Mentor teacher guide the beginning teacher assigned to them through the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration process during the first year of appointment as beginning teachers build their evidence base. Professional development is another important component in Victorian induction program. It focuses on high quality professional learning for beginning teachers to develop the skills and knowledge which is central to improving student learning.

Principal will assess the evidence developed by the beginning teacher in determining granting full registration. The principal will grant full registration when the beginning teacher achieve satisfactory outcome and meets the standards of professional practice of Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). Beginning teachers are provided with 5% reduced teaching load in their first year of teaching to allow them to participate in the induction activities and work their way towards full registration. Victoria views it's beginning teacher induction program as able to support Victorian beginning teachers in their transition into professional teaching, provide professional learning opportunity, maximising chances of teacher retention and guarantying quality educational experience for all students.

Comparison of Malaysia and Australia (Victoria) beginning teacher induction programs

Beginning teacher induction program is designed to ease beginning teachers transition from their pre-service teacher education program to become professional teachers. Induction program generally serve as a bridge between pre-service teacher education program and in-service teaching and particularly aim at easing the transition of beginning teachers into the profession (Haim & Amdur, 2016). Effective beginning teacher induction programs is viewed by many researchers as solution in facilitating and easing the transition from pre-service teacher to in-service teacher with the intent of improving student learning (Cherubini, 2008).

Much attention has been placed on induction programs in Malaysia and Australia in recent years with both countries posing a relatively strong teaching profession. There is now

pressing challenges to promote high quality teaching in every Malaysian and Australian classrooms. Malaysia and Victoria deploy comprehensive induction programs in which all beginning teachers take part for at least a year. Malaysia and Victoria possess similarity as both induction model use orientation, mentoring, professional development and assessment as primary beginning teacher induction components.

In Australia, each of the education authorities in the various jurisdictions have their own specific policies and procedures to induct beginning teachers into the profession. By contrast, Malaysia has standardized the beginning teacher induction throughout the nation by setting national guidelines on beginning teacher induction for all schools. Having a nationwide induction program allows the Education Ministry of Malaysia to systematically implement the induction program and oversee the quality of the program.

Since the 1990s, school based teacher induction has become an important trend in Australia (Li & Zhang, 2015). Beginning teacher induction in Australia is primarily the responsibility of each school, with state education departments providing some resources to support the transition (Hudson, Beutel & Hudson, 2009). Induction in Victoria is school-based with Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) providing support and guidelines to the Victorian schools. Likewise, Malaysia's beginning teacher induction program is also school based and this program is supported and guided by the Education Ministry of Malaysia.

According to Kane and Francis (2013), beginning teacher induction program typically includes some form of orientation, mentoring and professional learning opportunities for beginning teachers. Malaysian beginning teacher induction program is a comprehensive induction program and similar to Ontario's world class beginning teacher induction program. The program includes four keys components which are orientation, mentoring, professional development and, evaluation and assessment. In the state of Victoria, the key components of induction program are orientation, mentoring, buddy support, feedback and professional development.

In Victoria, beginning teacher orientation occurs in two phases, pre-service orientation and in-service orientation. Pre-service orientation in Victoria allows Victorian beginning teachers to start off on the right foot. This program ensures beginning teachers feel supported on the first day of school because they've had a chance to meet other teachers and find out how the school operates. Whereas in Malaysia, orientation program only starts after beginning teacher joins the profession. Victoria also possess buddy support system which is not found in Malaysia. The buddy support system assists Victorian beginning teachers in adapting to the profession and provide opportunity for sharing ideas.

In the last decades, mentoring program had become the most dominant component of beginning teacher induction (Strong, 2009). In Australia, mentoring is universally practiced throughout the country and is seen as a critical component of induction. Mentoring by experienced teachers is a key component in Victorian and Malaysian beginning teacher induction programs. Beginning teachers are mentored by experienced teachers to achieve the targeted competency. Ingvarsen et al. (2007) reported that 84% of the beginning teachers in Australia stated that they had made substantial improvements in their classroom teaching as a result of guidance and feedback from their mentors and other colleagues.

The professional development is another component shared by Malaysian and Victorian beginning teacher induction programs. Beginning teachers in Malaysia and Victoria are provided with high quality professional learning to develop knowledge and skill. Evaluations and assessments component can be found in Malaysian and Victorian induction programs. In both induction programs, this component involves evidence gathering and appraisals are conducted at the end of induction period. Beginning teachers in Malaysia who successfully complete the induction program is confirmed as permanent teacher and in Victoria successful completion of the program grants beginning teacher with full registration.

Another important aspect in beginning teacher induction program is reduced teaching load. Many countries such as Singapore, New Zealand and Shanghai provide their beginning teachers with reduced workload to enable beginning teachers to participate effectively in the induction program. Beginning Australian teachers are assigned to reduced teaching loads (McKenzie et al., 2014). Victorian beginning teachers are provided with 5% reduced teaching load in their first year of teaching. Reduced teaching load enable Victorian beginning teacher to cope better with the demands of teaching profession and work their way towards full registration. In contrast, beginning teachers in Malaysia are not provided with reduced teaching load. Beginning teacher in Malaysia share similar workload and responsibility as their experienced colleagues.

Conclusion

Teaching is comparable to skill or craft based occupations as learning to teach is a developmental process, that can never be done perfectly and one can always improve. Moir and Gless (2001) posited that the art of teaching is a profession that is difficult to master, especially in the first year of teaching. Induction help beginning teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice and develop effective teaching skills. Saphier and Durkin (2011) argued that beginning teachers learn their craft in the schools and not in initial teacher preparation program. They learn it quickly and achieve proficiency only when well supported. Research by scholars suggested that comprehensive induction programs can make a difference in beginning teacher's teaching practices (Breux & Wong, 2003). It has been well established that induction programs provide effective support for beginning teachers when these programs are successfully implemented (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Hudson, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Although there is no universal best practice in beginning teacher induction, there are many programs around the world which are well planned and executed such as in Singapore, Shanghai (China), Ontario (Canada), New Zealand and California (USA). Effective beginning teacher induction program can produce effective classroom practitioner and guarantee a quality educational experience for all students. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) claim that beginning teachers who participate in effective induction program demonstrate successful classroom management and possess better teaching skill.

When considering best practice in terms of beginning teacher induction programs it is wise to take into consideration the strategies and components found in world famous induction programs. A crucial aspect that should be looked into in designing effective beginning teacher induction is the beginning teacher's individual needs. DeAngelis, Wall and Che (2013) argued that a targeted and tailored induction approach based on beginning teachers' needs would be more beneficial, as opposed to the common one size fits all approach. California's world renown California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) support their beginning teachers with an Individualized Induction Plan (IIP) to address beginning teachers' needs during their induction period.

The mentoring system should also be pondered in designing effective induction program. Most countries practice one-on-one mentoring of a beginning teacher by an experienced teacher. However, this practice often fails due lack of mentor training or unfitting match (Johnson & Kardos, 2005). Shanghai's world class induction program offers a solution to this problem by providing its beginning teachers with multiple mentors. In this program a protégé has a network of mentors, each providing different functions (Higgins & Kram, 2001). Multiple mentors practice provide platform for mentors and protégés to deal with professional as well as cultural issues more dynamically.

Ganser (1999) points out that beginning teachers' greatest challenges were the demands of clerical work and heavy teaching loads. Clearly, reduced workload and responsibility is vital to provide beginning teachers sufficient time to participate in beginning teacher induction program and to weather the transition shock into teaching profession. Scholars find in their research that lighten teaching load makes the beginning teacher's job easier and enable them to have the opportunity to "learn to teach" (Cohen, 2010). Hudson, Beutel and Hudson (2009) reported in their study that in Australia educationalist have called for reduced teaching loads for beginning teachers. New Zealand's Advice and Guidance (AG) program is a good example where beginning teachers are provided 20% reduction in teaching load to participate effectively in the program (Wong, Britton & Ganser, 2005).

Culture of shared responsibility in school promotes all teachers to give a helping hand to the need of beginning teacher. Goh and Wong (2014) reported that beginning teachers value the importance of creating friendship and mentors with their colleagues in the school. Long et al. (2012) ideally point out beginning teachers rely upon their connections with other teachers to survive in their beginning years. Beginning teachers should be incorporated into a network of relationships with colleagues to support their growth and continued learning (Carroll, 2005). Collegial support system found in New South Wales induction program is a great example. Beginning New South Wales teachers are offered collegial support, in which experience colleagues guide beginning teachers in school-related issues and share how to teach strategies. Christensen (2013) found that beginning teachers need collegial support in order to successfully navigate induction phase.

The first year of teaching is an important phase in any teacher's professional growth. It catalyses a lasting commitment to effective teaching as successful early experiences instill confidence in beginning teachers to face the challenges in teaching profession. Murshidi, Konting, Elias and Fooi (2006) explained that without proper support system beginning teachers may feel personally insecure, lack of confidence and leadership. These negative feelings may contribute towards beginning teachers' ineffectiveness in teaching, regardless of how strong the pre-service preparation has been. Effective and comprehensive beginning teacher induction program is critical to develop highly competent teachers who inspire their students to learn.

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