

Chapter 70

Role of Educational Leaders in Supporting Beginning Teachers in Al Ain Schools in the UAE

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ABSTRACT

This chapter studied the current practices of the principals in Al-Ain school district (in UAE) in supporting their novice teachers in their first years of teaching. It aimed at drawing attention to the urgent need for an effective principal who knows the important role he plays, especially with the newly appointed teachers. The study used a literature review to establish a good base of theoretical ideas about the effective role of principals in supporting novice teachers in their first years of teaching. The importance of induction program and its goals and benefits were tackled as well, in addition to the main aspects of the support provided. Moreover, the conceptual framework of the study discussed the methodology by describing the qualitative and quantitative methods used to gather data. The population and the sample, data analysis and discussion, conclusion and recommendations were presented too. Twenty principals and 30 teachers of public and private schools participated in answering a questionnaire. Some of them were also interviewed.

INTRODUCTION

Principal support of new teachers has been cited as one of the primary factors that influences both general and special education teachers' retention in the profession. However, principal leadership is a critical component of creating environments that support new teachers to meet the complex and diverse needs of their students (Correa & Wagner, 2011). Principals should work on having an effective school-based induction activities to provide all novice teachers with the induction they need.

Novice teachers may face some obstacles which might cause stress, anxiety and lack of self-assurance (Saenz-Lopez, Almagro, & Ibanez, 2011). Therefore, schools should implement an individual structured program to support the beginning.

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A principal's role in the induction of novice teachers is multifaceted. Findings from several research studies, such as Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2006; Correa & Wagner, 2011) suggest that building administrators who are effective in supporting novice teachers promotes a positive school climate, serves as an instructional leaders, and actively supports induction and mentoring programs.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A beginning teacher is a person who has been hired to work in a new environment with people he/she does not know. The new appointed teacher goes through a period of transition from being a student to into becoming a teacher. In such a case, beginning teachers need supervision and support to adjust to their new roles. Moreover, being exposed to new policies, and untried materials, gives the new teachers the feeling of being lost. It is no wonder that some of the new teachers leave their jobs simply because they are left to "sink or swim" and of course many sink and leave to feel better. However, this paper highlights the importance of the principal's role in supporting novice teachers in Al-Ain in the UAE.

Research Questions

This paper answers the following questions:

1. What are the present practices of principals in Al-Ain schools in supporting their beginning teachers?
2. How can the educational leaders develop these practices to have the best induction program for their beginning teachers?
3. What needs would the new appointed teachers in Al-Ain district, have and what would they expect from an effective school-based induction program?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Around 50% of teachers who remain in education field leave their profession after five years (Evans, 2008). On the other hand, different reports indicate that 25%-50% of beginning teachers resign during their first three years of teaching (Voke, 2002; NCES, 1999). Other studies showed that it is within the first five years of teaching; approximately half of the teachers will leave the occupation (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Murnane et. al, 1991). Novice teachers usually face many difficulties in the profession. In a study for Veenman (1984) the perceived problems of beginning teachers were classified into eight kinds of problems; they are 1) classroom discipline, 2) student motivation, 3) dealing with individual differences, 4) assessment of student work, 5) relationships with parents, 6) organization of class work, 7) inadequate instructional resources, and 8) dealing with problems of individual students. Moreover, Corbell (2008), stated that there are ten factors affect the beginning teachers' perceptions of success, such as, Mentor Support, Colleague Support, Administration Support, Classroom Management, Student Success, Instructional Resources, Assignment and Workload, Parental Contacts, Satisfaction, and Commitment. However, teachers' success can be ensured by providing them with a comprehensive, coherent professional development program (Wong, 2004).

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