Headteachers’ Conceptions of the Professional Competence of Newly Qualified Teachers in Zambia.

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**Abstract**

This paper discusses the conceptions of fifteen head teachers regarding the

professional attributes and competence of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in selected secondary schools in Zambia. It attempts to demonstrate how teacher education programmes and work environments in schools greatly influence NQT performance and work place disposition. Data were collected through in depth one-on-one interviews and analysed thematically using coding and patterns interpretation. This article has established that NQTs exhibited inadequate pedagogical execution of their duties, low commitment levels towards work and negative attitudes towards veteran teachers. Teacher education programmes are critiqued for their weaknesses in teacher preparation and so are schools for failing to provide conducive environments for NQTs to flourish.

**Key words**

Professional competence, newly qualified teachers, professional development, professionalism, commitment to duty.

**Citation**

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