

**Relevance of Teacher Induction Programmes in Promoting Professional Development of Teachers in Zambia**

**By**

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**Abstract**

*This paper highlights the relevance of teacher induction programmes in the professional development of new teachers in Zambia. With regards to research methodology, the authors reviewed and critically analysed various induction-related pieces of literature from both local and international empirical studies, education policy documents and practice papers. The paper begins by conceptualizing the meaning of induction in Teacher Education. It gives an illuminating insight into the significance of induction programmes in promoting teacher quality and professionalism. After carefully analysing Zambia's current situation in so far as beginning teacher induction programmes is concerned in comparison to other international practices, the paper raises a number of critical points upon which policy makers, managers and teachers in the education sector may reflect to inform policy on the indispensability of effective induction programmes in promoting professional practice among those joining the teaching profession.*

**Key words: Induction, New Teachers, Professional Growth, Classroom Performance, Student Achievement**

**Introduction**

Teaching is an increasingly challenging career and thus induction for newly appointed teachers is vital if they are to fulfill their roles professionally (Blandford, 1998). It is indisputable that in any given profession, the transition from training into the work place generates certain tensions. For example, employers need to ensure that their new staff have appropriate training and that they will be able to contribute positively to the

achievement of organisational goals. In the same way, the newly qualified teachers require guidance, scaffolding and anchoring in policies, procedures, practice and support from colleagues as they work in line with the needs of the school. In a similar manner, clear policy on discipline and other operational guidelines for newly appointed teachers can be met through an effective induction and mentoring processes (Bubb, 2003). Induction of newly appointed teachers helps to improve the quality of educational provision as well as student achievement. This is because one of the factors necessary in the provision of quality education in any given country is the retention of adequately qualified, experienced and highly motivated teachers in all schools.

## **Background**

Although there is no policy framework on new teacher induction programmes in Zambia, such programmes are carried out in both primary and secondary schools differently and at the mercy of the school managers (Chatora, 2006; MOE, 1996). The induction programmes are meant to orient and introduce new teachers into the teaching profession in which they are expected to develop and become expert professionals in the delivery of quality education. However, due to lack of a policy framework, the effectiveness of these induction programmes is questionable in Zambia. This paper, therefore, aims at highlighting the importance of strengthening teacher induction programmes in promoting the professional development of those joining the teaching fraternity. It is the hope of the authors that the paper will invoke necessary debate on the importance of strengthening teacher induction programmes in schools in Zambia.

## **What is Teacher Induction?**

The concept of induction is subject to a number of varying interpretations and meaning. This could justify why in many developing countries including Zambia, no greater weight, if any, is attached to the significance of strengthening teacher induction programmes in teacher education (MOE, 1996). In light of this, one must appreciate the fact that the concept of induction means a lot to professional development of new teachers.

According to Feiman-Nemser (2010), traditionally the concept of induction could be taken to refer to influences exerted by systems of recruitment, professional education, and work

initiation as new teachers move along a path towards membership in a professional community. In addition, induction is about supporting and extending professional practice, building collegial relationships and sustaining an organisational culture where there is a shared responsibility for the success of all members of staff in an organisation. Through the process of induction, new teachers are introduced to take on the dominant language, values, norms and knowledge of a thorough teaching profession. Though not the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that induction should be done to all teachers who are newly appointed transferred, promoted or returning to work after extended absence such as study leave (Bubb, 2003).

Induction of a teacher can also be taken to mean socialization. This is because every school to which a teacher is posted is unique in many ways compared to others. Therefore, the conceptualization of induction as a process of socialization highlights the need for harmonizing the tension between helping a new teacher fit into a completely new environment for teacher and student learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2010).

Induction can also be looked at as a formal programme for beginning teachers. Huling-Austin (1998) defines induction as a systematic organizational effort to help new teachers adjust readily and effectively to their new assignments, while realizing personal and professional fulfilment. Since “new” teachers lack experience, they are likely to be confronted with uncertainties and complexities of teaching. This is most likely to make them frustrated with their work. In this manner, induction programmes must be provided to help the “new” teachers on matters relating to curriculum implementation, instruction, class management, student assessment, school culture, professional development and the larger community.

In view of the above, we can see that the concept of induction can be conceptualized as learning to work with others in the school and community and to develop personal traits and strengths of importance to teachers. Care must be taken to avoid an interpretation that simply ends up being orientation to the work place rather than being a full programme to meet the needs of the “new” teachers. All in all, the concept of induction in this paper will be taken to mean a comprehensive formal process in which the “new” teachers are

initiated into the requirements, values and competencies of the teaching profession with the aim of achieving good classroom management and performance performance.

### **Why Teacher Induction?**

Many researchers (Glazerman et al, 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011 and Sun, 2012) have strongly argued that teacher induction programmes promote the professional growth and development of teachers by improving teaching practice, student learning achievement as well as reducing teacher turnover. It should however be noted that although induction of “new” teachers may serve a number of aspects in the career development of the novices such as reducing attrition, the focus of this paper is mainly on the improvement the classroom performance of the teachers as well as their professional growth.

The first year of teaching is the most formative period in a teacher’s career, and support is crucial if new teachers are to develop the competencies, confidence and attitudes that will keep them happy and successful in the job (Bubb, 2007). As such, in promoting professional and career development of “new” teachers, induction programmes should be designed to help them develop a firm foundation upon which they have to build their career to become successful teachers who can make a real impact on school development and the lives of the young people. Such programmes, should as much as possible help those joining the teaching profession to be able to effectively accomplish tasks assigned to them in conformity with the expected standards and competencies of a school teacher (Imber and Van Geel, 2010).

Induction programmes are meant to guide and provide the “new” and inexperienced beginning teachers with personal and professional support as well as other learning experiences indispensable for their smooth transition from pre-service teacher training to a full time teaching career (Simatwa, 2010). Moreover, it is envisaged that once “new” teachers go through the process of induction, they can adequately internalise the norms and values of their newly found profession and become effective and quality teachers who can positively impact the learning achievement of students (Singh, 1988). These sentiments were also echoed by Sun (2012), who was of the view that induction improves the teaching abilities of “new” teachers which in turn improves student achievements. For

example, in their randomised controlled study of teacher induction programmes, Glazerman et al, (2008), found that student achievement gains in mathematics and reading were significantly greater when a teacher received two years of comprehensive induction support compared to teachers who received less intensive support. Paine and Schulle (2010) further found that the induction of beginning teachers must be meant to build what they termed “something desirable” such as effective teaching, a strong teaching force, a vital profession and optimum learning to students in schools.

The relevance of induction programmes in the professional development of beginning teachers can further be substantiated when one compares the professional performance of novices and experts in teaching (Sun, 2012). It is a fact that the competence, proficiency and expertise takes quite a long time to develop and do not automatically flow from experience. In this vein, we must begin to look at induction of “new” teachers as part of professional learning continuum. Induction in this context becomes both an extension of initial preparation and a bridge to professional development (Sun, 2012).

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that beginning teacher induction programmes played a major role in improving classroom performance of novice teachers. The duo found that teachers who had gone through some kind of induction performed better at various aspects of teaching. They kept students on tasks, developed workable lesson plans, used effective student questioning practice and were able to reasonably adjust classroom activities to meet the interests of learners (Isenberg, *et al*, 2010). In addition, such teachers are able to maintain a positive classroom atmosphere and demonstrate successful classroom management which promotes student growth and achievement.

Induction of “new” teachers should not be looked at as an event which should take place for one day or a week, but rather a long process to initiate them in the teaching profession. This could even be the more reason why Singh (1988) was of the view that Continuing Professional Development of teachers could imply that which attempts to encourage each individual teacher to move as far along the path of professionalism as they can go.

Further, it should be noted that new teacher induction programmes are of great importance in reducing the cost of teacher attrition and persistent academic achievement

gaps among diverse groups of students (Feiman-Nemser, 2010). Induction therefore must be regarded as part of a larger effort to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning in our schools. Policy makers in education must be reminded that the induction stage in teacher education is a unique phase in learning to teach. According to Feiman-Nemser (2010), the initial years are a special time in one's teaching career, for they are totally different from what has gone before and what comes after. There is thus a need for a serious approach to induction in order to reconcile the tension that usually arises between a teacher's self-defined needs and the requirements of effective teaching and learning.

Apart from improving classroom performance, research has proved that comprehensive teacher induction programmes can promote teacher retention in the teaching profession (Kapadia, *et al.*, 2007). The retention of highly qualified teachers is increasingly becoming a challenge in many schools around the world (OECD, 2002). Many new teachers leave teaching for greener pastures elsewhere as they are left by themselves to swim or sink. Among the reasons forwarded for this increased attrition among teachers is the lack of a structured initiation-induction-to guide and support new teachers which is characteristic of the professions like law and medicine which are well known for employee retention (Kapadia, *et al.*, 2007). According to Darling-Hammond & Cobb (1995), induction of newly appointed teachers is very critical for them to develop skills and positive attitudes regarding the profession. As such, lack of proper induction is catalytic to attrition as observed among the new teachers.

In Africa for example, retention of new teachers has been a challenge partly due to lack of formal policies on teacher induction (Cobbold, 2007). For instance some Sub-Saharan African countries such as Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Lesotho in the last decade recorded attrition rates ranging from 2% to 10% each year of teachers leaving the profession mainly due to job dissatisfaction as well as alternative employment opportunities (UNESCO, 2010:8).

From the foregoing, it can be seen that since universities and colleges of education only train their students to teach, and are not in any position to complete their adjustment and socialisation in their newly found roles as full time teachers, those joining the profession

must therefore undergo induction to internalise the norms and values of the teaching profession (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). More so, there is a case to be made that the school teaching experience in which the student-teachers are observed once or twice does not prepare the new teachers to adequately face the day to day challenges of teaching in class (Simatwa, 2010).

In addition, in the process of teacher education, the teaching experience which all those who aspire to be teachers undergo is mainly concentrated on pedagogy, though in reality teaching goes beyond management of students within the four corners of a classroom and includes cases of dealing with truancy, theft, sexual harassment and many other situations (Imber and Van Geel, 2010). It is, therefore, only through the process of induction that novice teachers can be guided to be more knowledgeable of the school policies and regulations, to manage their time effectively, help them to learn about the professional ethics of their career, the legal provisions of education as well as the procedures on how to use properly the school facilities available to them, (Imber and Vaan Geel, 2010; Chatora, 2008). Induction thus can help build proficiency, confidence and identity in those joining the noble profession of teaching. Moreover, it must be clearly pointed out that induction should never be seen as a waste of valuable time. It must be viewed as a critical process through which “new” teachers are assisted to settle well in their new roles.

### **Current Situation on Beginning Teacher Induction in Zambia**

The Government of the Republic of Zambia, through the Ministry of Education, has a mandate to ensure that in all schools learners are facilitated with the attainment of the highest standards of learning through teaching of excellent quality (MOE, 1996). Since this calls for having quality teachers in schools, the Ministry of Education almost every year recruits and posts new teachers to both Primary and Secondary schools throughout the country. They would be failing in their duty if they did not recognise various interdependent factors such as, quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment and the quality of the teachers in schools. It is thus the duty of the government:

to promote the highest standard of education and learning for all. This entails giving attention to various interdependent factors, including the quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment, the quality of teachers in schools, schools and institutional arrangements, and planning processes”, (MOE, 1996:4).

Among all these factors the teacher is the most important input in the education of learners. Teachers have a direct bearing on the learning achievement of students in schools. The learner’s success in education is thus, to a large extent, determined by the qualification and experience of teachers involved.

It should be noted that one does not become a quality teacher overnight, it takes professional support, proper socialization, enculturation and adjustment and integration into the teaching profession (Cobbold, 2007). Induction programmes thus are meant to provide professional support and various learning experiences to the novice teachers for a smooth transition into the teaching profession from pre-service training (Simatwa, 2010).

The current national policy on education, clearly points out: “the quality and effectiveness of the educational system depend heavily on the quality of its teachers...The educational and personal wellbeing of children in schools [thus] hinges crucially on their competence, commitment and resourcefulness,” (MOE, 1996: 107). The calibre of the teacher in the teaching profession is of great importance. As such only suitable persons must be attracted to take up this career. Once these have been attracted, it is the duty of the Ministry of Education through those appointed in positions of responsibility to equip new teachers with initial professional education as well as providing them with subsequent in-career development (MOE, 1996). Since education is essential in fostering development, the Ministry of Education has a mandate to ensure that all schools are staffed with qualified teachers, while constantly ensuring the adequacy of their preparation and professional development it arranges for teachers and review the services they provide.

Despite there being three (3) pertinent stages in teacher education and development, i.e. Initial Training; Induction and Continuing Professional Development, teacher induction still remains insignificant in the Human Resource Development agenda for teachers in Zambia. Sadly though, this is the component which is supposed to bridge the gap

between initial teacher training in college and universities and the professional development of the many beginning teachers in the actual work place.

There is a big discrepancy between what goes on in teacher training institutions and what is actually expected of any teacher in the school or work environment. When new teachers get into a school, they struggle to succeed due to reality shock, loneliness and loss of idealism (Bubb, 2007).

Zambia has also not been immune to the challenge of retaining new teachers in the profession. Lack of policy guidelines may be one of the contributing factors. For instance, new teacher induction programmes have not been recognized in the working document of the Ministry of Education National Policy on Education (MOE, 1996). This is evident in that about 2, 191 teachers from primary and secondary schools left teaching for other professions (MOE, 2008). Studies suggest that this has been partly due to challenges surrounding the process of inducting new teachers in schools (Chatora, 2008). The absence of a formal policy to induct new teachers in Zambia, has left the decision to orient new teachers to the discretion of school managers who do it as it seems fit to them, with varying degrees of support from other members of staff in schools. For instance, Kamwengo (1995) reported that school managers in some schools did not organize induction programmes for “new” teachers, as they lacked adequate management skills and knowledge required for their positions. This suggests the need for qualified personnel in such management positions.

Furthermore, the lack of comprehensiveness, continuity, consistency, support and formalization of the induction programmes makes it difficult to adequately induct newly appointed teachers in the system in both primary and secondary schools (Chatora, 2008). Chatora (2008) also revealed that the new teachers were poorly socialized in the system mainly due to inefficiencies resulting not only from the nature and components of the programmes but also insufficient awareness and understanding of induction in schools. Lack of adequate understanding of what constitutes teacher induction, enables many schools to simply orient new teachers about the school premises instead of taking them through a comprehensive induction programme to fit in the system and profession without many difficulties. This is what Simatwa (2010) found in some Kenyan primary schools,

where new primary school teachers were subjected to induction briefings instead of induction programmes due to lack of time for such an activity. What lessons then can Zambia draw from the international experience in so far as induction of beginning teachers is concerned?

### **International Experience on Teacher Induction**

Going through the international perspectives of what induction is, can help us to question and value what we may have been taking for granted for a long time in our country. It should also be reminisced that the concept of teacher induction as a stage in teacher education is not an innovation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, but rather a practice which has existed long before the term induction began to be commonly used (Paine and Schwille, 2010). In addition, there is a growing relationship which exists among pre-service, induction and professional development of “new” teachers.

The relevance of induction in the professional development of “new” teachers cannot be over emphasised. In some Western countries such as England, one cannot be employed as a qualified primary or secondary school teacher unless they pass the induction assessment (Budd, 2007).

The teacher induction programmes are not native to Zambian schools alone. The induction programmes have been reported in the United States, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, China, New Zealand and Australia to mention but a few (Stephen and Moskowitz, 1997). In these countries, the effectiveness of the new teacher induction programmes have been observed in enhancing performance, retention and reduced attrition among teachers (Xaba, 2003; Kapadia, et al, 2007 and UNESCO, 2010). The induction programmes are meant to recognize the special developmental needs of first year teachers by providing them with both specialized training and emotional support in their transition from being student teachers to professional teachers (Duke, 1990).

In substantiating the importance of new teacher induction programmes from international perspectives, quoting Bristol, et al., (2003) Paine and Schwille, (2010:33) re-emphasised that “even in settings like Switzerland, where pre-service preparation was extensive in both subject specialization and pedagogy, it was assumed that the beginning teacher,

even one with substantial pre-service training had much to learn.” Furthermore, in countries such as New Zealand, England and Singapore, apart from promoting emotional and professional support, induction programmes treated the beginning teachers as adult learners and were tailored towards promoting the professional knowledge and skills that they needed to develop in order to become more competent (Paine and Schwille, 2010).

In Japan, induction programmes for “new” teachers have focused much on six broad categories related to working with pupils, managing classrooms, working with parents and participating in the school community, (Paine and Schwille, 2010).

When it comes to how induction programmes for “new” teachers should be conducted, one should recall that even from international experience, there seems to be no consensus with regards to what should be included in standard induction programmes and how long they should last. This depends on the needs and goals of the education system of a given nation (MOE, 1996). However, what is striking in all these programmes from different countries is that even if there is no single approach to organizing the learning opportunities for induction, such programmes must provide intensive learning opportunities within and around the classrooms and personal development of “new” teachers (Buddy, 2007).

Taking the case of Shanghai in China, a comprehensive induction programme has three phases (Paine et al., 2003a). The first phase takes place at school level, for new teachers are meant to undergo school-based mentoring with a mentor in the subject matter of teaching. They do this by working with students on different tasks and visit students’ homes in the company of experienced teachers to appreciate the environment where students come from and how they can help them learn properly. In the second phase, Paine and Schwille, (2010), found that the induction process involved District based activities in the Shanghai region in which every novice teacher was required to put in a minimum of One Hundred Hours. This included attending and actively participating in workshops, and courses of new teachers, mentorship, as well as teaching competitions. In addition to this, it was found that a hotline was established in the district for subject matter specialists who answered phoned-in questions from the new teachers. In the final phase, Paine and Schwille (2010:37) found that induction activities were offered by the

district in collaboration with the schools where the new teachers came from. Such activities included:

Peer observation by the mentor and novice of other teachers in the same school and other schools; public lessons observed and discussed by the novice or a group of novices as well as others' 'talk' lessons in which novice and experienced teachers talked through a lesson without actually teaching it and then provided justification from what was presented; action research projects by new teachers with support from others at school or district level, and the use of a handbook developed by the school or district for new teachers and their mentors.

This comprehensive induction programme in Shanghai region provides a good example of some of the activities which may be included in the induction programmes of novice teachers to help them develop and uphold good practice in the teaching profession for the benefit of students.

Singh (1988) cautioned that induction programmes for the new teachers should not attempt to replace the professional preparation of the initial training, nor should it seek to repeat experiences which beginning teachers already underwent during the pre-service training. The induction programmes should instead provide learning experiences and professional support which "new" teachers are able and ready to receive only after assuming full responsibility from their first appointment in the teaching service.

### **What Next for Zambia?**

In Zambia the current national policy on Education, "Educating our Future" does not recognize the relevance of beginning teacher induction programmes, in their professional growth, albeit acknowledging the fact that " the initial preparation, provided at training colleges and the university, does no more than lay a foundation for a life time teaching," (MOE, 1996: 108). In view of the literature on induction that has been reviewed in this paper, there is need for Zambia to draw a number of lessons from the international

perspective, to see how induction programmes can be formally implemented for “new” teachers in the country.

The policy further clearly spells out that the life of every teacher revolves around two never ending growth and progression (MOE, 1996). These include knowledge which is dynamic and ever changing and children, each one unique and developing within the fabric of a changing social environment. Thus we can see that initial teacher training is little more than a start and there is much more left for one to become a professional teacher after college education, hence the need for induction (MOE, 1996).

Going forward, there is need to formalize and improve on how beginning teachers are inducted in the teaching profession. Experienced teachers who understand the needs, aspirations and expectations of the new teachers as well as the broader context of teaching and its challenges must be engaged to induct and mentor the new ones in the profession of teaching and learning (Huling-Austin, 1992). More so, those engaged as mentors in the process of induction, must be given certain incentives for them to participate whole-souled in the process of teacher induction. Induction programmes should therefore, involve mentorship. All “new” teachers need to be assigned a mentor to guide them on how they can be effective teachers in class.

As more and more teachers enter the teaching service with reduced preparation and face increasing diversity of students in schools, the notion of induction as a critical phase of learning to teach, takes on increased urgency. As such, there is need for well designed comprehensive induction programmes to address the root causes of teacher dissatisfaction, by giving them support and tools they need to succeed and guiding their work. Such is likely to help “new” teachers develop their skills to handle the full range of responsibilities which come with the teaching job and evaluating their performance during the first few years of teaching.

New teachers must be encouraged to work together with their peers. Engaging in peer observation, shared reflections and joint inquiry can be so helpful to the teachers to learn how to teach better (Paine and Schwille, 2010). There is also a case to be made that “new” teachers must as much as possible be encouraged to engage in self introspection,

to reflect and inquire about their teaching. This can help them develop a reflective stance both at personal and professional level. New teachers should be guided to enter in a number of activities which can make them grow professionally such as engaging in practice groups, individual counseling, observation of other teachers teaching and seminars just to mention a few. Engaging in such induction activities can help those joining the profession to appreciate the process of “self-evaluation of self-competence, social competence and competence in one’s area of teaching...” Paine and Schwille, 2010:39). This may be the only way through which teacher professionalism will be achieved in addition to other Continuing Profession Development activities such participating in studies in colleges and universities.

## **Conclusion**

Going forward, induction programmes for “new” teachers should be looked at carefully to avoid interpreting them as simply orientation to the workplace. Instead, they should be considered to constitute the full range of support programmes designed to meet the needs of the “new” teacher. To have good teachers therefore, there is need to always treat the first year of teaching as a phase for learning to teach and surround new teachers with a professional culture that supports teacher learning. This is one of the best ways through which the classroom performance of those joining the teaching profession can be improved upon.

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