Idealism versus Realism: Expectations and Challenges of Beginning Teachers in Three Districts of Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

This study explored beginning teachers' expectations and the challenges that they encounter during the first year of entry into the profession. The 24 participants for the study were drawn from a population of 90 new teachers who had just completed a 4 year undergraduate pre-service teacher training programme at a local university. Data was collected using a questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics. The study established that, on joining the teaching profession, participants had some basic expectations relating to such aspects as the types of schools they would be deployed to, remuneration, availability of requisite resources and infrastructure, professional support and the nature of students they would teach. However, these expectations turned out to be at variance with the realities within school settings and the novices experienced many challenges in their new roles as teachers. The study recommends that interventions be put in place to socialise new teachers into the new settings and enable them to settle down smoothly and perform effectively in the classroom.

Key words: beginning teachers, expectations, challenges, interventions, induction.

INTRODUCTION

The education sector in Zimbabwe, like many education systems in the world, experiences an influx of new professionals that are churned out of universities and teachers' colleges every year and are deployed into schools to begin their careers as teachers. The question of the entry of beginning teachers into the field of teaching

has been subject to intense scrutiny among researchers who have mainly focused on the complexities of the needs and challenges new teachers face upon entry into the field and how they can be assisted to adjust to the rigours of the profession (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

Teachers play a central role not only in ensuring a good quality education system but also in the realisation of the broader national agenda of human capital development (Gwaradzimba & Shumba, 2010; Voluntary Services Overseas, 2006). In this regard, the optimum realisation of school effectiveness is largely dependent upon the extent to which beginning teachers enter into schools and are socialised and integrated into the school system smoothly and rapidly so that they can begin to make meaningful contributions to the school system. The first year of teaching has been described as one of the most challenging periods in a teacher's career (Bartell, 2000; Veenman, 1984). During this period new teachers are gripped with fear, anxiety, anticipation and excitement emanating from the uncertainties that the new professionals are likely to encounter in the field of teaching. Research has shown that teachers enter the profession with high pre-formed ideal expectations about the school and the education system in general, which if met lead to satisfaction and if unmet, may lead to dissatisfaction and demotivation (Quagglia, 1989). The latter have been cited as some of the causes of high attrition rates among beginning teachers in such countries as United States of America and Australia (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1999). The expectations that beginning teachers bring into the field of teaching are often in dissonance with the existing realities and challenges that they face in the school (Flores, 2004). This implies that the perceptions of beginning teachers about the profession are largely shaped by the nature of interplay between the kind of expectations that they bring into the school and the contextual realities and challenges that await them within the school.

This paper seeks to explore the expectations of beginning teachers and how these conflict with the contextual realities that they encounter in the field. The

paper also seeks to examine how this interplay between expectations and realities influences the behaviour and attitudes of beginning teachers towards their careers during their formative years in the profession. Insights into the problems faced by beginning teachers is critical in providing important information that can be used in the development of programmes to orient and socialise beginning teachers into their new roles and workstations. The term "beginning teacher" in this study refers to the first year of full time employment in the teaching profession.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, very little research has been carried out in the area of expectations and challenges facing beginning teachers in Zimbabwe. The available literature that has been reviewed by the researchers reveals that research has been carried out elsewhere in Europe, America and Asia (Bartell, 2004; Sharplin, 2002; Wiegerova & Szimethova, Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000; Quaglia, 1989; Veenman, 1984). The available literature does not adequately inform the local setting because the contexts underlying expectations and the challenges facing beginning teachers are different. The researchers, therefore, hope that this research will contribute to the existing gap of knowledge.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was premised around the framework of Hebert Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). According to Sexton (2008:73) "symbolic interactionism focuses on the construction and mediation of meaning." The theory postulates that individuals are social actors in a social context. The individuals interact with others and derive meanings from these interactions and act upon them. This implies that individuals' responses and perceptions are a direct result of the actions and behaviour of people around them. Teacher induction involves the development of an understanding of what teaching is. The interaction of beginning teachers with other significant members of the school, the community and the broader education system is critical in fostering understanding and shaping their attitude and behaviour towards their career. In short, beginning teachers engage in

role learning by observing and imitating significant others within the school environment and this leads to their situational adjustment to the profession.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The placement of new teachers in schools upon completion of pre-service training is critical to the achievement of quality, equality and equity of education particularly in the rural areas in Zimbabwe. School effectiveness and the realisation of the broader school agenda is dependent upon the degree to which new teachers are initiated into the school system so that they can quickly settle down and start working towards the achievement of school goals. Perceptions that beginning teachers have about the ideal school conditions under which they expect to work are often in dissonance with the contextual realities in schools. This greatly impacts upon the capacity of the new teacher to adjust and make contributions to the school system. It is against this background that this study sought to explore the expectations of and challenges that beginning teachers face upon entry into the profession. The study basically sought to answer the following research questions:

(a) What expectations do beginning teachers have about the teaching profession?

(b) What challenges do beginning teachers face during the first year of entry into the profession?

(c) What are the interventions that can be used to prepare beginning teachers for the daunting challenges that they face during the first year of their career?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has shown that the first year of teaching is a period of transition for beginning teachers as they graduate from being student teachers to professionals (Schollert, 2011;Veenman, 1989). During this period, teachers enter schools with ideal expectations that emanate out of their values, emotional feelings and psychological and ideological beliefs. These expectations are often informed by the experiences that beginning teachers develop during pre-service training. In contrast,

the realities of the school environment often subject the beginning teacher to an array of pressures and the extent to which they cope with the interplay between their expectations and the challenges they encounter has implications for their professional development and personal wellbeing. Day (1999:59) states that

> these first few years of teaching have been described as a two way struggle in which teachers try to create their own social reality by attempting to make their work match their personal vision of how it should be while at the same time being subjected to the powerful socialising forces of the school culture.

In his study of challenges facing beginning teachers, Veenman (1984), refers to the transition from teacher training to the first teaching job as posing a reality shock among beginning teachers. The notion of reality shock points to a situation in which the ideal expectations formed during pre-service training are replaced by the harsh situational realities of the school environment. The impact of these complex realities can be disastrous if no support is rendered to the new professionals during the formative period of entry into the profession.

Louis (1980) presented a three stage model to explain the levels of experience through which beginning teachers undergo during the formative period of entry into the profession. The model comprises of the three levels of change, contrast and surprise. The level of change denotes a shift from the old setting to a new setting in which the beginning teacher assumes a new role and identity that is different from the past. At this level, the former student teacher assumes a new role as a young professional in the field. At the level of contrast, the beginning teacher's experiences brought from the old setting are replaced by present experiences in the new setting within the school. If experiences from the past fail to match with the present setting, contrast emerges and this results in a strain on the beginning teacher's experience. The beginning teacher experiences surprise when there is discordance between his anticipations and the prevailing realities in the new setting. The mismatch between novice the teachers' original expectations and the realities they face in schools

invokes surprise and often results in stress, demotivation and frustration which may impact negatively on the capacity of the beginning teacher to deliver. Quaglia (1989) however, states that despite the threat of reality shock, novice teachers can manage to strike a balance between these experiences through a process of sense-making in which they begin to conform to the existing realities and attempt to adjust to the culture within the school.

Beginning teachers bring into the profession, a myriad of expectations. One of the major expectations that they bring pertain to conditions of service. Working conditions such as decent housing, an improvement in the remuneration levels, safe schools and the provision of adequate teaching materials are some of the factors that underlie beginning teacher expectations (Farrell & Oliveira, 1993). The issue of better remuneration and other forms of monetary compensation like rural allowances and school based incentives have also been documented as some of the expectations of novice teachers in Zimbabwe. The question of rural incentives has become topical because teachers in rural schools expect to be compensated for providing their services under difficult conditions, in rural and remote areas where the majority of schools are located. In addition, the past decade has experienced a proliferation of satellite schools[1] in the farms, a development which was triggered by the land reform programme. Chireshe and Shumba (2011) however state that while teachers expect better remuneration, these demands are beyond the resource capacity of the government because of the heavy financial constraints it is currently facing.

A survey carried out on teacher motivation and incentives in low income developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia has concluded that teachers want to be looked upon in terms of their public rating and occupational status by the communities in which they serve (Bennel, 2004). The decline in the status of teachers in most countries has been cited as one of the major reasons why teachers enter into the profession with little commitment.

Beginning teachers expect school heads and experienced members of staff to offer them guidance and collegial support during the formative years of joining the profession. Research has shown that novice teachers require a substantial degree of training and support that will enable them to easily adapt into the new school setting and ultimately realise the smooth transition into the teaching career. This is because newly appointed teachers are not able to apply theory learnt during pre-service training to the classroom setting. The theory/practice divide has been a subject of debate by various authors who maintain that initial teacher education equips trainees with a basic competence kit but learning to teach begins in earnest when the new teacher is certified and is faced with the realities of the classroom (Frykolm, 1998; Tickle, 1993). Beginning teachers therefore require support in planning; time management; instructional delivery; classroom management; assessment of students' work and managing relations with parents (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). It is disturbing to note that the lack of collegial support interventions for beginning teachers within schools has remained a major challenge that affects their professional growth. Newly appointed teachers are left to swim or sink on their own yet research has demonstrated that teachers who are well supported become more effective earlier in their careers and contribute effectively to the achievement of school goals (Bartell,2004). This implies that the first year of entry into the teaching profession should be regarded as a period of scaffolding beginning teachers towards proficiency.

Studies on the problems facing beginning teachers have revealed that the global crisis affecting the teaching profession stems from poor teacher training and low salaries which contribute to poor morale and low motivation (Volunteer Services Overseas, 2006).The arbitrary deployment system is also another challenge that beginning teachers encounter (Sharplin, (2002; Chireshe & Shumba, (2011). Beginning teachers are not comfortable with the idea of being deployed to remote rural areas because schools in these areas are often associated with problems of poor accommodation; lack of transport and communication; poor water facilities and

lack of resources. Besides, rural areas are not considered as ideal places to live because they lack the cultural and social opportunities available in other developed areas (Bennel, 2004). A study carried out in Australia also established that the difficulties related with staffing of rural remote schools have been linked with negative perceptions of teaching in such environments (Sharplin, 2002). Teachers deployed to these areas were reported to have complained of loneliness and isolation.

In other studies on challenges facing teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa, it was noted that teachers face a problem of being deployed to schools in hostile communities. A sense of insecurity engulfs beginning teachers at the idea of being deployed to rural schools because the political crisis in Zimbabwe during the past decade has found teachers in rural areas being subjected to political harassment, intimidation and violence (Amnesty International, 2009; Amnesty International, 2009). Burundi, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia have been classified as some of the countries with strained state-teacher relations (Bennel, 2004).

Novice teachers deployed to communities characterised by an entirely different cultural background have been found to experience difficulties in adjusting to the types of behaviours that are acceptable. Aspects of clash of culture have been experienced in social, cultural and political spheres and these clashes have been a result of the fact that rural communities are largely conservative and are thus sceptical to divergent views and practices. For example, some communities may not cooperate with schools and may have different views about issues of instilling discipline in deviant students. This compromises the capacity of beginning teachers to assert their authority over students.

A school culture that is characterised by individualism and competition creates an environment in which working relations between veteran teachers and beginning teachers are constrained leading to the isolation of the latter. Flores (2004) argues that the beliefs, values and habits of beginning teachers are influenced by the culture prevalent within the school. The absence of a collaborative

work culture inhibits the provision of collegial support to new teachers. Studies carried out on professional support to newly appointed teachers have shown that novice teachers are forced to take up responsibilities for the performance of students put under their custody from the first day of their career yet they are not provided with the appropriate instructional guidance (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999).

Beginning teachers also face the challenge of work overload in schools. Novice teachers are allocated the same responsibilities as the more experienced teachers despite the limited experience (Saka, 2009; Lindgren, 2005; Bartell, 2004; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).In most instances newly appointed teachers are given the most difficult tasks and unpopular extracurricular responsibilities that experienced teachers do not want to tackle. These complex responsibilities that are foisted upon beginning teachers against the backdrop of the limited experience they have, tend to yield further frustration which compromises their capacity to collaborate in the execution of the broader school agenda. Other challenges that have been documented regarding the extent to which beginning teachers struggle in their formative years include classroom control, motivation of students, dealing with pupils with special needs, lesson delivery, time management and dealing with individual differences in class.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive survey design to investigate the perceptions of novice teachers regarding the kind of expectations and challenges that they encountered during the first year of joining the teaching profession. Best and Khan (1993) define the descriptive survey design as a method that is used to determine and describe the nature of prevailing conditions, practices and attitudes in a given population within their naturalistic form, setting and context in which they occur. The design was chosen because it allows the researcher to gather, present and interpret information about people's beliefs and opinions in a manner that enables findings from the sample to be generalised to the entire population.

The population for this study comprised new teachers who had completed the Bachelor of Education (Pre-Service) Primary degree programme at Great Zimbabwe University in August 2011 and were deployed into the field of work beginning September 2011. The participants in this study, therefore, had had more than six months in the field of work when they were contacted by the researcher. Twenty-four (24) students (14 male and 10 female) who participated in this study were selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select a sample with the qualities that are being investigated (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2001).The participants who were drawn from rural primary schools were purposively selected from three districts in Masvingo province, namely: Bikita (8), Chivi (7) and Zaka (9). The three districts were randomly selected from the seven districts that comprise the province of Masvingo.

The sample size was deliberately kept small because the researchers sought to conduct an in-depth study about the expectations and challenges of beginning teachers. Patton (2002) states that there are no rules governing sample size in a qualitative study. Rather the sample size depends on what the researcher needs to know and what can be done within the available time and resources. The researchers assumed that a small sample size would enhance the validity and reliability of information generated from qualitative enquiry.

A questionnaire was used as a major instrument of data collection in the study to gather information on the new teachers' perceptions about their expectations and challenges regarding the school system and the teaching profession. The questionnaire comprised both open-ended and close-ended questions. The data collected was summarised, categorised and analysed using different descriptive statistics. The data was then presented in tables, frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS

The findings of this study are summarised in Tables 1-6. The study collected information on the age, gender, area of upbringing and teaching experience prior to pre-service training of the respondents including their expectations and challenges encountered in the first year of teaching. Background information on the demographic characteristics of participants helped the researchers to understand the background and experiences of the respondents which the researcher felt had a strong bearing on the expectations and challenges of beginning teachers.

Table 1: Age of respondents (n=24)

Age bracket	No. of respondents		%
21-25	8		33.33
26-30	10		41.67
31-35	4		16.67
36-40	2		8.33
Total	**24**		**100%**

Table 2: Area of origin(n=24)

Area	Number of respondents	%
Urban	6	25.00
Rural	16	66.67
Other(Farm)	2	8.33
Total	**24**	**100%**

Table 3: Experiences gained as a temporary teacher prior to pre-service training

EXPERIENCE (Number of years)	No. of respondents		%
None	16		66.67
1-3	4		16.67
4-6	4		16.67
7-10	0		00.00
Total	**24**		**100%**

Table 4: Expectations of beginning teachers

Expectations	No. of respondents	%
Better pay	24	100
School based incentives	22	91.67
Availability of cellular network coverage	21	87.50
Improved working conditions	20	83.33
Rural allowances	19	79.17
Guidance and support from school head and experienced teachers	18	75.00
Availability of reliable transport	17	70.83
Availability of health and water facilities	17	70.83
Decent accommodation	16	66.67
Safety from political violence	15	91.67
Availability of teaching resources	14	58.33
Workshops to induct new teachers	12	50.00
Co-operative parents	10	41.67
Good relations with the community	8	33.33
Disciplined students	6	25.00

Table 5: Challenges encountered by beginning teachers.

Challenges	Number of respondents	%
Poor salaries	24	100
Lack of teaching resources	21	87.50
Work overload and being allocated unpopular tasks	21	87.50
Poor working conditions	20	83.33
Lack of information on Public Service policies and regulations	20	83.33
Lack of support from experienced teachers	19	79.17
Lack of respect by the community	19	79.17
Poor accommodation	17	70.83
Deployment in rural and remote areas	16	66.67
Poor health and water facilities	14	58.30
Undisciplined students	13	54.16
Intolerant communities	11	45.83

Lack of reliable transport	10	41.60
Political harassment/intimidation	9	37.50

Table 6: Responses to close-ended questions

Item	Yes	No	Unsure
Have the expectations that you previously harboured about the profession been met?	20.83%	70.8%	8.33%
Do you think that teacher training prepared you for these challenges?	16.67%	66.67%	16.67%

As shown in Table 1, 33.33% of the respondents were in the 21-25 years age range, while the majority (41.67%) fell within the age range of 26-30 years. Only 16.67% and 8.33% fell within the 31-35 years and 36-40 years age brackets respectively. So, most respondents were young and just coming out of pre-service teacher training. Literature shows that young teachers harbour idealistic expectations which if unmet may cause a reality shock leading to stress and frustration. Buxton and Sawyer cited by Ajowi, Simatwa and Ayodo (2011) indicate that young age is associated with a high rate of turnover in schools because young teachers detest the conditions of work within the education system and certain schools in particular. Beginning teachers' entry into the profession, therefore, needs to be properly supported through effective induction training interventions that will enable them to settle down in their new workplaces.

As can be drawn from Table 2, the majority of respondents (66.67%) originate from the rural areas while 25% were brought up in urban settings. Only 8.33% of the respondents were brought up in farming areas. The experiences gained by an individual during upbringing have a strong influence on a beginning teacher's perceptions about the character and conditions of the schools in which they are deployed to work. Bartell (2004) is of the opinion that new teachers bring varying

backgrounds that shape their view of the profession. This view is confirmed by Sharplin (2002) who states that teachers from an urban background experience difficulties in adapting to the types of behaviour expected in rural areas. In this study however, the expectations of participants with rural backgrounds were largely similar to those of their urban counterparts.

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents (66.67%) indicated that they had no teaching experience gained as temporary teachers prior to pre-service training while 16.67% of the respondents had between 1-3 years of experience while the same percentage of respondents had between 4-6 years of experience. According to Quaglia (1989), previous experience is fundamental in guiding beginning teachers to make sense of the current experiences that they encounter in schools. If experiences from the past cannot be associated with the present, the capacity to adjust is heavily strained. It is therefore evident that those with teaching experience prior to training and those from a rural background would find less difficulty in adjusting to the challenges associated with rural schools.

DISCUSSION

As indicated in Table 4, respondents cited a range of expectations that constituted the perceptions of the beginning teachers. The majority of respondents indicated that they expected the government to improve the conditions of service of teachers. Better salaries, rural allowances and school based incentives were cited by respondents as some of the components of a monetary reward package that could improve the status of teachers. Farrell and Oliveira (1993) argue that the payment of competent salaries for teachers is critical to the motivation and retention of teachers. Literature has also shown that low levels of commitment among teachers are attributable to low salaries and this has devastating effects on the achievement of school goals.

Respondents also cited availability of teaching resources, decent accommodation, water and health facilities, reliable road access and cellular

network coverage as some of their expectations. Most primary schools in rural Zimbabwe are characterised by poor infrastructure, unreliable road access and no network coverage. The facilities in most schools do not meet the expectations of beginning teachers.

It also emerged from this study that beginning teachers faced various challenges included poor remuneration, arbitrary deployment, lack of teaching resources, poor working conditions, poor housing, political intimidation, work overload, lack of familiarity with policies and procedures of the education system, lack of respect and intolerant communities.

Most respondents raised concern about the fact that Public Service regulations, policies and procedures guiding the education system in Zimbabwe are not availed to them upon entry into the profession. Rather new teachers are left to learn about these policies on their own. It is quite possible that some new teachers only get to know of these regulations once they contravene them and they are read out to them in disciplinary hearings.

The issue of arbitrary deployment was also a major cause of concern to most respondents. It was noted that while beginning teachers anticipated to be deployed to schools that are accessible and close to urban areas, they found themselves being deployed to remote places. Sharplin (2002) contends that new teachers often experienced difficulties with fitting into a new community far away from family members.

The unavailability of teaching resources in schools was identified as a challenge by most respondents. Most schools in Zimbabwe have been experiencing a severe shortage of classroom furniture, textbooks and audio-visual aids which are critical in the process of teaching and learning. Sharplin (2002) contends that schools that are poorly resourced with curriculum material pose a major challenge to the capacity of beginning teachers to deliver instruction competently.

Beginning teachers also raised concern about the lack of guidance and support from the school heads and fellow experienced staff members. Research is replete with evidence of school heads and experienced teachers not inclined towards providing guidance and support to beginning teachers (Bartell, 2004). This problem could be attributed to the lack of a systematic induction programme in schools that can professionally develop newly appointed teachers under the tutelage of mentors. Beginning teachers require professional guidance in planning, teaching methodology, time management and community relations. It is also possible that experienced teachers are laden with their own responsibilities to the extent that they hardly get time to attend to the developmental needs of beginning teachers.

The majority of respondents identified work overload as one of the major challenges affecting beginning teachers. Studies show that beginning teachers are often allocated the most demanding responsibilities and the least desirable tasks despite their lack of experience (Ajowi, et al., 2011). This is also the case with co-curricular activities where beginning teachers are allocated responsibilities in areas where they are incompetent.

The challenge relating to conservative communities was also cited by many respondents. It was noted that some communities might not be open to the divergent social, cultural and political beliefs of newly appointed teachers. All female respondents highlighted this as a major challenge which may imply that such communities are averse to the dressing habits of young fashion trendy female teachers whose style of dressing is regarded as morally degrading.

It also emerged from the study that the majority of respondents had indicated that the expectations that they harboured about the teaching profession were at variance with the realities in the schools. The undesirable conditions of work at the schools lead to demotivation from the time the new teachers enter the field leading to high labour turnover, cases of absenteeism and low commitment to duty (Buxton & Sawyer in Ajowi et al., 2011).

Indications by some that the teacher training that they had attained had not adequately prepared them to confront the realities of the school setting may stem from the fact that teacher education programmes are predominantly more theoretical and less practical hence new teachers often experience difficulties in transforming theory into practice (Stansbury & Zimmerman,2000; Flores, 2001).

Generally, findings from this study suggest that the participants of different backgrounds and of different experiences had basically the same expectations, probably because they all would have expected their new jobs to result in improved lifestyles. However, the underplaying by participants of such aspects as the need for induction workshops for beginning teachers, good relations with the community and disciplined students seem to indicate a lack of appreciation of the importance of these in refining teacher efficacy. The lack of appreciation for the need for proper induction could probably be attributed to the fact that, as noted by Ajowi, et al (2011), new teachers are not keen to seek advice from experienced teachers because they are afraid of being labelled as incompetent. Also, the new teachers did not seem to attach much importance to good community relations yet literature indicates these are pivotal to the process of learning to become a teacher (Flores, 2001).

The participants, on the whole, experienced the same challenges. Some of the challenges can be attributed to the nature of rural schools in Zimbabwe which are renowned for being under resourced. For example, there is lack of accommodation, poor water sources and lack of teaching resources. Some challenges such as lack of information on public service policies and regulations, overloading of novices with work and unpopular tasks and general lack of support by experienced, would suggest that schools may not be aware of the needs of beginning teachers and take their competencies for granted. As a result, the beginning teachers are being left to 'sink' or 'swim' (Britton, Raizen, Paine, & Huntley, 2000) much to the detriment of their well-being and professional growth.

CONCLUSION

A conclusion that can be made on the basis of findings made in this study is that beginning teachers face a dilemma whose source is mainly the mismatch between their perceived expectations about the teaching profession and the contextual realities obtaining within the schools. Personal values, beliefs and perceptions are overridden by the influential realities of the workplace. These contradictions that underlie this dilemma have a strong impact in shaping the way new teachers perceive the profession. It is evident that new teachers faced with these challenges are engulfed with stress, frustration and demotivation which in turn affect their ability to settle down in schools and contribute meaningfully towards the attainment of school goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need for education policy makers to come up with sustainable interventions that can enable beginning teachers to settle down and adapt rapidly within an unfamiliar school setting. Beginning teachers should be oriented to the school and the community before the opening of schools. The provision of orientation by the school head and a member of the School Development Committee (SDC) may enable the beginning teacher to get insight into the philosophy and culture of the school and the community surrounding it. This will enable the beginning teacher to adjust rapidly into the new school system. It is also important to provide new teachers with handouts on the Public Service Commission regulations, policies and procedures in order to make them aware of the rules guiding professional conduct.

Beginning teachers should undergo a systematic school based induction programme that is meant to provide instructional guidance to beginning teachers through mentoring by veteran teachers. Induction workshops should be tailored to

address the specific needs of new teachers particularly by focusing in capacity building in the areas of classroom management, discipline and managing community relations.

Colleges and universities involved in teacher training programmes must adequately equip new teachers with skills to adapt to different school cultures and settings. This would enable the beginning teachers to reduce the gap between their ideal expectations and the contextual realities in the school setting thereby reducing the effects of reality shock as they are deployed into the field. The teacher education curriculum should also expose students to Public Service regulations. Seminars for pre-service teachers after a year of teaching practice would enable students to reflect on their experiences and explore with colleagues possible ways of managing community relations and improvising in situations where teaching resources are in short supply.

The improvement of teachers' salaries, working conditions and the provision of teaching resources can also help to motivate beginning teachers while rural allowances can greatly assist to retain new teachers within the rural areas.

Notes

1. A satellite school is a make shift unregistered school which is an appendage of an established and registered school within the vicinity . Such schools administratively fall under a registered mother school and are often poorly resourced.

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