



Novice teachers' strategies to overcome the challenges in teaching and learning

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Abstract. The problems of novice teachers at school still raise questions and require further research. Therefore, this study was done in the district of Kuala Krai to investigate the problems of novice teachers and the strategies that they use in addressing the challenges. This study completely uses main qualitative study as a method and personal interviews with novice teachers in five schools in the district of Kuala Krai. The data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic methods to detect problems faced by novice teachers. The research involved a sample of 6 novice teachers who have been in the teaching service for one to three years, and have not been confirmed in the service. The question instrument was built based on the research questions that are being studied. The findings show that problems involving the novice teachers are related to issues of teaching, extra work, lack of support from school administration and their attitude. According to findings from interviews that have been conducted, all of these problems are the main restrictions for teachers to achieve their goal. The strategies used by the novice teachers in addressing the challenges were asking for guidance from the school counsellor, trying to increase the sources of information by utilizing the internet as well as practicing good interpersonal relationships. This study proposes that the training and education of novice teachers, their physical and mental readiness, mentor system and staff development training should be strengthened so that novice teachers will gain higher knowledge and have more quality in their skills.

Keywords: Novices teacher, Support, Challenges, Staff development training and Continuous professional development.

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INTRODUCTION

The world is rapidly changing together with the unprecedented rapid development in the technology and information era. In the 21st century, advanced technology in Information Communication Technology (ICT) has created a borderless world (Malik, 2019). We live in an interconnected world where globalization, ICT and knowledge explosion have shrunk the world into a global village. With all these rapid developments in the lives of human beings, teachers who are responsible for educating the young minds must keep abreast with the new wave of challenges in the education world.

The 21st century challenges require skillful teachers who are also knowledgeable in ensuring the development of education (Altbach, 2007). Therefore, professional and personal development of teachers must be taken seriously as they are the front runners in the education of the country's young minds. Their personal and career development should not come to an end when they finish their training and start teaching at schools. In addition, unplanned and unsystematic teacher development programmes would be an obstacle in teachers' success and effectiveness and would be a hindrance to achieve the objective of developing their potentials in teaching.

As teachers play pivotal roles in a nation's education system, they must possess high quality subject knowledge and skills to be able to teach effectively. Based on Malaysia Development Plan in the Tenth Malaysia Plan gazetted in 2014, the Ministry of Education (MOE) receives more than 175,000 applications yearly from candidates who are keen to join the teaching profession but is only able to hire 20,000 new teachers in schools all over the country. These new batch of teachers are referred to as novice teachers.

Ministry of Education Malaysia (2010) defines a novice teacher as a Permanent or Temporary Education Service Officer or a Trained Substitute Teacher who has a Diploma or Degree with teaching qualifications and has to undergo a probation period by Ministry of Education before being confirmed in the Education Service Officer Scheme.

There are many issues which are reported to be faced by novice teachers including school adaptation, teaching skills, and many others despite all the approaches and improvement programmes taken by various parties to solve these issues among novice teachers (Bailey & Taylor, 2015, Calderhead & Shorrock 1997; Lundeen, 2004 and Zakaria Atan, 2015).

Vygotsky Learning Theory

A person's development involves formal and informal education, imitation, social interaction, memorization, and practice. There are many theories which discuss the learning. Vygotsky's learning theory says that a person's learning is influenced by historical, cultural and social factors. He opined that people's education is decided by the culture in which they belong to, and an individual would be able to perform a difficult task if he received enough assistance. In addition, a person's mind will be stimulated by performing difficult tasks. A child's development is very much influenced by language and the elders. Thus, he proposed that parents' roles are central in a child's development as they are the earliest individuals who interact, assist and motivate them.

In short, Vygotsky's theory explains the major role of the elders in the development of a child through interaction and communication between them. In the context of novice teachers, their initial learning is normally acquired via interaction and communication with more experienced teachers. These experienced teachers normally act as mentors to novice teachers, sharing their knowledge via formal and informal means. In Malaysia, the implementation of PPGB using Vygotsky's theory translates to assigning a mentor to every novice teacher so the learning process will be more structured.

Novice Teacher Problem

The transition phase from a trainee teacher to novice teacher involves different challenges, experiences and roles. This is inevitable as the scope and responsibilities of trainee teachers and novice teachers are different. Therefore, it is important that a comprehensive study on novice teachers is carried out to help them become effective and skillful particularly in classroom teaching.

There are many studies on novice teachers done locally and abroad (Confait, 2015; Habibah Elias & Foo Say Fook, 2006; Judy Bailey & Taylor, 2015; Le Cornu, 2013; Rahmah Murshidi, Mohd Majid Konting, Sumru Akcan, 2016; Warren & Miller, 2013; Zakaria Atan, 2015). The studies include issues and challenges faced by novice teachers and professional development programmes implemented for them. Sulman (1987) suggested that research must focus on classroom teaching among novice teachers. This is because teaching is the main focus in the teaching profession. His opinion was shared by other scholars in education field who believe that the most pressing problem faced by novice teachers is classroom activities (Socket 1996; Staton & Hunt 1992). This problem causes novice teachers' failure in applying the knowledge they receive during their training into their classrooms. Due to this, many scholars try to examine the strategies employed by novice teachers in classroom. This is because the core business of teachers takes place in classrooms and their failure in executing their lessons in class would hinder students' progress.

Trotter (1986) believed that a teacher needs many years of teaching experiences before he or she can be a skillful teacher. They also believed that only a small percentage of teachers will become experts in their field. Hence, novice teachers must move towards improving their knowledge, skills, and increasing the effectiveness of their teaching techniques to achieve the status of expert teachers. In order to achieve this, these novice teachers should be provided with the necessary assistance to help them manage the early phase of their teaching career.

A number of studies have been done to explore the issues and problems faced by novice teachers (Calderhead & Shorrock (1997; Lundeen, 2004; Nasir Mohd Idris, 1998). A study done by Tan Meng Guat (2007) on 200 Bahasa Melayu novice teachers at Chinese Vernacular Primary Schools indicated lack of teaching and learning (TnL) skills among novice teachers in classroom teaching. This shows that there is a need for these novice teachers to be helped so they can improve their teaching skills. If teachers do not have adequate classroom knowledge and skills, students' academic achievement might be adversely affected. In addition, novice teachers who are not fully prepared to enter the teaching profession can also bring about negative effects to the students performance. This will subsequently cause a decline in the schools' grades and affect the country's education system as a whole. If the problem is not addressed, this would eventually

affect students' academic achievement. Furthermore, it was also found that these novice teachers lack references and information on the latest changes in the grammar of the language they are teaching.

Bartell (2005) found that the main problem faced by novice teachers when they were first posted to schools was trying to adapt themselves to the real classroom environment. These novice teachers should be given proper guidance to carry out their responsibilities of fulfilling the needs of students from different ethnic groups and backgrounds (Knowles & Cole, 1994; Veenman, 1984).

Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) opined that majority of teachers who are in the first few years of their service face various problems in TnL which include managing students in classrooms, managing relationship with students in classroom, planning students' activities and learning, observing students' understanding of lessons and adapting to their roles in school's social structure.

Based on the Integrated Education concept (Mohammed Sani, 2002), a teacher must undergo continuous teaching training throughout his career as a teacher. A study done by Lundeen (2004) examined problems faced by novice teachers in their first year of teaching service and found that four major problems faced by novice teachers include issues related to classroom management, student discipline, peer relationship and interaction among teachers. Novice teachers are also having problems adapting themselves to the real school environment because teacher training programmes are theoretical in nature (Veenmann, 1984). The complexity and the uniqueness of TnL process may impede a teacher's progress in adapting to a new working environment. Based on a research done by Mohd Aliff and Yusraini (2014) about novice teachers, it was found that novice teachers are very tentative in varying their teaching methods because they are still new in the teaching profession.

In addition, a study done by Mohd Nasir Mohd Idris (1998) on 128 novice teachers in four districts in Malaysia found that among the problems faced by novice teachers are students' personality, co-curricular activities, teaching methods, classroom management and problems in getting teaching aids. A research done by Zuraidah A. Majid (2001) on 250 novice teachers serving in schools in the Federal Territories, Malaysia indicated that novice teachers encounter problems in student discipline management and classroom control.

Meanwhile, the Federal Schools Inspectorate (1998) reported that teachers graduating from teacher training institutes who are teaching at primary schools in the country are only rated average in their teaching performance. Among the weaknesses observed among them in classrooms are lack of preparation and the absence of teaching aids. Similarly, Baharin Abu (2006), in his study, found that teaching knowledge and skills among novice teachers are only at the average level.

Based on these two studies, it is clear that novice teachers will face bigger problems if their level of preparedness in TnL process is low. The failure of novice teachers to address this problem would hinder quality learning and affect students' academic performance. Therefore, this study is carried out to explore the problems faced by novice teachers in schools.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This study is aimed at exploring problems faced by novice teachers in classroom. The research question is: What are the problems faced by Malaysian novice teachers in classroom?

METHODOLOGY

6 novice teachers from different schools were involved in this study. This research used face-to-face interview to gather information on problems faced by novice teachers in schools. The semi-structured interview questions were divided into three sections : Section A - Demography, Section B - questions related to problems faced by novice teachers, and Section C - follow-up questions based on findings during the interview sessions. The researchers allotted some time for the respondents to answer the questions. Every session was recorded using a tape recorder with the respondents' consent. It was then transcribed. Once all the data were gathered, they were analysed to identify the next type of data to be collected. This study adopted data analysis and data refining method as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) which involved writing summaries, writing reflections and making notes of the interview sessions.

To carry out the study, the researchers first obtained the permission from Malaysia Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD), Malaysia Ministry of Education (MOE). After getting the approval from research supervisor regarding the interview questions, the researchers scheduled interview appointments with the respondents of this study. Appointment was sought from the respondents to ensure the smoothness of the interview sessions.

FINDINGS

Novice Teachers Problems

Findings show that problems faced by novice teachers in classrooms include syllabus-related issue, teaching resources, skills and knowledge, classroom control and management.

Issues of Teaching

Out of six novice teachers interviewed in this research, the researcher found that all six (GN1 – GN6) said that teaching was the main problem faced by them. The findings showed that subjects and teachers' weekly contact hours had a major impact on these novice teachers. This might be due to them being inexperienced in teaching. To illustrate, GN1, GN2 and GN3 who had below one year of teaching experience, had more problems compared to those who have been teaching for more than one year. In addition, GN3, GN4 and GN6 who had one to two years of teaching experience were able to adapt well with the subjects they were assigned to teach and were comfortable with their weekly contact hours. GN3 who had only been teaching for two months found that he was not comfortable teaching the subject and thought that the contact hours were overwhelming. GN3 taught the English language, had 28 contact hours and taught a class with generally weak students. For GN3, these issues caused problems to him.

"At first, I was not comfortable at all teaching here. I couldn't adapt with my timetable. I remember being so stressed out at that time" (GN3)

Besides being inexperienced, data analysis showed that female novice teachers faced less problems in teaching compared to their male counterparts. This was mentioned by GN4, GN5 and GN6 who said they encountered problems in teaching. The problems faced by these male novice teachers include teaching workload and teaching techniques. This is based on GN4's responses to the related interview question. He said,

"...when I first started teaching, I didn't know how and what approach I could use to teach my students. I tried asking senior teachers and was hoping they could help me with my predicament. However, I found I could turn to the Internet, especially Youtube, for resources". (GN4)

Data from GN's interview showed lack of resources to help in the teaching process. This was due to lack of Internet access in her school. According to her,

"...here the Internet access is rather poor and intermittent. I couldn't have access to teaching resources that I need if I want to improve my TnL process". (GN2)

Therefore, this shows that teaching is the main problem faced by novice teachers.

Extra Work Issues

The second issue is related to extra work given to novice teachers at schools. Findings show that novice teachers assigned with extra workload. In the interview, novice teachers stated that their workload, including teaching hours, in the first year was overwhelming. GN2 and GN3 who had been teaching for 6 months and 2 months respectively, were given a lot of tasks which must be completed within a short time. They said,

"...I have a lot of work that I always have to continue everything at home. I was tasked to chaperone students for the District Hockey Tournament despite not being the teacher in charge for the team". (GN2)

"...my extra work in the afternoon is completing the mural at the computer lab". (GN3)

Findings based on the interview show that these novice teacher rarely turn down the request to carry out work which is initially assigned to or is the responsibility of other teachers. One possible factor for this scenario is their age. Being younger, at the age range of 24 to 29 years old, they accept the work out of respect of other teachers' seniority.

"I took it in my stride. I see it as my responsibility as a teacher. Most of the extra work was assigned to me by more experienced teachers". (GN2)

This issue is not new among novice teachers in schools as this is part and parcel of teachers' journey in their teaching career.

Management Support Issue

The third problem faced by novice teachers is problems related to the support from the school's management. This problem varies based on gender. Generally, female novice teacher received more support compare d to the male novice teachers. All three female novice teachers, GN1, GN2 and GN3 mentioned that they received full support from their school principals. Their responses are as follows:

"The school and the principal have given me enough support since my day one. The positive vibes motivate me to be more confident and happy to teach here".(GN1)

"...the school principal is a nice person and very helpful to a new teacher like me".(GN2)

"The school administration have helped me a lot in overcoming some of the problems I had since working here".(GN3)

The scenario, however, is not the same for the male novice teachers. Findings show that GN4, GN5 and GN6 did not receive as much support and help from the school management compared to their female counterparts. This might be due to the perception that male teachers do not generally need such support from the administration. GN6 said,

"The school hopes I, on my own, learn quickly and I am expected to be always alert of the current situation and to be independent".(GN6)

However, findings from this research also show that those with more than one year of teaching experience received a high level of support from the school administration. This is shown in the case of GN5 who used his expertise in computer to his school. This novice teacher was given enormous support from the school for his expertise and was asked to assist other teachers with his knowledge. He said,

"...my school administration gave me a lot of motivational support in these two years I've been teaching here. I got to share my skills and computer expertise to help all the teachers here in their TnL process".(GN5)

"I would like to thank my school principal who has been giving me continuous support and motivation in expanding my skills".(GN5)

Therefore, it can be concluded that the issue of management support is one of the problems faced by novice teachers and the way these teachers respond to the problems varies from one novice teacher to another.

Teacher's Attitude issue

The fourth issue faced by novice teachers is related to attitude and perceptions of other teachers towards novice teachers. Other teachers' attitude towards novice teachers depends on novice teachers' age and gender. Findings show that GN1,GN2 and GN3 felt that other teachers did not have any qualm in working with them and helping them with their TnL, cocurricular activities and school's programmes. They said,

"My colleagues always motivate me to work harder and try new things for my skills improvement".(GN1)

"...my friend always provide me with enough support and are always willing to share their ideas and creativities".(GN2)

"i always get help from other experienced colleagues especially in my TnL".(GN3)

The situation is the same with the male novice teachers. During the interview, GN4, GN5 and GN6 said that other teachers' attitude towards them is no difference with their attitude towards other teachers. Other teachers think that novice teachers are able to function just like other teachers, regardless of their teaching experience. They said,

"..they treat me as if I have been teaching for years and there's no gap between us".(GN4)

"My colleagues see us just like other teachers with the exception that we have not been confirmed in the teaching service".(GN5)

"they are friendly and never hesitate to share their knowledge with me"(GN6)

This shows that the attitude of novice teachers' as well as other teachers has an impact on the novice teachers. All of the novice teachers stated that other teachers' attitude towards them was good.

Findings for Research Question 2 : Strategy used by Novice Teachers in Schools to Overcome the Problems They Face

The next research question explores the strategies used by novice teachers to overcome the problems they face in schools. The strategies used by the novice teachers in addressing the challenges are asking for guidance from the school counsellor, trying to increase the sources of information by utilizing the internet as well as practicing good interpersonal relationships

Mentoring

All research participants stated that they received a lot of guidance from their mentors. Most of the mentors are senior teachers with experience in TnL and school administration. There are also mentors who are Excellent Teachers who have vast ideas which can be shared with novice teachers. As new teachers, novice teachers must turn to experienced teachers for guidance. In fact, all research participants agreed that one

of the ways to address the challenges they face as novice teachers is by learning from the experience of their senior colleagues. GN1, GN2, GN3 and GN6 said that their mentors helped them a lot in accomplishing things. However, GN4 and GN5 were not assigned specific mentors. Hence, they got help from other teachers when they needed it. Their interview responses are as follows:

"I'm very thankful for my mentor, who is also an Excellent Teacher. She has helped me a lot from day one. She is humble, kind and responsible. I love the way she mentor me."(GN1)

"My relationship with my mentor is very good. We always discuss things before carrying out any school programmes."(GN2)

"I got help, mentoring and advise from my mentor as well as other teachers from even other units"(GN3)

"...she is a great mentor with a lot of fresh ideas". (GN4)

In sum, mentoring and guidance is one of the processes which every novice teacher must go through to in schools. Good induction, mentoring and guidance from experienced teachers will help novice teachers problems related to TnL, students, and workload. In short, a mentor plays a big role in pragmatically sustain the novice teacher's motivation.

Resources and The Use of Internet

Findings show that all research participants retrieve knowledge and information regarding their job from the Internet. This is because they can use the information to adapt well to their situations. GN5 and GN6 use tremendous amount of their time to get resources from the Internet in order to function well as teachers. Finding also shows that research participants in the age range of 24 – 31 years old preferred the Internet as their main source of information. Therefore, they are more innovative and creative and most of them frequent websites which provide them with TnL information and teachers' responsibilities and roles in the 21st century. This shows that all research participants were well-prepared before carrying out classroom lessons and any school programmes. They said,

"I prefer to use the Internet to look for information because it's readily available and appropriate".(GN5)

"Internat is the fastest way to get information and one doesn't have to go through excessive red tape"(GN6)

"I always prefer to get information from the Internet compared to getting it from my colleagues because there are a lot of interesting materials there."(GN5)

"..I prepare my lesson plans early using sources from the Internet and I'm very comfortable with it".(GN6)

Teachers' responsibilities are abundant nowadays. This is a new challenge for them as they need to keep abreast with the advancement of technology in the education world. Therefore, all novice teachers must always strive to arm themselves with enough skills for 21st century classrooms as they have to ensure the effectiveness of their teaching. They also need to look for teaching materials which reflect the current situations. The effectiveness of the use of technology in teaching refers to teachers' abilities to integrate pedagogical, psychological and technological knowledge in their teaching as well as students' ability to learn from all the materials used by the teachers.

However, if schools do not have enough infrastructure, teachers and students will not be able to enjoy conducive learning experience. Thus, school infrastructure must always be monitored by the authority to ensure that students and teachers have access to the Internet and computers whenever there is a need. Novice teachers must always work towards producing dynamic learning in the context of Internet usage in schools so it is ingrained in the school's culture. They must also reset their attitude and embrace positivity towards using ICT in classroom as opposed to using the conventional methods.

Findings also show that novice teachers did not have problems in looking for suitable reference books and materials for their lessons. In other words, they have enough means to search for information when they start teaching.

This shows that source of information and the use of internet are not a problem among novice teachers as they are well-versed with computer skills, making it easy for them to prepare teaching materials for their students and to carry out any school programmes.

Good Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal communication happens when two or more individuals have face to face communication without using any complex or organised medium. The sender and receiver of the communication use more than one sense to digest the information, message and reactions. Teachers need to have good interpersonal

skills as they deal with students every day to convey information. Effective teachers possess effective communication skills. This is because, a teacher needs to be able to communicate well with his students in order to transmit specific information which must be understood by the students. Therefore, good communication skills are important for teachers in order to make their teaching effective.

One of the aspects analysed in this research is the communication with stakeholders at schools. In the interview done with the participants, GN1, GN2 and GN5 ranked communication as the highest priority in addressing the challenges faced by novice teachers in schools. This is because two way communication will create ideas which will then expedite the completion of daily work at schools. GN1 and GN2 stated that,

"Communication is the best way for me to search for the right information to ensure success in everything I do"(GN1)

"...asking questions and answering questions are my way of communicating with others. I won't know anything if I refuse to ask".(GN2)

"...interpersonal skills are important so a teacher can achieve his goal".(GN2)

Generally, novice teachers have problems in creating good interpersonal relationships with students, their colleagues, school administrators, and students' parents. In other words, novice teachers must have good relationship with the forementioned individuals. Teachers are able to create good ties with students, their colleagues, parents and school administration (Principal/Senior Teacher, Senior Subject Teacher) because they need to do it as part of their job. They do not know how to communicate and prioritise. Having good interpersonal relationships enables novice teachers to function well as teachers. Data from the interview show that GN3 and GN4 had a different opinion compared to other participants. They said,

"I'm a little bit reserve in communication because I don't normally receive good responses from people"(GN3)

"Sometimes I find it difficult to start a conversation with others. I always do not know what to ask".(GN4)

This clearly shows that effective two way communication is very important for novice teachers. If the communication is positive, the outcomes will be positive. As communication is natural among human beings, it is important that these novice teachers possess good communication skills to help them with their job. Thus, novice teachers must practice good communication skills to uphold the teaching profession.

In summary, there are several problems and challenges faced by novice teachers in schools but they need to equip themselves to overcome the problems. They also need to vary their strategies to ensure that they achieve the goal of education. By doing so, these novice teachers will be able to strengthen their identity and teach their students well, just like their senior counterparts.

DISCUSSION

This study is aimed at exploring problems faced by novice teachers in classroom. Based on the findings, among the problems reported by respondents are issues related to teaching, extra work, lack of support from school administration and their attitude. All of these problems are the main restrictions for teachers to achieve their goal.

According to Shahbuddin Ngah (1986) in his study about teachers' workload in two secondary schools in di Muar Johor, a teacher works for an average of 44.28 hours per week compared to only 35.50 hours for other workers. This is similar to the findings of a study which found that teachers who have more contact hours per week would have problems in teaching.

With regards to the involvement of school administration, findings of this study is aligned with Vennman (1984), who did a research on novice teachers who left the teaching profession. His findings showed that many American novice teachers left the profession because of the lack of guidance from the school administration. Therefore, for the present study, the researcher thinks that this is one of the main problems faced by novice teacher.

Extra workload differs from one novice teacher to another. However, it can be concluded that these novice teachers were given too much work which became a burden for them. Some of them need to shoulder the responsibilities which are outside their expertise and skills.

Findings from teachers' attitude are in line with the findings from a study done by Varah, Theune and Parker (1986) who tried to identify various problems faced by novice teachers in class. They found that novice teachers had problems in maintaining discipline in their classrooms, evaluating students' work, and selecting suitable teaching materials. All these problems need to be tackled early to ensure that these teacher receive the necessary help.

Findings from this study has also explored the strategies used by novice teachers to overcome their problems which are problems related to teaching, source of information and the use of internet and good interpersonal skills. Research has shown novice teachers undergo certain self transformation from being teacher trainees to novice teachers. Some of them are had difficulties in adapting to the changes and embrace the reality of the complex and challenging teaching job. Novice teachers have to undergo more changes in their job compared to other profession. Thus, teachers who are assigned as their mentors have a major role in helping the novice teachers. Previous research done by Wesley (2003) suggested that novice teachers are given continuous training to improve the quality of their professionalism. One of the programmes is the mentoring system in which teachers are taught how to teach. This involves the aspects of practical-based knowledge expansion, the changes of cognitive aspects, and the development of interpersonal skills which covers the affective aspect. However, there are other strategies which can be used to help novice teachers overcome the problems they face in schools. Furthermore, two-way communication is a must to produce the best input in the teaching profession for novice teachers. At the same time, novice teachers must know that they need to fit themselves well in the teaching work culture which will always require them to keep abreast with changes, values, skills, and teaching ethics which are unique to the teaching profession (Olesen & Whittaker, 1970).

From this study, it was found that mentoring plays a major and critical role in providing support and training to novice teachers besides helping them to stay in the profession. Mentoring is one of the ways for the school administration to help novice teachers to add values to their skills. Given that every school is culturally and environmentally different, novice teachers must continuously be provided with opportunities to improve their professionalism despite already completed comprehensive teaching training. Findings show that novice teachers are very concerned toward their teaching orientation and mentoring in schools. There are times when they do not receive enough guidance, especially when they need help with their TnL. Without the proper knowledge of school culture, rules, policy or school procedures, these novice teachers will be met with obstacles in their work. The present mentoring and guidance system is effective in providing novice teachers with the following knowledge:

1. Administration – providing mentoring and guidance of how to carry out certain task or duty related to administration such as class administration, clubs and societies, uniformed units, and sports and recreations. Novice teachers will be able to function well with proper guidance from experienced teachers.
2. TnL - Novice teachers need guidance from Senior Subject Teacher, teachers from the same unit, and other teachers. If they are given enough help, they will be able to teach well.
3. Cocurricular Activities – Most novice teachers are given the tasks to oversee the management of Uniformed Units, Clubs and Societies, and sports and recreations. School administration, especially the Sports Secretaries and Physical Education teachers must guide these novice teachers in the management of uniformed units, clubs, societies, and sports and recreations.
4. Student affairs – Issues related to students are major issues faced by novice teachers. Many of them have problems in managing students especially in terms of discipline and classroom management. Hence, every novice teacher should be assigned an experienced teacher to assist them manage students from different gender, intelligence, emotional and socioeconomic background.

From above, it was found that systems to support novice teacher are important during their early career. In addition, a few researchers such as Bailey and Taylor, (2015) and Cameron, Mulholland & Branson, (2013), highlighted the issues of novice teachers' support in their research. Their findings indicated that it is important that novice teachers are given enough assistance and guidance about the right teaching techniques from more experienced teachers who can act as their mentors. This is because techniques taught and learnt in the teacher training programmes are different from the real school environment. Novice teachers who receive guidance from their mentors should be able to display some improved behavioural changes as compared to those who do not receive any guidance from other teachers.

Suggestions to Improve Novice competencies

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the training received by trainee teachers at teacher training institutions or universities must be followed by programmes which can increase exposure and experience so they can be better prepared to face the real school experience when they start their teaching career. There might be a need to increase the duration of teaching practicum to give enough time for these trainees to get first hand experience of real classroom teaching. Furthermore, the duration for teaching practicum is differs according to universities and teacher training institutions.

The present practice of mentoring system for trainee teachers in schools is too short for these trainees to maximise their learning and for mentors to identify the weaknesses of the trainees and to guide them accordingly. Once these trainees become novice teachers, they are still deprived from the mentoring process as many teachers are too occupied with their teaching related tasks that they do not have enough time to guide these novice teachers. Effective mentoring is key in ensuring the improvement of the teaching quality among novice teachers despite being new in the profession.

Based on the findings of this study, it is important that novice teachers exchange ideas and discuss with their colleagues to improve and enhance their competencies and motivation. Furthermore, school administration officers should carry out classroom observation to ensure the effectiveness of novice teachers in classroom.

Novice teachers must be involved in all activities related to staff development including in-service training, in-house training, and motivational workshops. The State Education Department and District Education Department must organise courses or workshops for novice teachers in the first three years of their career. These courses and workshops would hopefully give exposure to these novice teachers on how to adapt themselves to their school environment.

CONCLUSION

These issues and conflicts among novice teachers should be identified and addressed to ensure that novice teachers will be able to function well in the system. Thus, research which highlights issues and challenges in the education world is important in providing the necessary information to the authority so that effective actions can be taken to solve the problems. As new in their profession, novice teachers need adequate guidance, advice and support from all parties in schools. School principals and other teachers must assist these novice teachers in matters related to school administration, TnL, co-curricular activities and discipline.

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