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The Challenges of Beginning Teacher Induction: A Collective Case Study

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Abstract

The induction of beginning teachers is an imperative process in enculturating teachers to their new careers and helping them overcome the hurdles in the early years of teaching and the registration processes teachers undergo. Although induction practices in Australia have become more common in recent years, the data shows there is still much work to do. The current article presents a collective case study of six induction programs, which sought to ascertain the nature of beginning teacher induction in the independent school sector in NSW. Although difficult to generalise across the entire schooling sector, it is likely that the cases selected provide a snapshot of the variety and inconsistency of induction programs in independent schools across the state. The implications of the findings are significant in that they support structured induction of beginning teachers that may require bureaucratic oversight to ensure that beginning teachers have the best opportunity to become highly qualified career professionals.

The Challenges of Beginning Teacher Induction: A Collective Case Study

Introduction

Traditionally there has been considerable variability with the management and implementation of teacher induction throughout Australia (Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), 2002; New South Wales Institute of Teachers (NSWIT), 2005). To address the variability the Commonwealth's *Graduate to Proficient: Australian Guidelines for teacher induction into the profession (Australian Guidelines)* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2016) seek to provide advice and recommendations for the implementation and execution of beginning teacher induction (BTI) across the country. The *Australian Guidelines* recognise the importance of BTI to the future of the teaching profession throughout Australia and are long overdue considering that recommendations for BTI have been consistent since at least the early 1990s. Support for induction in Australia was prevalent throughout the 1990s (Dinham, 1992; Ramsey, 2000), implemented informally in the late 1990s and more formally in the 2000s (DEST, 2002; McCormack & Thomas, 2003). Despite the support for BTI, the *Australian Guidelines* are the first to address the variability and inconsistencies that are prevalent in the understanding, development and implementation of programs in Australia.

Background

Induction

Induction has come to mean different things depending on the context in which it is applied. Teacher induction, and more specifically BTI, has its roots in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, where mandatory schooling and professional standards for teaching were examined in the post-war period (Serpell, 2000; Tisher, 1979).

Induction in recent years has come to be an umbrella term for orientation, mentoring and support of teachers, both new to the profession and/or new schools (Wong, 2004) and has been linked to professional accreditation/registration. In NSW, since October 2004, accreditation of teachers was the remit of the New South Wales Institute of Teachers (NSWIT) [later named Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) and now called the New South Wales Standards Authority (NESA)], which stated:

A key priority of the NSW Institute of Teachers and of the profession in general, is to support you to establish yourself in your teaching career. This support occurs through accreditation during which you will be mentored and supported by senior members of the teaching profession. This process will provide you with a structured induction into teaching. (2005, p. 3)

What this policy established in 2005, was that any teacher who underwent the accreditation process, called registration in all other states and territories, received, by the very nature of the that process, structured induction. Although it seems evident that the accreditation process is inextricably linked to induction, the *Australian Guidelines* only mention that process twice. They say that systems, sectors and regulatory authorities “facilitate the provisional to full registration process which is begun through induction” (AITSL, 2016, p. 9). Before the *Australian Guidelines*, there were no shared definitions or understandings, in Australia, of what BTI entailed (Kearney, 2014), except that teachers, at least in NSW, were informed that their schools provided structured induction through the accreditation process. Despite the lack of clarity provided by the NSWIT on structured induction, Commonwealth recommendations (DEST, 2002, 2003) were clearer and the new *Australian Guidelines* closely mirror those recommendations:

The term ‘induction’ refers to a formal program and other support provided to assist early career teachers... to move to the... [next] career stage - to learn, practise and refine the elements of the professional role that are best acquired while teaching. (AITSL, 2016, p. 2)

The *Australian Guidelines* provide more detailed guidance on what a program should entail and justify the reasons for implementing a program; however, a more comprehensive definition of induction could be suggested. One such definition, which was used as the operational definition for this research is: ‘the primary phase in a continuum of professional development leading to the teacher’s full integration into a professional community of practice and continuing professional learning throughout their career’ (Kearney, 2015). The operational definition came from a review of definitions from the literature (see Kearney, 2014). Those definitions all refer to a multi-stage formal process toward the beginning of a career to support the teacher. A definition does not guarantee good practice, instead, it is the effectiveness of a program that has the greatest impact on the beginning teacher (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Successful induction programs produce teachers who are dedicated to quality teaching and continuing learning (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004) and effective BTI has been shown to facilitate the transition into the profession (Gilles, Wilson, & Elias, 2010); arrest high beginning teacher attrition rates (Helms-Lorenz, et al., 2017); and, alleviate the problems faced in the first years of teaching (Hudson, 2012; Serpell, 2000). These factors suggest, but are not definitive in concluding, that BTI cannot only help to facilitate an easier transition to the profession, but also in keeping teachers in the profession longer, which could in turn help them to develop into higher quality teachers.

Problems Beginning Teachers Face

There is seemingly universal agreement on the problems beginning teachers face early in their career. They are typically given the most difficult classes; more classes to teach; and, have more out-of-class duties imposed on them than their more experienced colleagues (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Killeavy, 2006). Early work on BTI found:

On the problem of beginning teachers the results are uniform and almost identical irrespective of the empirical method used to ascertain them, the quality of the design and analysis in particular studies, the decade when the study was done, and even the country where the study was done (McDonald, 1982, p. 10).

For more than five decades teachers have been reporting problems with ‘discipline’, ‘classroom methods’ and ‘motivation’ (Dropkin & Taylor, 1963). In the early 1980s Veenman found that beginning teachers reported problems that included ‘classroom discipline’ and ‘motivating students’ (1984, p. 154). In the 1990s in Australia, Dinham (1992) found the problems of classroom discipline and workloads were most prominent amongst beginning teachers, which reiterated the findings of Dropkin and Taylor in the 1960s and Veenman in the 1980s. It seems that from the 1960s to the 1990s the problems of beginning teachers were not only pervasive, but also uniform, confirming McDonald’s sentiment in the early 1980s.

Since the year 2000, various studies have found that beginning teachers are still facing similar problems with behaviour management; excessive responsibilities; inadequate mentoring and supervision; and, failure to recognise and reward professional growth in their early years (Hudson, 2012; McCormack, 2005). The OECD (2012, p. 39) reported similar results and recommended more support and professional development: ‘Given the concerns of new teachers about their classroom teaching and the difficulties

they encounter with classroom management issues, greater importance should be placed on the support and development they receive.’ This evidence suggests that despite decades of research and recommendations, the needs of beginning teachers are still not being met.

This is not to suggest that no action has been taken, recent reviews of the profession in Australia include: *Review of Funding for Schooling* (2011), *Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools* (2018), *Productivity Commission’s School’s Workforce Report* (2012), *Great Teaching Inspired Learning*, (2012), *Teacher Education Minister’s Advisory Group* (2014), *Induction* (2016), and the *National Teaching Workforce Dataset* (NTWD) (2014), all of which have impacted education in different ways.

These reviews and the resulting recommendations are all very important to the future of the teaching profession in this country, if acted upon. Almost two decades ago, Ramsey reported that education was the most reviewed profession in Australia, and that, ‘the most common characteristic of these reviews has been the lack of action on their recommendations’ (2000, p. 116). The most relevant recent review for this paper is the AITSL scan of teacher induction in Australia (Deloitte, 2015) and the resulting *Australian Guidelines*. While this review did not appear in as many headlines as some of the others, it is equally important to the future of the teaching profession as the others. The scan concluded that, ‘improving the quality of beginning teacher induction programs could lift teacher quality and student outcomes across Australia’ (Deloitte, 2015, p. 34).

Independent Schools

To contextualise the research an understanding of independent schooling in Australia is needed. Australia has three distinct school sectors: The government/public sector, the systemic Catholic sector and the independent sector, which are defined by their governance structures. The government/public sector is operated by the state government in each state/territory. Catholic systemic schools are operated by the Catholic Education office in each diocese, but also attract federal funding to supplement private fees. Independent schools can be secular or religious, including Catholic, but are operated independently with each school being its own entity; these schools also attract federal funding to supplement fees.

In NSW, there are 480 independent schools (Association of Independent Schools (AIS), n.d.), which constitutes an 85% increase over the past 20 years and accounts for 16% of all students (AIS, n.d.). The independent sector is the fastest growing sector in Australia, accounting for more than 16% of all students (Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA), 2018). In the independent sector each school is independent, free to operate, for the most part, as it wishes; therefore, research into this sector is imperative if we are to have a comprehensive understanding of schooling in Australia.

Research Methodology

A collective case study was used to better understand the nature of effective induction practice in six independent schools. Multiple subjects (teachers and administrators) in each case (school) provided an account of their experiences of the induction process. The research took place in two phases. First a survey was sent out to all independent schools in NSW (n=~400). Schools that responded (n=42) and self-selected as having a BTI program (n=19) were then purposively selected for their range of diversity. Factors such as religious association or lack thereof; socio-economic status of the area; co-educational or single sex; primary, secondary or K-12; and, whether the school was

regional, rural or urban were all factors that were used for selection. While the research initially intended to analyse approximately 10-12 schools, the number of respondent schools that met the inclusion criteria was limited and therefore only six were chosen. Besides the diversity of schools, the cases selected also had to have a formal BTI program in place for at least three years with at least three teachers who had undertaken the program in the past two years. Only eight schools that responded met these criteria and two of those withdrew from the study after the initial interview with the administrator. Table 1 below shows relevant details of each of the six schools.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Phase two included interviewing each of the teachers who had participated in the BTI program and the administrator in charge. The administrator in all cases was either a member of the school leadership team or an experienced teacher who was appointed the role. Twenty-six interviews were conducted in total. A comprehensive document review that included policies and other related resources associated with orientation, induction and professional development was conducted to triangulate data collected in the surveys and interviews.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed in three distinct phases. The first phase of analysis aimed to understand the individual experiences in each case. This was followed by a comprehensive analysis, which aimed to understand each case in its entirety, by understanding the experiences of each participant individually and then combining those experiences into a case report. Finally, a cross-case analysis took place, which sought to understand how the cases related to one another and the characteristics of effective induction. Initially, directly following the interview, the recording of each

interview was replayed and additional notes were made to supplement those taken during the interview. The purpose of this was twofold: first, conceptualising the data through ‘casing’ (Neuman, 2011) aided in understanding the individuality of each case; and secondly, it allowed for an initial noting of apparent themes and trends for each case. Next a systematic analysis of the interview transcripts for emerging trends and themes occurred (Mertens, 2005). Themes and trends were identified and integrated by grouping similar themes into broad categories. During the cross-case analysis, these themes were compared to the characteristics for effective induction and international best practice induction (Kearney, 2014):

- the one to two-year mandated program that focused on teacher learning and evaluation;
- the provision of a mentor;
- the opportunity for collaboration;
- structured observations;
- reduced teaching and/or release time;
- intensive workplace learning;
- beginning teacher seminars and/or meetings;
- professional support and/or professional networking; and,
- part of a program of professional development.

To start, individual comments within each case were sorted to categorise similar concepts to identify the essence of each case. Once the individual teacher interviews were completed the administrator interviews were subject to the same processes, but were analysed for congruent and/or contradicting statements when compared to the collective teachers’ perceptions. The final aspect of the individual case analysis was the writing of narrative reports for each case using select quotations to illustrate common themes, which provided an opportunity for further examination (Denscombe, 2010). Given the large volume of data, quotations were selected from individuals to

illustrate a common theme representative of the case, not the individual's perspective (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Once an advanced understanding of each individual case was reached through the narratives, it allowed for improved cross-case comparisons (Simons, 2009) through analytic narrative analysis (Pedriana, 2005). Progressive focusing (Simons, 2009) was used to aid in the identification of relevant cross-case themes and common issues of induction. Specifically, in this phase of the cross-case analysis, the individual interview transcripts were coded according to the characteristics for effective induction and international best practice. Generalisations across the identified themes are used to make recommendations (Denscombe, 2010) with regard to the current challenges of BTI in the independent schooling sector specifically, as well as more broadly in all sectors of schooling.

Findings

The findings address each of the four main themes that emerged from the analysis of the cases. While more than ten common themes were found, for the purpose of brevity the four most relevant themes to current induction practices will be the focus of this discussion. The cases illustrate that the nature of BTI, specifically in the Australian independent sector of schooling, is distinctive and does not follow a prescribed format. Each case illustrated various methods and justifications for their BTI programs; however, four common themes emerged quite clearly in the data. These themes are discussed and considered to allow the reader to better understand the ways in which BTI is conceptualised in these cases and possibly the broader spectrum of schools throughout NSW, Australia or more broadly. While these cases do not presuppose a generalisation with regard to BTI, they present a clearer picture of the ways in which

BTI is conceptualised at the school level, which allows for general recommendations for the improvement of such programs.

Conceptualising induction

There was extensive variation and inconsistency in the use of the term induction, which was a hindrance to implementing effective programs. The data found that in the 26 interviews conducted there were 16 different ways that induction was understood, which can be sorted into three broad categories: orientation to the school, mentoring and professional development. If the term induction is routinely used in so many different ways in schools, it is not surprising that it influences the effectiveness of programs at the school level.

Although the misapplication of the term may improve with the new *Australian Guidelines*, the misunderstanding of the concept may constitute a much more significant discrepancy in understanding induction. Whether the definition proposed by the *Australian Guidelines* or the one proposed in this article forms the basis of understanding, any examination of the nature of induction from an educational perspective results in a conceptualisation of BTI, even in its most basic form, as a support system for neophytes to facilitate the transition into their new career. Unfortunately, this research found that when the term is misused, or simply misunderstood, the beginning teacher is adversely affected.

Only Case 2 was able to successfully differentiate the concepts of orientation and induction and had separate policies for each; however, even this school used the term 'induction' for its orientation for all teachers. Although this case represented the best of the six induction programs, its misuse of the term induction as orientation, confused the beginning teachers. Thus, when teachers were asked to describe their induction

experience, they referred to the two-day orientation they received, instead of the two-year program that constituted the school's BTI program. A beginning teacher who believes that the induction process, as outlined in the new *Australian Guidelines*, consists solely of a two-day orientation, and that other support received relates not to induction, but something else, perpetuates the misunderstanding of induction in educational fora.

Case 2 was the only school with comprehensive policies for every stage of teachers' professional development. One teacher from the school described the process as:

Crucial for all new teachers to remain in the profession..., but you can't confuse the accreditation process with induction, otherwise you risk doing both insufficiently. They are both essential, but separate.

In Case 1, induction represented an idea, rather than an actual process. The idea of an induction program was formulated in 2010 and as at 2015 the actual program had not yet materialised according to the teachers. They reported informal and infrequent support offered by various staff members at different times. The school's conceptualisation of induction as an informal program of support does not meet the spirit of induction as intended by the *Australian Guidelines*, nor any of the recommendations from national or state-based agencies before the introduction of those guidelines. Two other Cases (3, 4) shared a common trait with regard to misinterpretation of the term induction in that it was a two-day orientation for all staff at the beginning of the school year and not specific to beginning teachers. Although in both cases the school self-selected as having a comprehensive induction program, the accounts of both the teachers and administrators confirmed that the only formal part of the program was the two-day orientation. The last two Cases (5, 6) also lacked a formal process, mostly due to a misunderstanding of what induction entails. Case 6

assigned a mentor to the beginning teacher and Case 5 assigned a ‘buddy’, both of which might constitute a mentoring program, but not, according to the definitions used here, a comprehensive induction program.

The term induction and its conceptualisation and implementation in schools requires careful consideration. A proper conceptualisation of induction that is aligned with best practice can ensure that the spirit of induction is maintained and the needs of beginning teachers are met. However, as long as schools continue to misconceptualise induction as either orientation and/or mentoring only, instead of an initial phase in a continuum of professional learning, teachers may struggle to thrive in the early years of their careers.

Accreditation (registration)

When the NSWIT became the accreditation body for teachers in October 2004 schools had to amend their policies and procedures to conform to new directives. During the interviews with the administrators, BOSTES (the former NSWIT) was described, in four out of five cases, in negative terms. Teachers too, at times, were not pleased with the way the accreditation process was administered by BOSTES. A common theme that arose was that teachers who felt disenfranchised by BOSTES were teaching in schools where the administrator expressed dissatisfaction towards that same entity. It seemed that the sentiment of the administrator toward BOSTES had an impact on how the program was or was not implemented in each school. Although all six cases cited accreditation as a major emphasis of their induction program, the attitude of the school, or at the very least the administrator of the program, correlated highly to the quality of BTI as perceived by the beginning teachers.

In Cases 3, 4 and 6 the administrator felt that the introduction of NSWIT in 2004 and the Professional Standards (AITSL, 2012), on which accreditation is based, was

imposed upon them. They felt this was unprecedented in the independent sector; the government was enforcing external regulations on schools that were independent. In Cases 1 and 2 the administrators saw the benefit of the regulations to the profession and welcomed the changes. The administrators in those cases (1, 2) felt that the accreditation process aided teachers in their transition from university to the profession and that accreditation gave induction an added purpose. The disparity between the attitudes of different schools towards accreditation, and by proxy induction, had a significant effect on the experiences of the beginning teachers.

One of the biggest complaints from the teachers collectively, in all cases where they did not have successful induction experiences, was the school's lack of knowledge with regard to the requirements of accreditation. In fact, the administrator in Case 2 was the only one who had overwhelmingly positive things to say about BOSTES.

Although many of the recommendations of accreditation were a significant part of the induction program at Case 1, it was reported that many of those structures were in place before NSWIT. Case 3 and Case 4 saw induction as a school-based process to meet the needs of their teachers in a contextual, often religious, framework. At Case 5 the administrator reported that the school's unusual and unique context was a fundamental principle in tailoring its induction to meet the needs of teachers in a rural, religious context. In Case 5, accreditation was seen as a starting point from which to build the school's own version of induction. Unfortunately, the existence of any form of induction was not supported by any of the teachers at this school.

The Case 3 administrator was the most outspoken about their dissatisfaction with BOSTES and was quite dismissive of its recommendations. He reported that the school had effective processes and that the introduction of mandatory accreditation had made the process more evaluative, which detracted from the induction process. Case 6 had

similar sentiments with regard to formal accreditation and felt that as an independent school it had unique needs and that the processes implemented by BOSTES were better suited to government schools. This sentiment though, specifically in this case is paradoxical, as the school misinterprets induction as orientation, as was seen in the previous section. One teacher at this school reported, ‘You really can’t call what I experienced induction; it was more like a trial by fire. I came into the school all enthusiastic and ready to go, but within days it seemed I was left on my own. I felt like a failure in those first few months.’

The teachers in Cases 3-6 were adversely affected by their administration’s perception of the accreditation authority and the accreditation process more generally. Whether that perception is caused by a misconception (Case 6), or a perceived misunderstanding of the school's theological foundations and how this relates to inducting teachers (Cases 3-5), is immaterial when it comes to the teachers’ experiences. Teachers became disadvantaged due to a lack of understanding about the differences between accreditation and induction. While NSWIT (2005) confused the issue by telling beginning teachers that schools would provide ‘structured induction’, schools, specifically those in the independent sector, did not necessarily agree with the intrusion into their procedures. BOSTES, and even the new *Australian Guidelines*, simply guide and recommend best practice; it is up to the schools to provide the support.

In four Cases (3-6), the schools are using the mandatory processes of accreditation as justification for overlooking their responsibilities to their beginning teachers. Specifically, Case 3 and Case 6, where the administration reported that induction in their respective schools was better before mandatory accreditation, have failed to implement any formal ongoing support for teachers to aid their enculturation.

A feature shared by all schools in this study was the emphasis on their uniqueness. Independent schools have to find their niche in the marketplace, therefore it is essential for them to distinguish their ethos as different from other independent schools and government and systemic religious schools more broadly. The identification of these schools as unique gave the impression that they should not be subject to government policies, despite their reliance on government funding. For these cases, the NSWIT seemingly provided an ideological line of reasoning to schools that were reluctant to implement effective, comprehensive induction. Because NSWIT tied induction to accreditation, it constituted an imposition against those schools' independence.

Responsibility for induction

The third theme was the extent to which each case regarded the responsibility for BTI as the school's or the teacher's. How the schools conceptualised this responsibility had a significant impact on the workload of their beginning teachers. There is no doubt that in the recommendations originally proposed by NSWIT and in the current *Australian Guidelines*, the processes of both accreditation and induction are regarded as a shared responsibility between the accreditation authority, the school and teachers.

NESA has specific guidelines regarding the responsibility of induction; however, only Cases 1 and 2 reflect the recommended guidelines. The Teacher Accreditation Manual (NSWIT, 2006a) outlined the specific roles of NSWIT, the school and the beginning teacher:

Accreditation candidates will be required to collect and present documentation as evidence of their meeting the standards. This includes written documentation as required by the Institute and authorised by supervisors as contributing to their successful attainment of the standards (p. 23).

This is the only clearly described responsibility of the beginning teacher according to NSWIT. Other responsibilities are assigned to the delegate for accreditation, who, in independent schools, is a school-based functionary. These responsibilities are: 'adequate supervision and mentoring; supporting accreditation; providing advice and reliable accreditation judgments; having a policy determining the most appropriate teacher has been assigned responsibility for accrediting candidates; [and], responsibility for developing Accreditation Reports' (NSWIT, 2006a, p. 23). In four Cases (3-6) however, beginning teachers assumed some or all of these roles and responsibilities. This was a direct result of the schools either not assigning or being ignorant of their responsibilities to assign a competent administrator of the BTI. In Case 6, in particular, and to a lesser extent the other cases, the beginning teachers were specifically told that their accreditation was their responsibility, which is clearly not what is intended.

NESA has an administrative role with regard to accreditation and induction and has, until 2016 when the *Australian Guidelines* were introduced, been the source of information on the roles and responsibilities of induction (see NSWIT, 2006b). As far as induction is concerned, current recommended practice and responsibilities are now outlined in the *Australian Guidelines*:

Systems, sectors and regulatory authorities deliver the policy, program, resourcing, evaluation and accountability frameworks... They facilitate the provisional to full registration process which is begun through induction... This requires providing early career teachers with learning experiences and opportunities to network to build their expertise. (2016, p. 9).

Only in Case 1 and Case 2 did the schools implement programs that aligned to procedures for effective induction. These schools have accepted responsibility for both

the enculturation of their beginning teachers into the profession and providing support throughout the accreditation process. These two Cases (1, 2) have adopted a philosophy of induction that is congruent with current recommended best practice. As the administrator for Case 1 stated: ‘accreditation is mandatory and teachers need ongoing mentoring and support through formal structured induction in order to meet those requirements.’ Cases 3-6, on the other hand, have all implemented their own versions of induction that meet some of the criteria for providing support, with varying levels of responsibility being accepted. Case 6 is notable in that it accepts no responsibility for accreditation. Rather than seeing induction as a process of enculturation and continuing professional development, induction at this school is considered a conduit to accreditation, which is the teacher’s responsibility.

Cases 3-5 all share a similar sentiment regarding the responsibility of induction, which is best expressed as in-principle support. Each case supports induction and accreditation in theory, but has done very little, on a whole school level, to implement formal structures to support the induction and accreditation of their beginning teachers. These cases are characterised by a distinct lack of knowledge with regard to effective induction procedures and their responsibilities with regard to induction and accreditation as set out by NESAs.

In almost all jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth, the accountability for induction and accreditation is a shared responsibility between the accreditation authority, the school and the employer (AITSL, 2014). In this study, teachers were more positive about their experiences in the schools that delegated responsibilities adequately and provided effective induction measures. Those teachers who were not afforded proper induction were not only struggling through the accreditation process but were unsure how long they would remain at the school and/or in the teaching

profession. Of the twenty teachers interviewed, more than half (n=12) reported that they were unsure about their long-term prospects in the teaching profession; all of these teachers were in schools that did not provide, according to the findings of this study, adequate induction (Cases 3-6).

The role of the mentor

The role of mentor and the ways in which mentor/mentee relationships were understood and implemented was a significant indicator of the effectiveness of the BTI programs investigated. Mentoring was illustrated in a variety of ways and was the one common feature in every case. Induction in Cases 3 and 4 entailed little more than the appointment of a mentor, despite the administrator reporting a comprehensive BTI program. A common theme in many of the interviews, with both the administrators and the teachers, was that mentoring and induction were used synonymously, which reinforces the misunderstanding of those particular terms and their relationship to each other.

Two major factors in the provision of the mentor were whether the mentor was Key Learning Area (KLA) or teaching-year specific and if the mentor appointed was the beginning teacher's immediate supervisor, such as a head of department (HoD) in secondary schools, or an assistant principal in primary schools. These two factors significantly affected the teachers' experiences of induction. A key issue was the added mentoring responsibilities that arose in circumstances such as those found at Cases 3, 4 and 6, where the mentor was the immediate supervisor of the beginning teacher and did not receive any extra time for mentoring. The only school that provided their mentor teachers with a time allowance was Case 2 and none provided any remuneration.

The appointment of the beginning teacher's immediate supervisor as their mentor was a problematic theme. When mentoring is the foundation of an induction program, as in Cases 3, 4 and 6, the mentor relationship is pivotal to the success or failure of that program. Mentoring relationships should be mutually beneficial to both the mentor and mentee and allow for open communication, trust and confidentiality (McCormack, 2005). In these Cases (3, 4, 6) the beginning teachers reported reluctance in discussing their difficulties with their mentor, because that same person would produce their final reports for accreditation. A teacher in Case 6 related it in this way: 'a mentor relationship is a much different relationship than that of a head teacher and a new teacher in the department and that's all I felt I had; a normal relationship.' In Case 4 two teachers reported that they did not feel their mentor could provide objective support outside of their role as assistant principal.

Despite placing an undue burden on a HoD or an assistant principal, two positions where overwork is a perpetual concern (Riley, 2017), none of the cases provided training to the mentors. Without clearly defined roles and purposes for mentors, and in some instances beginning teachers, these schools are seemingly running mentoring programs because of the rhetoric that surrounds the idea of mentoring. This idea supports what Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1992) concluded twenty-five years ago in the United States: 'In too many cases of mentoring we find that the educational institution does not clearly identify the purpose of the mentoring, but rather institutes a program because it is believed that it will be effective' (p.706). According to Baker there must be 'an absolute clarity of roles, expectations and knowledge of what constitutes the mentoring relationship' (2002, p.39); this unfortunately was not the situation in these cases, except Case 2, where a specific mentoring policy was in place.

Mentoring was the most significant component of induction programs for all cases with the exception of Case 5, which was found to not have any facets of formal induction or mentoring, despite the insistence of the administrator that it had both. The most effective induction programs were those where the mentor appointed was an experienced member of staff within the beginning teacher's KLA in secondary schools (Case 1), or teaching the same year group in primary schools (Case 2) and where the mentor was not the immediate supervisor for the beginning teacher.

Excessive workloads of beginning teachers were a common concern in all cases, which supports Australian Education Union (AEU) findings (2015; 2016). The provision of a mentor who understands and can help with specific pedagogy and administrative tasks is a factor that came through strongly in interviews. In Cases 3, 4 and 5 where KLA or year-specific mentors were not appointed, the beginning teachers reported difficulties with content specific knowledge, negotiating the curriculum and programming and assessment. Although teachers in Cases 1 and 2 also noted some of these difficulties, they reported managing them more efficiently than colleagues who did not have a year- or KLA-specific mentor.

Discussion

Induction practices lay the foundation for the careers of beginning teachers; however, the manifestation of the intent of BTI has not yet been realised in these cases. Although difficult to generalise to the broader education community, the evidence from these six cases suggests that there is still the same variation and inconsistency in the management of BTI that the DEST found in 2002. The literature supports school-based induction practices as the most useful in enculturating beginning teachers to their school and to their career; however, these findings illustrate that the haphazard manner in which orientation, induction and mentoring are implemented makes it difficult for

this contention to be supported in the schools examined. The *Australian Guidelines* deliver a consistent message that schools can follow; however, they do not go far enough in mandating such programs for beginning teachers.

A standard one-size-fits-all model is not the answer to the question of BTI; the specific context of schools needs to be considered in any BTI program. However, there are essential components that should be universal to all programs, which form the basis of the recommendations that follow. School-based leaders are in the best position to implement a program that is context specific, yet what the findings of this research illustrate is that left to their own devices, without a mandate, this is not happening.

In regards to the implementation of induction in Australia, it has been shown that despite recommendations from state governments and the Commonwealth, many teachers do not receive the support they need in the early years of their career (AEU, 2015; DEST, 2002; Kearney, 2014). An effective induction program requires a commitment of time and resources from the school and dedication towards helping the teacher develop into an accomplished professional. The argument about available resources is a valid one and one canvassed elsewhere (see Kearney, 2014a). An essential insight is that the research supports quality teaching improving student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hattie, 2009) and that effective induction is linked to teacher effectiveness (Stanulis & Floden, 2009); therefore, while a causal relationship between quality induction and student achievement has not been established, it stands to reason that there is a link that further research can identify. The nature of the implementation of successful induction and how that translates into support and guidance for the teacher is a complex undertaking that requires a thoughtful approach by the school and regulatory authority. The inconsistencies in BTI programs found in this study and the ongoing problems faced by teachers in the early years of

their career demonstrate a major lapse between what the literature advocates, the government recommends and what schools practice.

In the six cases, a common theme identified that the accreditation process was the precursor and rationale for BTI programs. It is important to note that BTI, although invariably linked to the accreditation process in NSW, should be more about enculturating teachers, with accreditation being a by-product of that process. There are numerous international models for induction (Howe, 2006) all of which could be used as templates for particular school contexts; however, finding the right model is only the first step in the process of implementing, reviewing, and continually improving a successful program to meet the needs of new teachers. The recent reviews, recommendations and actions taken by the government to improve the quality of teaching in the classroom have focussed on entry into initial teacher education (ITE) and testing during ITE. While these improvements in teacher training continue to move the profession in the right direction, they do not adequately address what happens in the first years of teaching. The first part of a teacher's professional accreditation and enculturation into the profession should be as regulated as every other part of their career to ensure they have the best possible start and the best chance to become the effective educators needed in every classroom.

Conclusion and recommendations

The new *Australian Guidelines* consider the current context of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2012) and define induction within that framework; however, it does little more than the reports of the DEST almost two decades ago (DEST, 2002; 2003). Short of mandating such induction with oversight by regulatory authorities, these recommendations may become one more review that is ignored by the schooling sector and the regulatory authorities more broadly.

Although the recommendations that follow have similarities to the new *Australian Guidelines* and the recommendations that preceded them, they are resultant not only from this research, but from a review of induction more broadly and align with international recommendations put forth by the OECD (2011). The recommendations for BTI arising from this study support:

- A mandated and overseen program supported by policies that promote a formal, structured and evaluated process;
- BTI conceptualised as a learning process that provides professional support in the form of:
 - orientation to the school,
 - mentoring from an experienced colleague in the teachers KLA (secondary) or same year-level (primary) and not the immediate supervisor of the beginning teacher,
 - continuing professional development opportunities,
 - structured observations of beginning teachers by their mentor;
 - structured time release for beginning teachers;
 - mentor training and time release, remuneration, or both for mentors.

The most important distinction from previous and current guidelines is mandating BTI programs and ensuring implementation through administrative oversight. While mandating induction may be problematic in a sector of schooling that finds accreditation contentious, there is little doubt that all schools are complying with the accreditation mandate. Therefore, while this research has illustrated the contentiousness of mandatory accreditation at the time of implementation by schools in

the independent sector, if induction is seen as important, as the *Australian Guidelines* suggest, then mandating induction is worth consideration.

These recommendations are not a cure-all for the state of the teaching profession, nor will they guarantee that students have the benefit of the most effective teachers.

However, if these provisions for induction are implemented in programs that include the characteristics of effective induction identified, at least then, we would have the evidence necessary to evaluate the impact on beginning teachers and subsequently the impact on student learning. The majority of research in Australia on teacher induction and the problems faced in the early years of teachers' careers are small-scale qualitative case studies such as this, and while useful to some extent, these studies are hindered by the lack of consistency across the sector, which could help facilitate larger-scale quantitative studies that assess impact.

The prevalence of reforms in education, which have in the past five years included: entry requirements for ITE programs; literacy and numeracy testing for ITE candidates; a teaching performance assessment in the final year of ITE; and, the move to bring all teachers under the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in 2018 are all in an effort to improve student outcomes in the classroom. If all of these factors have been considered worth mandating, then the abundance of evidence relating to effective beginning teacher induction is similarly as worthy.

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