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Effective induction of new teaching staff: A comparative analysis of best practices and their implementation in a small regional Christian school

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Abstract

Attrition of early career teachers is a major issue in Australia. An effective induction program can positively impact longevity and experience as a teacher. Induction programs are not mandated, and research into what constitutes an effective program has risen in importance. This investigative case study compared the induction policy of a small regional Christian school with best practice as described in the literature. Qualitative data were obtained from recent inductees, relating to their induction experiences and suggestions for improvement. Key findings are that early career and new teachers have different induction requirements for orientation, understanding policies, and a desire for support. Both experienced teacher and early career teacher inductees find value in a reduction in teaching load and need more assistance when teaching out-of-field. Mentorship was found to be most effective when the needs of the mentor are considered alongside the mentee.

> *An effective induction program can positively impact longevity and experience of a teacher*

Introduction

Teacher attrition is currently a major issue in Australian schools. The high number of vacated teaching positions has an impact on students and the remaining staff. Longmuir (2023) found that up to 70% of teachers do not want to continue working in their careers. Of particular concern is the high teacher attrition of early career teachers (ECTs). Research has found that these teachers are 1.8 times more likely to leave the profession (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2018). An important part of a teacher's early exposure to school is an effective and impactful induction process (Kearney, 2014; Shields & Kilgour, 2018).

In the current study, the best practice regarding teacher induction was determined from an analysis of current literature. Teaching staff who had undertaken an induction process in 2023 were interviewed to collect data about their experiences of the process and their suggestions for improvement. The policy, procedures, and practices of a small regional Christian school in Australia were then compared with the literature findings.

Literature Review

A key component to the recruitment and retention of effective staff is the process of inducting these new staff with the organisation's objectives and values from the outset (Jones, 2010). Although orientation and induction are often used interchangeably, there are distinctions between them. Orientation

is the completion of paperwork and routine tasks at initial employment (Society for Human Resource Management, n.d.). It is also a general overview of the workplace, including geographical awareness, and general introductions to relevant personnel. This brief process is expanded by the more structured and in-depth process of induction. The purpose of induction is to familiarise new employees with the organisation's vision, values and cultural norms so that the new employee is equipped to understand and uphold these norms in words and actions (Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2014). This process assists the new employee to adjust to the workplace culture and understand their role within it (Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2014). Simply put, an effective induction process helps the new employee become a part of the cultural fabric of the new environment.

How To Retain Teachers Through Induction

It is common for new teachers to miss the opportunity to be a part of a comprehensive and systematic induction program (Shields & Kilgour, 2018). Research by Wyatt and O'Neill (2022) showed that 51% of beginning teachers did not undergo any induction program. The lack of effective and widespread induction programs is a serious issue.

Researchers such as Sean Kearney have been exploring induction programs and processes in Australian schools. In 2014, he accurately identified the anticipated levels of teacher attrition, indicating that effective induction processes are imperative to supporting ECTs. Additionally, recommendations from Shields and Kilgour's (2018) paper on preventing ECTs from leaving the profession highlighted the need for a school induction program that is formally evaluated to ensure efficacy (Shields & Kilgour, 2018).

Effective induction in schools

Key research findings by AISTL outlined four focus areas for effective induction: professional practice and collaboration, incorporation of feedback and assessment of the new teacher; professional iIdentity, meaning how they develop as a professional in the teaching community and understanding what role they play in the educational workplace; wellbeing, which requires the workplace to be aware of the challenges of teaching and having systems in place to assist the development of resilience; orientation that encompasses geographical knowledge of the workplace, the policies, practices, and procedures, as well as the cultural and interpersonal elements (AITSL, 2018).

Mentoring

Often identified as the key component to a successful induction program, the person selected for the role should be an expert teacher who can impart more than just professional learning opportunities. A "practice-focused mentor" is: a part of the inductee's teaching area, modelling effective pedagogy and practice, focused on the outcomes of the teacher, supportive of wellbeing, and given time to discuss and meet regularly (AITSL, 2018). Although common practice is for the inductee's line manager to be given the responsibility of mentor, this is not best practice. Appointing a subject-specific experienced teacher meant that new teachers felt they could more easily and confidently ask for help (Kearney, 2017). The selection of a mentor must also consider the upskilling and training that is required to develop the skills for mentoring (Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015).

A relatively new approach to teacher mentoring is group mentoring. Teachers were placed in a cohort with multiple competent and intentionally selected mentors allocated. Participants found that the program was more beneficial than one-on-one mentoring, allowing for more emotional and instructional support. They also identified six positive themes about group mentoring: the negation of isolation, improvement of pedagogy, uplifting relationships formed, mentors developed professionally alongside, broader feedback, and more comprehensive support types (Holmes, 2021).

An often overlooked, but important element to mentoring, is leadership contact. This involves visits and interactions with school leaders. Regular interactions with these school leaders will assist new teachers with a clearer understanding of the school's culture and the goals for the individual and the school (AITSL, 2018). It is also important that the principal takes an interest in the wellbeing and development of the ECT, further developing the ideal collaborative culture. In terms of teacher wellbeing, the principal should be aware of the workload of the ECT and their provided mentor, allowing them to both focus on the key components of their roles (AITSL, 2023). Unfortunately, it was found in a study that 25% of ECTs did not find the principal supportive. This led to a recommendation that principals, or other relevant school leaders, take the time and effort to develop positive interactions with new teachers (Shields & Kilgour, 2018).

> *Appointing a subject-specific experienced teacher meant that new teachers felt they could more easily ask for help*

Professional practices

Feedback and evaluation

As teaching is a profession that relies on improvement and innovation, an ECT being able to develop in their role is crucial. As a mentor

working closely with them in their day-to-day practice, being able to observe and give feedback is a fundamental component of effective induction programs (Kearney, 2023). This feedback can either be informal or formal. Informal feedback is based on quick observations, such as a chat in the staff room or between classes. Whereas formal feedback addresses areas of focus or concern for the ECT or school system (AITSL, 2023). This should happen on a regular basis and should incorporate assistance and feedback on the paperwork that the ECT has developed (Shields & Kilgour, 2018). These documents, such as lesson plans and assessments, should also be reviewed through the lens of the AITSL standards, as evidence of the ECT's progression towards meeting the Teaching Standards (AITSL, 2023).

> *Throughout the induction period, there should be regular targeted professional learning opportunities*

Professional development

Professional development and learning are important in teaching as they allow for further improvement and implementation of new knowledge and innovation. Implementing a culture of professional development in the induction process allows for teaching to be viewed as a learning continuum in which consistent professional learning is a key aspect of the role (Kearney, 2023). Throughout the induction period, there should be regular targeted professional learning opportunities that focus on the areas of importance and focus for the ECT (AITSL, 2018; Shields & Kilgour, 2018). Some of the areas identified as needing further professional development include: behaviour management, assessment and feedback (Wyatt & O'Neill, 2021), creative assessments, differentiating for students with special needs, innovative methods of content delivery, and technology use in the classroom (Shields & Kilgour, 2018). These learning opportunities should aim to further develop their teachers with the resources and experiences that equip them for added value and success in the school (AITSL, 2023).

Time allocation

The duration of induction programs and the time given for the completion of the important components must be addressed. Different induction programs globally show lengths of induction ranging from one to two years (Kearney, 2014). Elements of induction should be matched to the school calendar, allowing the ECT to feel equipped throughout all elements of school life, for example, reports, curriculum checks, and interviews.

A reduced teaching load is the main way this is achieved. This allows for extra planning time and increased opportunity for mentors and mentees to meet and engage effectively (AITSL, 2023).

Comparison of induction to site school policy

Now that the need for induction and the key practices outlined in the literature have been explored, the site school's induction policy is to be compared against the literature. The phrase Accreditation Program is used throughout the policy, as "accredited" is the title given to a teacher who has successfully completed the program.

Goals

The goals of the induction policy outline what a teacher who has undertaken the process should be doing. It states that they should imbed Adventist Christian Identity into their day-to-day work and life, focus on improved pedagogy and practice, engage in collaborative practice, participate in professional learning, experience wellbeing and belonging, and engage in reflective practice. All but the goal of imbedding Adventist Christian identity is reinforced in the literature as outlined before.

Methodology

Introduction

The research project is a qualitative, investigative, and comparative study that aims to explore the central question: What does literature say is best practice when inducting new staff and how does a small, regional Christian school compare? The initial component compared the best practice of induction from Australian literature against the site school's induction policy. This was followed by a qualitative investigative study that explored four participants' experiences of the site's induction process. Principal permission was received prior to conducting the interviews, as well as approval from the Avondale University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Data Collection

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with new teachers at the site school to examine whether the participants found that the induction process was effective, and what could be done to improve the process.

The interviews were audio-recorded, with permission from the participants. The recorded files were transcribed using software and then reviewed by the interviewer to ensure accuracy. Upon completion, the interview transcripts underwent thematic analysis. This method of data analysis in qualitative research is effective in identifying, organising, and describing prevalent themes (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2013).

Participants

The participant teachers included two graduate

Induction program components

Table 1: *Components from the Induction Policy compared to best practice.*

Program specifics	Best practice
"Provision of all policies and procedures (via confluence)" and/or staff handbook.	"Teachers need to understand relevant policies… These policies include attendance, student discipline, emergency procedures, curriculum standards…" (AITSL, 2023).
"Provision of a mentor"	Mentoring is "…highly valued by inductees, effective in improving their knowledge and skill, and is also a means of delivering or supporting other strategies." (AITSL, 2018) "The aspects that stood out and relate to international best practice were: the provision of subject specific mentors…" (Kearney, 2017, p. 794)
"Visits from support persons such as Principal, HOS…"	Visits from Principals to beginning teachers should occur multiple times within their first term. (Shields & Kilgour, 2018) School leaders "play a key role in establishing professional relationships with graduates to support their wellbeing and help them understand the culture, practices and expectations of the local setting" (AITSL, 2018, p. 11).
"Completion of Adventist Christian distinctives program"	Becoming part of an organisation is done through the induction program, allowing the employee to feel a "sense of belonging". (Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2014, p. 214)
"Participation in ongoing professional learning"	One of the eight characteristics of effective induction programs was "continuing professional development" (Kearney, 2023, p. 123). Professional development should be regular and matched to the teacher's needs (Shields & Kilgour, 2018).
"A reduction in teaching load for at least the first year of the induction program" (graduates only).	"The aspects that stood out and relate to international best practice were: … reduced teaching load for both the teacher and the mentor…" (Kearney, 2017, p. 794) "Reduced schedules allow extra planning time for ECTs, enable mentors and ECTs to engage effectively and provide the environment for full engagement in induction activities." (AITSL, 2023).
"The NSW SDA Teacher Accreditation Program will normally span two years of full-time teaching".	"Induction is most effective when undertaken over an extended period (… two years or more for full-time teachers…)". (AITSL, 2023). "An effective induction program requires a commitment of time and resources from the school and dedication toward helping the teacher develop into an accomplished professional within a community of practice." (Kearney, 2014, p. 12)
"At least one formal observation report is to be completed during the NSW SDA teacher Accreditation Program process for provisional and conditional teachers"	Mentors should regularly give feedback and ensure documentation is completed properly. (Shields & Kilgour, 2018) Teacher assessment and evaluation support teacher growth. It should occur frequently and provide timely feedback. (AITSL, 2023).
"Teachers on the NSW SDA Teacher Accreditation Program will generally visit at least two other schools and/or classrooms for observation and discussion with experienced teachers."	Induction programs should provide teachers with networking events, including professional networks, especially relevant for regional schools (AITSL, 2023). School systems should provide teachers with the opportunity to "network to build their expertise." (AITSL, 2018, p. 11)

> *"learning experiences should aim to further develop teachers with the resources and experiences that equip them for added value and success in the school"*

teachers in 2023 (ECTs) and two new-to-the-school teachers (NTTS) who had come from another system and therefore provided a greater depth in exploring the induction process. In the data, P1 and P2 refer to the two ECTs, whereas P3 and P4 refer to the two NTTS teachers.

Data Analysis

This process started with open coding, where the researcher became familiar with the data. After which, a series of codes was identified from emerging patterns in the data. These codes highlighted themes within the participants' experiences and how effective the site school's

induction procedure was. Participants also identified ways that their induction experience could be improved. The experiences were then compared and contrasted, leading to a discussion of the findings and how this related to what has been identified as best practice within the appropriate literature.

Results

The The investigation into the induction experience of four teachers at the site school revealed positive and negative experiences, as well as suggested improvements. These three themes were related to the specific components (described in Table 1) of their induction experience.

> *All participants who were provided a mentor spoke positively about the experience*

Staff Handbook

The provision of a staff handbook is a key initial component of the induction program. All participants reported that they received the staff handbook and were aware of it. There were many positive, a handful of negative remarks and some suggestions for improvement identified.

Positive Experiences

All participants stated that they had read the handbook and that they found it particularly useful. The document was praised for giving insight into the day-to-day functioning of the school and answering questions that a new teacher would have. The ECT participants commented that "the main questions I had were answered" whilst another stated that it "specified things that I might not have known…". For the teachers that were NTTS, P3 remarked that the handbook made it clear that the school's special character and Adventist Christian distinctives were imbedded into the school. This was of particular importance for the teacher, coming from a different school system and having not been in a private Christian school setting before. The teacher also mentioned that it reinforced the orientation tour of the workplace and showed the way around the grounds. The other NTTS teacher, P4, stated that the handbook "sharpened up what the professional boundaries were", which provided guidance on how to act and conduct themselves while in the classroom.

Negative Experiences

One of the ECTs found that the staff handbook "lacked information on staff dress code, work hours and how to respond in certain situations" in comparison to a previous workplace. Interestingly, one of the NTTS teachers commented on the staff handbook as effective in covering the details such as staff dress codes and procedures within the school. It is important to note that the ECT was in the secondary school, whilst the NTTS was in the primary school. It was also mentioned that the digital platform, where all policies and procedures are held, had many of the answers to the ECT's questions. However, they found that the digital platform was "an overload of information" while the information contained in the handbook was made up of the information that they deemed as "need to know".

Suggestions for Improvement

Regarding the improvement of the staff handbook, three of the teachers did not identify any necessary improvements. However, one suggestion proposed by P2, an ECT, was to include more in-depth information on things such as discipline and the Learning Management System. They reported that they had to "ask different staff members things" because many of the questions that they had were not written down anywhere.

Provision of a Mentor

Both ECT and one of the NTTS teachers mentioned that they were a part of the mentor program. It is important to note that the teacher without the mentor is an experienced teacher who is state registered within NSW, and therefore not required by policy to be provided one. The other three teachers were provided with mentors who were also their line managers (Head of Primary or Director of Teaching and Learning).

Positive Experiences

All participants who were provided a mentor spoke positively about the experience. The support and guidance provided by mentors were clearly and frequently mentioned. P1, the primary school ECT, found that the mentor provided guidance and help with meetings, curriculum documents, and their own teaching practice:

> "Having [mentor] willing to sit in on parent meetings has really helped. It's been helpful gaining insight and perception, from a more experienced teacher and then taking that knowledge and guidance and applying it to my own teaching practice during parent meetings and staff meetings."

The mentor was also praised for being able to "bounce ideas off" as the ECT sought clarification and guidance on teaching practice.

Mirroring this experience was P2, the Secondary school ECT, who found that the mentor gave them support and guidance as they familiarised themselves with the school and its systems. Of particular impact was the ability to ask the mentor questions and have check-ins on their wellbeing and deadlines for items such as curriculum

documentation. The NTTS primary teachers (P3) found that the benefits of mentoring were the regular check-ins at different times of the year, giving them guidance in a new teaching area. The interactions were described as "deeper and very meaningful", and their mentor checked in because they cared, not because they had to. This gave them an increased sense of belonging and inclusion in the workplace. They also mentioned that it was not their provided mentor alone that contributed to this feeling, rather the entire workplace made the effort to be inclusive and affirming:

> "When you hear that you're doing really well, those few words make a huge amount of difference and hold a lot of gravity because of the people that are saying it as well. The [Principal] [Head of Primary] [Other Primary Teachers]. They're not just mentors but they are people I aspire to be like. I'm blessed because I don't have just one, but a few people I can call on."

Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions for improvement were: a checklist outlining what they should be doing inside their mentoring meetings and different areas of focus throughout the year; that weekly meetings and more frequent check-ins would be ideal in Terms one and two, when there are many new things, then changing to a fortnightly meeting schedule in Terms three and four, once they felt more settled.

Visit From Support Persons

There were mixed responses regarding visits from support persons. There was a clear difference in the eagerness of the ECTs to have validation and affirmation from the school Principal. The NTTS teachers also had very different attitudes towards visits from support persons.

Positive Experiences

Both ECTs mentioned that visits from support personnel were useful and helpful. They mentioned the visits from the Learning Support teacher as being "really helpful". P1 saw that they could use her expertise to better support the students in the classroom and their learning needs. P2 had regular visits at the start of the year due to the "overwhelming number of students on learning support plans" in the class, but had not had a formal discussion with them since. P1 also had learning support come to assist them with the challenging students. There have also been visits from the Chaplain and the Wellbeing Officer, whose support was helpful and positive. One teacher remarked that:

> "It's nice to know I can call on people, even though I don't ask for help very often, but when I do my calls are always answered in a positive way."

When asked about members of the school leadership team visiting, P2 mentioned that the Head of Secondary regularly checked in with them. They added that they had not had any formal meetings, but "there's an awareness that he is supportive and making sure I am doing well and am settling into the school". Mirroring this experience was P3, who found the Principal to be approachable, resulting in more frequent informal meetings. However, there were times when there were formal meetings to deal with student behavioural issues and the Principal was seen as supportive.

Reduction in Teaching Load

Positive experiences

Of the four interviewees, only the two ECTs mentioned a reduction in teaching load. The Secondary ECT did not outline how much of a reduction she was given, and the Primary ECT said she had "double of what a normal experienced teacher would have". This time was seen as beneficial for them as they were able to complete marking, planning, and other curriculum documentation:

> "I think it's taken that strain or stress away from staying back after school and doing extra marking or whatnot. I think it's been really beneficial."

"This gave them an increased sense of belonging and inclusion in the workplace."

The Secondary ECT found that the extra release time did not consider their extra responsibility of introducing a new subject to the school. This was seen as a time-consuming task for an ECT.

Negative experiences

Whilst a reduction in teaching load was a big benefit to the ECTs, they both mentioned that it was not enough. Even though P1 was able to complete much of the paperwork at school, they were not able to complete all of it. P2 found that the pressure and time commitment in introducing a new subject caused most of her release time to be consumed and meant extra work, a daily average of "five plus hours after work".

The pressures of paperwork and the limited time to do it were a shared burden for both the NTTS teachers. They found that the requirements of their jobs in teaching new subjects, or teaching out-of-field, meant a much higher time commitment. There was a constant struggle to find the time needed to complete paperwork, understand content, and make up resources.

> "The paperwork is probably what has hurt me the most this year. I still feel like I am playing catch-up…I've never had to do daybooks to this extent. But I have been given all the support I can be given, and then the rest lies on my shoulders."

Suggestions for improvement

Suggestions were offered by both ECTs. P1 saw that the issue of time was not something a single school could fix, but rather a "government level" issue. They suggest having teachers who no longer want to be, or can be, in the classroom, working on creating and completing the paperwork requirements:

> *The pressures of paperwork and the limited time to do it were a shared burden.*

Assessment and Feedback

Positive experiences

All four teachers mentioned some form of feedback. However, there were different understandings of the type and purpose of the feedback. P3, the NTTS Primary teacher, was given feedback as they transitioned from Secondary to Primary teaching. They mentioned that the Head of Primary gave "lots of tips" as they adapted to a new and more explicit style of teaching. P4, the Secondary NTTS mentioned a meeting with the principal to discuss professional goals, which they deemed to be "*some form of feedback*". P2 was given feedback on their lessons and curriculum documentation, which was helpful.

Negative experiences

There were no instances mentioned of negative feedback experiences, but rather a lack of depth or frequency. P1 was not given any formal feedback, but outlined informal visits from the Head of Primary, who would "*mention what is working, and what is not*". Similarly, the P4 received no feedback on their teaching practices, only their curriculum documentation.

Suggestions for Improvement

Both ECTs offered suggestions for improvement regarding formal feedback in their induction processes. Both requested more feedback at regular intervals. P2 wanted more regular feedback at the start of the year as it would be helpful in "*understanding the school's dynamics*". P1 sought feedback twice a term from senior leadership.

Discussion

Workplace Orientation, Policies, and Procedures

A key part of initial employment orientation is the geographical awareness of key areas of the school, as well as locating and understanding the policies and procedures of the school and knowing information to enhance the safety of the staff and students (AITSL, 2023). The experienced teachers found no problem in navigating the information found in the handbook and understanding the policies and procedures. However, the ECTs required more specific guidance with the handbook and policies. ECTs are unlikely to understand much of the unique acronyms and language used in schools, placing a substantial barrier to their effective induction. Assisting new teachers in understanding the documentation provided will play an important role in helping teachers through their socialisation into the school culture (Kearney, 2014).

Mentoring and Support

The findings of the research indicate that mentoring is highly valued and effective, as also suggested by the literature (Kearney, 2017). The impact of the mentor was seen in their ability to answer questions, provide guidance and give support. This support was frequently mentioned by the new teachers as being affirming and encouraging, which promoted their confidence and practice. The wellbeing of new staff was also addressed through mentorship, as staff were provided with "check-ins", a key role of the mentor as outlined by AITSL (2018).

Those appointed to this role of mentorship were known as staff who had good interpersonal skills; however, they were not given any training for the role. The selection or provision of a mentor was minimally addressed or considered in school documentation; this has led to a diversion from best practices. A mentor should be selected based on their skill and ability (Wyatt & O'Neill, 2021) and given the opportunity to improve their mentoring skills through training (Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015). They should also be given loading to assist the teachers, and not just be a line manager, but someone from the subject area who can model best practices (AITSL). Adding to this was the lack of time provision for the mentor to allow them to meet and support the new teacher (Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015). This is a crucial part of an effective "practice-focused mentor" (AITSL, 2018), as it allows them to tailor the mentoring to the needs and experience of the mentee (Wyatt & O'Neill, 2021). The need for mentor guidelines and provisions was further highlighted in the requests of the new teachers to have "regular meetings", especially during Term One, or particularly challenging times in the year. Although the new teachers spoke highly of mentoring and reported no negative experiences, there are improvements that must be made to the selection and provision of mentors.

Feedback, Evaluation and Professional Development

Feedback and evaluation are an important part of the professional development of new teachers and are a part of the site school's induction policy; however, the process around their implementation was inconsistently followed. A mentor should be able to observe and give feedback to their mentee (Kearney, 2023), this should be both informally and formally.

The benefit of informal feedback is that it is quick to give and adjust practice, which was identified as a useful component and was understood as supportive. However, only one of the teachers articulated receiving formal feedback from a focused observation, although the policy states that all ECTs should have "at least one formal observation".

Time Allocation

The site school has a two-year induction period, but little instruction is given on what is meant to be covered in that time, other than achieving accreditation. Whilst a two-year period is an appropriate and impactful length of time (AITSL, 2023), specifics are needed as to what they are set to achieve during this length of time. Furthermore, the school needs to be able to supply the appropriate resources and dedication to enable the new teachers to be effectively inducted into the school (Kearney, 2014).

A reduction in teaching load is a key component of effective induction programs; this has been identified in the literature and confirmed in the interviews. The site school states that a 10% reduction in teaching load is given to ECTs, which is in line with best practice as outlined in Kearney's work (2017). However, it does not make provisions for a reduction in teaching load for the mentor teacher, in turn inhibiting their ability to meet and work together effectively and regularly (Kearney, 2017; AITSL, 2023). An aspect not covered in the induction policy, and not addressed comprehensively in the literature, is that of experienced teachers who are teaching out-of-field. The two participants who were experienced teachers were also teaching new subject areas, culminating in a larger workload in developing paperwork, resources and understanding content.

Conclusion

The first three years of a teacher's career are the hardest (Shields & Kilgour, 2018), highlighting the importance of effective induction programs. These programs must support the Early Career Teacher as they adjust to the job, workplace, and requirements of their role. However, what the best induction practices in schools are, is a new area of research, and one that requires much more individualised structuring and funding to develop into effective programs.

Through researching the current literature of school induction practices and comparing it to a site school further insight has been gained into policy in practice and how it can be further improved. The four participants identified the need for greater orientation and awareness of policies and procedures. However, most importantly, the ECTs require deeper assistance in understanding them and how they apply to their role (AITSL, 2023). This is a role that an effective mentor will fit, being able to support the transition and professional development of new teachers. However, guidelines and provisions for a mentor must be made by the school for it to be most effective. This study identified that time-poor mentors were one of the biggest blocks to effective induction. Further enhancing mentorship is the professional development that occurs through feedback and evaluation (Kearney, 2023). There was a request from ECTs that feedback be given to them from not only their mentors, but also the Principal and other support staff. To allow for feedback to happen, time allocation must be given to the mentors so that they are able to fulfil their regular teaching duties and be effective mentors and evaluators of new teachers (Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015). It is also important to impart a culture to new staff that feedback and visits from the Principal and other staff members are for their benefit and to improve student outcomes.

This study into effective teacher induction in a small regional school has highlighted the possibility that schools may need to assess their policies and practices. Having a clear plan to effectively induct new staff has an impact on their experience at the school, and perhaps their longevity in a teaching career. The unique context of each school, particularly small regional schools, must be considered when making plans, needing a greater understanding of the needs of the new teacher and the provisions required to meet them. Likewise, the staff tasked with the responsibility of mentoring and inducting new staff must have their needs considered to allow it to be a supportive, beneficial, and effective process.

> *A mentor should be selected based on their skill and ability.*

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed as a result of this research and study into effective teacher induction in schools.

- Staff handbooks should be current and comprehensive in imparting necessary knowledge to new teachers. This includes the necessary knowledge of geographical awareness, policies, practices, and requirements of their roles. As well, ECTs require greater assistance to understand these documents, as much of the vocabulary and requirements of teaching are new to them. Is it a recommendation that THE handbook's present language and vocabulary be reviewed?
- School culture should be explained and