

The inadequate induction of novice educators: a leadership failure?

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A model of long-term leadership is used as a conceptual tool to analyse qualitative data from an investigation into the induction of novice educators conducted in Community Junior Secondary Schools in Gaborone, Botswana. It is argued that the inadequate induction of novice educators reflects a failure of school leadership. Interview data are presented on features of induction programmes and the degree of support rendered to novices by relevant role players. The article concludes with a critical appraisal of the leadership inadequacies regarding the induction of novices.

Die onvoldoende induksie van beginneropvoeders: 'n leierskapstekortkoming?

'n Model van langtermyn leierskap word as 'n konseptuele instrument gebruik in die analise van kwalitatiewe data verkry uit 'n ondersoek na die induksie van beginneropvoeders in Community Junior Secondary Schools in Gaborone, Botswana. Daar word geargumenteer dat die onvoldoende induksie van beginneropvoeders 'n leierskapstekortkoming op skoolvlak reflekteer. Data word aangebied uit onderhoude oor kenmerke van induksieprogramme en die mate van steun gelewer deur relevante rolspelers. Ten slotte volg 'n kritiese beoordeling van leierskapstekorte in die induksie van beginneropvoeders.

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Induction is a vital element in discussions on teacher development and retention. Novice educators need support in order to perform their duties effectively. Research results indicate that induction programmes need to be tailor-made for novice teachers in a more meaningful way in order not to compromise the teaching and learning function of the school (*cf* Dube 2009).¹

Ingersoll & Smith (2004) describe induction as support, guidance and orientation programmes for novice teachers during the transition into their first teaching jobs. It links pre-service education and classroom practice. Induction calls upon schools to help novice teachers to settle down in the classroom and into the teaching profession.

Authors hold different views of the concept of novice educator.² For the purpose of the empirical investigation in this article novice educators refer to teachers who have obtained either a degree or a diploma in education, stating that they are qualified to teach in a Community Junior Secondary School (CJSS) in Botswana, and are employed in one of Gaborone's public schools. They undertake their first two years of teaching in the classroom, which implies that they need the support of leadership in the school to achieve their goals in the teaching profession.

There are numerous definitions of leadership. Leadership is about influencing people to reach goals (Van Niekerk 1995: 3). This is in line with Kleon & Rinehart's (1998: 2) definition of leadership as a role that leads towards goal-achievement, involves interaction of influence, and usually results in some form of changed structure of behaviour of groups, organisations or communities. This definition of leadership relates directly to the task of school leaders regarding novice educators.

1 *Cf* Brock & Grady 1998, Ingersoll & Smith 2004, Kitchen 2003, Steyn 2004, Killeavy 2006, Smethen & Adey 2005, Oebele 2005.

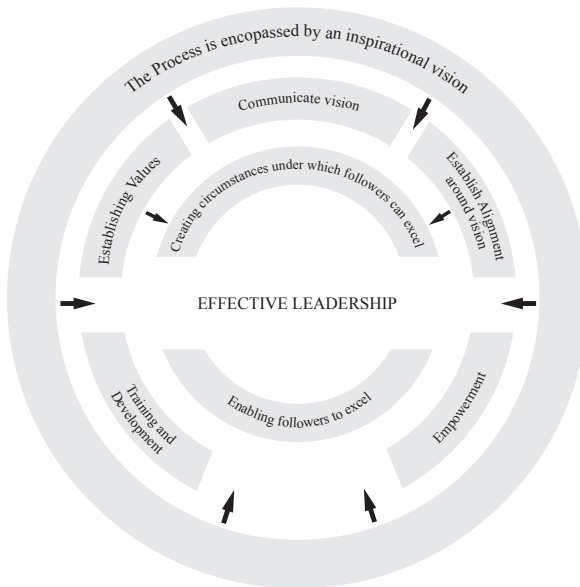
2 *Cf* Heyns 2000: 161, Lyons 1993, Vail 2005, Niebrant *et al* 1992.

1. Leadership theory and the induction of novice educators

Research into leadership theory indicates that effective long-term leadership creates desirable conditions under which novice educators can excel (Van Niekerk 1995). The inspirational vision must communicate effectively the functioning of an organisation's values. In addition, effective long-term leaders enable their followers to excel through training and development as well as empowerment. This should also be encompassed by the vision.

Figure 1 summaries the above aspects of effective long-term leadership in their relation to each other. These will be used to direct the following discussion. This article does not aim to discuss short-term or situational leadership.

Figure 1: Effective long-term leadership



It will be argued here that failure to provide effective induction within the school context constitutes a failure of leadership with a long-term perspective. Such a failure seems obvious from the empirical study carried out in Community Junior Secondary Schools in Gaborone, Botswana. To describe what this long-term leadership failure entails, each of the long-term functions of leadership will be discussed briefly, namely envisioning, communication of the vision, establishing desirable values and the development and empowerment of followers.

1.1 An encompassing vision

A school's vision focuses on its core business: effective teaching and learning (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk 2009: 2). Novice educators become part of the execution of this core function of schools when they join the teaching fraternity. Schools that are serious about achieving their vision relating to effective teaching and learning view the induction of novice educators in a serious light. Can this be an indication that the vision of a school is a mere paper exercise when novice educators are not properly inducted? We are of the opinion that this is a definite possibility. A school's vision and mission should form an integral part of its daily functioning where long-term leadership is effective; meaningful induction efforts should make novice educators part of this daily vision and mission (Naidu *et al* 2008: 59-63).

As the creation and communication of a school's vision is a leadership function, the implication is that school principals will need to ensure that novice educators become an integral part of the successful execution of the school's vision and mission (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk 2006: 94-5). This also means that other leaders, namely vice-principals, heads of department and staff development coordinators, who should play an important role in the induction of novice educators, have to take an active part in such induction. This is not the case in most of the schools included in the empirical investigation, as will be discussed later.

1.2 Communication to ensure alignment with the vision

Alignment with the vision and mission can only be attained through its successful communication (Lewis 2003: 10, Neumann & Neumann 1999: 73). This does not mean that the school leadership should be continuously talking to the novices about the vision, but that they should be communicating with them in a trusting manner and by means of other verbal and non-verbal methods, such as role modelling, to ensure that new staff members become part of the school's vision of effective teaching. The leader wins trust and cooperation by means of effective communication (Naidu *et al* 2008: 60). It is imperative that novice educators not be ignored or shunned, but regarded as a unique part of the personnel needing special attention. They need to be aligned with the school vision in order to become an integral part of the school's core business of effective teaching and learning.

1.3 Establishing desirable values

Values are ideas about what is important or desirable within the school context (Haydon 2007: 9). Coetzee *et al* (2008: 56) mention basic educational values that can be useful in creating a culture of teaching and learning. These include enhancing the quality of the learning experience, promoting academic standards, and educating students for the future and to the best of the educator's abilities. Induction can play an important role in establishing these values in novices. Davies *et al* (2005: 191) identify important values such as equity, access, efficiency and harmony. According to them, equity assures that students with similar needs and aspirations receive the same treatment during the teaching and learning process; access ensures that all students receive the type of education that is commensurate with their needs and aspirations; efficiency seeks to optimise the outcomes of the teaching and learning process using the resources available, and harmony, as part of value management, ensures commitment among all the stakeholders in their efforts to realise the school's expectations. Values underpin collaboration and a climate con-

ducive to learning and teaching. The school should thus be a place where there is mutual respect, trust and honesty among all the members of its community (Sullivan & Glanz 2005: 39).

Novice educators who join the profession need to be integrated into the values espoused by their schools through effective value management by the leadership in the school, in particular the school principal. Value management establishes a specific school culture and promotes a favourable school climate which, in turn, will help to realise the school's vision towards which the novice educators need to contribute. A sound induction programme should thus ensure that novices attain the desirable educational values promoted by the school. Induction of this nature is a problem in those schools where there is no proper culture of teaching and learning, established *inter alia* by means of effective value management.

As an important long-term leadership function within organisations, value management that contributes to the establishment of organisational culture is needed to create an environment conducive to work (Van Niekerk 1995: 49). Since inducting novice educators into attaining desirable educational values and becoming part of a constructive, values-driven school culture of teaching and learning is crucial in making them a proficient part of their school context and of the teaching profession, any failure by the school's leadership at facilitating this can be considered a failure of leadership.

1.4 Professional development and empowerment

To provide effective long-term leadership, school leadership should enable novice educators to become a successful part of the school's vision and the teaching profession through training and development, as well as empowerment. These aspects of effective long-term leadership are severely compromised when novice educators are not correctly inducted into the profession and their new school context.

Staff development is essential in improving the quality of teaching and learning (Mosoge 2008: 162, 168-9). In research on instructional leadership behaviour, Sheppard (Blase & Blase 2004: 11) learnt that promoting teachers' professional development was

the most influential instructional leadership function. Steyn (2007: 223) is of the opinion that "... if we want to talk about school quality and school improvement, we need to focus on people improvement". Staff development thus directly relates to the leadership function of directing the (novice) staff towards the vision of effective teaching and learning as the core function of schools. The professional development of novice educators encompasses learning processes that will enhance the performance of both individuals and the organisation (Steyn 2007: 225). It is thus inconceivable that school leaders, such as principals, vice-principals and heads of department, will not seriously consider this.

It is hoped that the new South African Council for Educators (SACE) Professional Development Activities Database and Directory Programme will also include the induction of novice educators. In article 7.5 of the its Code of Professional Ethics, SACE has adopted the following concerning induction of novice educators, which is a step forward although it only refers to the role of educators:

An educator accepts that he or she has a professional obligation towards the education and induction into the profession of new members of the teaching profession.

In terms of induction, effective long-term leadership implies that the induction and development needs of novices be determined and that induction programmes focus on these in order to ensure that relevant training is provided (Wilkinson 1997: 50, Steyn 2007: 205). If these needs are addressed, novices will be better empowered to contribute towards the vision of the school by implementing their new competencies to the advantage of the school. School leaders cannot assume that new educators can competently teach in the real school context once they have completed their training at an institution of higher education. Novice educators still have to learn a great deal within the real school context when they are appointed to their first posts. No benefit will be derived from blaming universities for not producing well-rounded educators in their first year of teaching, as other stakeholders such as schools and departments of education also have a leadership responsibility to assist the integration of novices into the profession.

This type of staff development should start with the induction of novice educators.

Empowerment of staff entails that, once trained and developed to a level of competence; the novices are trusted and given an opportunity to contribute towards the vision of the school (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk 2009: 8-10). Training comes before empowerment if novices do not have the required competence. An effective induction effort is thus crucial to ensure that new staff can in fact teach effectively. Empowerment also implies that principals and other school leaders assign tasks to novice educators with caution. It is irresponsible to assign to novices tasks which leaders know are beyond their ability. This is often the case when the least desirable courses, extracurricular activities, and classes with the most difficult learners are assigned to novices (Steyn 2007: 208). By contrast, empowerment should entail that school leaders ease novices into becoming effective members of the teaching profession through induction by doing their best to set them up for success.

On the basis of the exposition of the long-term dimension of effective leadership regarding the induction of novice educators, a measure of leadership failure should be attributed to all schools where novice educators are inadequately inducted.

2. Aim and methodology

The research problem addressed in this article is whether the inadequate induction of novice educators reflects a failure of leadership in the education profession. In line with this formulation of the problem, this article argues that the inadequate induction of novice educators reflects a failure of leadership, and that the induction of novice educators needs to be driven from a leadership perspective. Considering the definition of leadership, as mentioned earlier, this implies that the various role players involved in the induction of novice educators need to consciously reflect on and take into account how novices can be positively influenced in their first two years of teaching to function adequately and to adapt effectively to the teaching profession. The results of a qualitative empirical investigation conducted

in Community Junior Secondary Schools (CJSS) in Gaborone, Botswana, support this argument.

The qualitative empirical research focused on establishing how the induction of novice teachers was carried out in six selected Community Junior Secondary Schools (CJSS) in Gaborone, Botswana. Induction practices were investigated using semi-structured and focus group interviews. Purposive sampling was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of novice educators. Only twelve participants were selected, two from each school. Semi-structured interviews were held with one participant from each school, while the remaining participants formed a focus group for purposes of triangulation and verification of results (Dube 2009: 60-66). The results, notably those indicating existing induction programmes and practices and the part played by various role players in induction, are used to argue that the inadequate induction of novice educators might reflect a failure of leadership.

Acknowledged long-term leadership functions, as identified in various models of leadership by eminent researchers and contributors to leadership theory (Van Niekerk 1995), are used as a basis to argue that the inadequate induction practices reflected in the empirical investigation constitute a failure on the part of leaders in the profession. Leadership theory is thus used as a conceptual tool to analyse the data for a critical appraisal of the leadership inadequacies regarding the induction of novices.

The following discussion of features of induction programmes and the degree of support rendered to novices by role players is based on Dube's (2009) investigation into the induction programmes in Community Junior Secondary Schools in Gaborone, Botswana.

3. Features of induction programmes

Induction programmes in the six investigated Community Junior Secondary Schools revealed the main features presented in Table 1. The information was provided by the participants in focus group interviews (one from each school) and individual interviews (one from each school).

Twelve novices took part in the interviews (N=12). The information presented in Table 1 provides a dismal picture of the neglect that novices suffered in the schools under investigation.

Table 1: Features of the induction programmes in schools (Dube 2009: 86)

Induction activity	Interview participants N=12	Percentage of respondents
Welcomed by the school head	9	75%
Introduction to educators only	9	75%
Introduction to the student body	9	75%
Guided tour	7	58%
Extra-curricular activities	6	50%
Introduction to support/ancillary staff	6	50%
Short orientation programme	4	33%
School-based workshop (3 hours or more)	4	33%
Introduction to school committees	4	33%
Meeting for all new staff	3	25%
Staff manual	3	25%
Assigned mentor	2	17%

The various induction features represented in Table 1 will now be discussed briefly, using information obtained from the individual and focus group interviews.

4.1 Welcome by the school head

Data indicated that mere welcomes and simple introductions of novices by the school head to teaching staff and learners are the most common forms of induction activities practised in schools. The reason for this may be that such activities are easy to carry out and may have a short-term effect in the career of a novice educator.

The majority of the participants were of the opinion that they were welcomed by the school heads and introduced to both educators

and learners. Three novices were not welcomed and introduced (*cf* Table 1). The novices were of the opinion that it was even more important for beginners to be introduced to all the role players and other stakeholders. One novice remarked:

Introductions are important. All members of the support staff need to know who I am so that when they see me moving around the school they will not take me for either a trespasser or a probable thief. I would like to work in an environment where everyone knows me and I know them.

Introductions to educators, learners, committees within the school, non-teaching staff and even members of the school committee/governing body can instil a sense of belonging in novices. However, there were fewer introductions to support staff (only half were introduced to them, *cf* Table 1) and specifically to school committees (only one third was introduced to them, *cf* Table 1) than to educators and learners.

It is important to note that novices expressly stated that mere welcomes and introductions to educators and learners alone did not suffice to help them settle in their new places of work. If welcomes and introductions are not taken into account in Table 1, the extent of the neglect by school leaders with which novices needed to cope in their schools becomes evident, as less than half of the novices were exposed to the other activities (with the exception of one instance, namely guided tour).

4.2 Guided tours

Like welcomes and introductions, a guided tour (novices did not specify which school leaders did this) was a popular way of initiating novices in their new places of work. Guided tours can also be viewed as an opportunity to meet teachers from other departments and to get an idea of where they will be working, as stated by one of the novices:

Guided tours take me to see people at work. I would rather meet people doing work and see how they do things in their departments. Because in that way, they can create more time to talk to me and say one or two more things they could not have said in

the staff room where novice teachers are presented in a general common manner.

Welcomes, introductions and guided tours only have a short-term focus, and will not settle a novice educator into the profession in any comprehensive way. Five of the twelve novices (*cf* Table 1) were not taken on guided tours of their new schools by any of the school leaders.

4.3 Involvement in extra-curricular activities

According to the data in Table 1, only half of the respondents were introduced to and became involved in extra-curricular activities. According to the novices, mixing with learners in extra-curricular activities is considered valuable and effective in helping beginner educators to settle in, as expressed by one novice:

During extra-curricular activities time, we speak and learn in a free and open atmosphere. We also have an opportunity to work with fellow teachers and different students amicably.

Apart from the opportunity to interact with educators and learners, extra-curricular activities also provide a valuable opportunity to mix with other role players, as expressed by another novice:

Besides involvement in these types of activities, extracurricular activities enable us to interact with the parents, sports masters, fellow coaches, support staff and the school management team on a regular basis and in an informal way.

When they are shunned aside or ignored regarding the presentation of extra-curricular activities in their new schools, novices lose a valuable opportunity to be inducted in a meaningful way into school life. Half of the novices interviewed did not get this opportunity, which clearly points to neglect on the part of the principal, in particular, also implicating staff in charge of extra-curricular activities.

4.4 Short orientation programmes and workshops

Although novices highlighted short orientation programmes and workshops, only two of the six schools engaged in these activities. The respondents consider workshops to be very

helpful, particularly in solving problems and answering questions raised by beginner educators. Through school-based workshops, participants interact freely with other educators and get an opportunity to learn how things are done in a more relaxed atmosphere. One novice stated:

In the workshop training session we meet different teachers and support staff. We partner in the decision-making processes and even plan activities together. The spirit that is in control therein is peaceful and conducive. For me really, workshops are effective and they leave me challenged.

According to one novice, a comprehensive year-long assistance programme should include workshops:

The Staff Development Coordinator should organise regular workshops [...] which will give us opportunities to work with other teachers as we learn from them.

Novices value such collaboration opportunities with other teachers as this teaches them what to do. The neglect by the principal and other responsible leaders such as the staff development coordinator to organise these as part of a comprehensive staff development programme should be considered a shortcoming in the induction programme.

4.5 Meeting, staff manual and mentor for novices

According to the respondents, it was found that assigning a mentor to novices, providing staff manuals for novices, and arranging a meeting for all newly qualified educators were the least considered and practised in schools. Arranging meetings between novices is vital as novices can learn from one another and provide each other with the necessary and relevant support. Novices can thus share experiences and help each other as they settle into teaching. Although difficult to implement and monitor, mentoring is an induction method with lasting and long-term effects in the life of an educator. A staff manual can also assist a novice in meaningful ways. It is thus a pity that there are apparently no staff manuals in the majority of the schools under investigation.

From the research data it became evident that one of the six schools was an outstanding school with a comprehensive induction policy whose beginner educators were fully inducted. The remaining schools are reported to have no solid staff induction programmes besides brief welcomes, introductions and short orientation programmes which are carried out haphazardly. This implies that school leaders ignore the seriousness of induction, allowing novices to learn by chance. It was also found that only a few of the twelve novice teachers, who took part in the interviews and who come from schools with well-defined staff induction programmes, felt welcome and appreciated. The remaining novices found it difficult to settle in their new environment. Those who felt that there were not enough induction programmes in their schools blamed school management. One tearful respondent stated:

Our staff induction programmes are lacking. Principals expect us to work without support and guidance. This situation makes me feel like bursting out and crying for help.

Some respondents doubted the ability of their principals to induct them successfully. They were of the opinion that school management's ignorance of the facts about induction of novices puts effective teaching at risk. The above information relates the empirical study directly to the question whether inadequate induction points to a failure of leadership. The next section sheds more light on the issue.

5. Degree of support rendered to novices by role players

A deeper understanding of the induction phenomenon developed when participants elaborated on the impact of role players on their initial year of teaching. Table 2 summarises the degree of support rendered to six novice educators with whom the individual interviews were conducted.

The results of the face-to-face semi-structured interviews (*cf* Table 2) clearly indicate that only one novice educator (Novice B) received help from everyone and that another (Novice A) did not

receive help at all. As far as their perception of support given by members of the school community is concerned, novice educators identified members of their departments (83%) as the best, followed by heads of department (67%) and senior teachers (67%). This, however, does not imply that the help received from these colleagues was sufficient. The above figures only indicate that the novices did not receive sufficient help from them. Fifty per cent indicated that they did receive some help from the subject coordinator, learners, fellow novices, the deputy head and colleagues. It is cause for concern that 50% did not receive help from these sources.

When asked who were the least helpful to them in their initial year of teaching, the majority of the respondents indicated that mentors (16.7% – they did not have any) and the ancillary staff (16.7%) had been the least helpful, followed by the principal and the staff development coordinator (33.3%). From the interviews it emerged that role players appeared to be too busy to assist them. It also became clear that the lack of help received affected the way in which novices performed in the classroom.

Table 2: Degree of support rendered to novice educators (Dube 2009: 103)

School community	Novice A	Novice B	Novice C	Novice D	Novice E	Novice F	Total novices N=6	%
Department mates		√	√	√	√	√	5	83%
Head of department (HoD)	x	√	√	√	x	√	4	67%
Senior teachers	x	√	√	x	√	√	4	67%
Subject coordinator	x	√	√	x	√	x	3	50%
Students	x	√	√	√	x	x	3	50%
Fellow novice	x	√	√	x	x	√	3	50%
Deputy head	x	√	x	√	x	√	3	50%
Colleagues	x	√	x	√	√	x	3	50%
Staff development coordinator	x	√	x	√	x	x	2	33.3%
Principal	x	√	x	√	x	x	2	33.3%
Mentor	x	√	x	x	x	x	1	16.7%
Ancillary support staff	x	√	x	x	x	x	1	16.7%
Total	0	12	6	7	4	5	34	47.5%

In four of the six schools the novice educators indicated that the principal was not helpful; this in itself points to a failure of leadership in the induction of novices. In five of the six schools induction was not carried out adequately according to the novices. In fact, in one of the schools induction was virtually non-existent and in others a dismal failure. This is due to the negligence of school principals to provide effective leadership. It emerged from the interviews that a lack of support from senior members of staff such as the principal and the staff development coordinator forces the novices to make their own plans to cope, thus compromising the quality of teaching.

6. Discussion

The majority of the participating novices indicated that the way in which induction is carried out in their schools is not sufficiently comprehensive to help them settle effectively into their new place of work; neither does it address their real needs. They clearly indicated the following relating to the school management: it did not do enough to support beginners; it must apply strategies that can be used to support beginner teachers, and provide them with feedback that can make them feel appreciated and valued; school management teams should prioritise the induction of novices in their staff development plans, and make appropriate alterations to programmes to meet the needs of novices; they should provide leadership in the induction of novices, and they were always busy with their own programmes and neglected the needs of novice teachers.

Novices blame their leaders, in particular the principals, for poor induction, thereby indicating that the cause of the problem is a failure of leadership. Four of the six novices taking part in the semi-structured interviews indicated that two key role players in the induction process were the least helpful in this process, namely the staff development coordinator and the principal. This constitutes a serious indictment, as the principal is the school leader who should be taking the leadership role in ensuring that a meaningful induction programme is presented in the school.

It also became evident from the empirical study that the principal is the key person in the efficient induction of novices and, in order to rise to the expectations of novices regarding the leadership role of the principal in the induction process, the following emanated from the empirical investigation:

- The principal should welcome novice educators in their new place of work and assure them of support and guidance during and after their initial year of teaching.
- The principal should introduce the novices to every staff member, and give the novices a guided tour of the school.
- Principals should initiate and support a comprehensive induction programme in the school via the staff development coordinator and other relevant role players, such as HoDs. As such all relevant role players in the school take the leadership for running an efficient induction programme.
- Principals should ensure that novices are involved in the process of identifying and planning for their development needs.
- Principals should communicate the aims of the school's induction programme to all staff and novices, thereby creating an atmosphere conducive to the school's induction programme.
- Principals should assist in identifying and appointing appropriate mentors.
- Principals should adopt an open-door policy towards novices and remember that their presence and intervention will at times be necessary.
- Principals should interact with and relate to novices in a professional manner.
- Principals should ensure that the induction programme focuses on enhancing effective teaching and learning as the core functions of schools.
- Principals should accept responsibility and accountability for the standard and quality of the school's induction programme.

If the school principal considers the above, novice educators will:

- Be aligned with the vision of effective teaching and learning.

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- Be made a part of the school's culture and the values adhered to in the school.
- Be developed and empowered to assist in realising the school's vision.
- Experience the support of all relevant school leaders through distributed leadership.

If leadership theory is applied to the results of the empirical investigation, serious neglect by school leaders, in particular the principals, is exposed. No alignment with the core business of the school, namely effective teaching and learning, can develop where leaders do not create desirable conditions in which novices can excel. Leaders should align novices with the school vision and make them part of the school culture through value management. However, if principals were to follow the above guidelines, a different scenario would prevail.

To provide effective long-term leadership, school leadership should enable novice educators to excel through relevant training, development, and empowerment initiatives to become a successful part of the execution of the school's vision and the teaching profession. These aspects of effective long-term leadership are severely compromised with regard to novice educators who are not properly inducted into the profession and their new school context. Empowerment should entail that the relevant school leaders ease novices into becoming effective members of the teaching profession through induction by doing everything possible to make them succeed.

7. Conclusion

Long-term effective leadership regarding novices involves creating desirable conditions under which novices can excel through alignment with the vision of the school and value management, enabling them to excel through training, development and empowerment. The empirical investigation conducted in Community Junior Secondary Schools in Gaborone, Botswana, indicated that leadership is lacking in essential aspects of effective long-term leadership regarding the induction of novice educators.

This points to a failure of leadership in the majority of the schools that were investigated.

However, this failure of leadership could also be conceptualised by leaders as a challenge. If school leaders rise to the challenge of effective induction of novice educators, they will make a meaningful contribution towards improving teaching and learning in schools.

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