A SURVEY OF THE PROFESSIONAL MEEDS OF UNTRAINED TEMPORARY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE DISTRICTS OF MUKAH AND DALAT AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR MENTORING

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Abstract

This small scale study surveyed the professional needs of untrained temporary secondary school teachers with the intention of suggesting appropriate mentoring approaches to assist and support them. Three issues were addressed: (1) the professional needs of the untrained temporary teachers, (2) the support they were receiving, and (3) appropriate mentoring approaches.

The survey methods, using a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used as its source of data collection. The questionnaires were distributed to all the 35 untrained teachers in the 4 secondary schools in the districts of Mukah and Dalat. A 100% response rate was obtained. 3 groups of respondents which consisted of the 4 principals, 8 untrained teachers and 5 senior teachers were interviewed.

The results of this study revealed that the untrained teachers needed additional support in many areas. Their most significant needs were in the areas of teaching, management and control, assessment and induction. The findings indicate that the difficulties encountered correspond to those identified in the major international studies (Veenman, 1984; Cooke and Pang, 1991; Tickle, 1994). There were no formalised induction programmes in the schools. Induction was variable and perceived as not adequate and is an area for further

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development. There was a unanimous consensus about the desirability of including mentors in supporting and assisting untrained teachers. It was felt that one mentor could not meet all the needs of these teachers, so a team was suggested to mentor them, "sharing the burden".

When we are striving for excellence in education, the plight of these untrained teachers, who have contributed much towards alleviating the shortages of trained teachers, should not be overlooked. The potential of mentoring for untrained teachers is an area that administrators or educators could consider.