Improving New Teacher Induction Strategies

Sabrina L. Manuel

College of Education, Grand Canyon University

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Dr. Gustafson

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**Benefits of Induction Plan**

The induction plan in our school currently reflects a plan to welcome new staff to the building, when possible, introduce them to key staff members and administrative team, give them a tour of the building and point out the featured programs in the school. They are given a school-level employee handbook that tells them about the different procedures that happen at the school-level and what is expected of them as a teacher in the building. When that is complete, they are given their classroom keys and some insight on the subject matter that was previously taught by the former teacher. The new staff person does not have a mentor besides the school support teacher who is also responsible for wearing many hats in the building so she cannot always be available immediately for new staff. After that initial first day, the staff member is simply on their own and encouraged to reach out if they need support.

This is a new process for staff induction or maybe it changes with the administrative leadership, but it appears to leave the person with too many grey areas and when I first started at the school, I knew exactly who to contact for every need that I had and if I didn’t know something, I had direct access to peers within my department. I knew each of their phone numbers and they knew mine, so they could reach out to me and in return I was able to reach out to them too. I was given a veteran teacher as an assistant three days out of the week for support with lesson plans, unit planning, writing IEP’s etc. The veteran teacher was there as a support not to give feedback about my performance to the administrator and the administrator simply stopped in to make sure that I was paired with the right person and to ensure that I had received all the services she had mentioned during the induction process. It appears to me that since this has changed, we are losing far more new teachers.

**Teacher Induction Plan Interview**

The teacher interviewed for this paper has only been with our school for one school year but has worked in the district for over five years. He mentions that his induction process was rough based on when he was hired and the clarification of what he would be teaching. Once he was able to overcome the obstacles related to hiring, he was given a tour of the school but found out that he was pretty much on his own after that. He mentioned that this was not very welcoming since he was in a new building that was much larger than his previous work assignment/location.

The induction process did not help him in setting up his classroom. He had materials leftover from the previous teacher and school year. When he was allotted time to set-up his room, it was interrupted by several required meetings which took up most of his day and left him with little to no time for getting his classroom together. He mentioned having to scramble around the building for tables and chairs, which he had to move himself for his classroom to be ready before the first day of school. He feared that if he didn’t do that, his first day experience would have gone all wrong and determined how the students would respond to him for the remainder of the year.

Classroom management was something that he quickly found out that new teacher or not, we are teaching in very difficult times, and you can only master this by doing this. No one can prepare someone for classroom management or interacting with students, this is done through relationship building and must come from the teacher directly. While he still struggles with what the school’s policy is on students disrupting the learning environment, he has been forced to initiate a method of his own and hopes there won’t be any severe consequences for him.

The school mission, vision and culture were made clear, and he believes that many people in the building are working towards making that a realty even if it’s not perfect. Getting to know the faculty and staff was more difficult because of the battle with COVID-19 and he understands that to be a nationwide problem, not just at this school. Nothing stands out as going well for him during the induction process and he feels that better communication early in the induction process will eliminate new teacher stress and burn-out. Giving new teachers the necessary support early on is essential for teacher retention.

**New Knowledge and Two More Questions**

The policy on how to handle new students was never clear, so as a new teacher he had to improvise and started calling safety to have the disruptive students removed. He decided that if administrators had a problem with it, they would eventually knock on his door and address it as a broken policy/rule. Since the curriculum that was handed down to him from the previous teacher, seemed to be impossible to implement, he is going to spend the entire summer revising the curriculum for a more conducive learning environment. He is taking what he learned in his first year at this school and applying it to resolve some problems for himself.

**PSEL Standards 6 and 7 and Implications for Future Practice**

According to Hicks et al., (2005) for leaders to retain new staff they must surround them with the right supports and give a strong induction to the building and the expectations early on. The book mentions several mistakes that has been made and the research of how to effectively prevent those same mistakes with your induction process. PSEL standards 6 and 7 reference things that I find to be crucial in being an effective leader. I plan to provide my staff as many opportunities as possible for professional growth, knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities so that they can receive the collaboration with veteran teachers and school support staff that they will need to be effective for the students. This support is very important to me as a leader and while I am learning that too much of a good thing could potentially make staff members feel like I am hovering over them, I feel strongly about my staff knowing that I am observing for opportunities to enhance their skills, and careers professionally. I want to ensure that they feel comfortable receiving the support that has been put in place to ensure they are successful both professionally and personally.

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