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Induction Experts:
An analysis of beginning teacher support
in low-socioeconomic New Zealand primary schools

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Abstract

This thesis analyses induction programmes in low-socioeconomic New Zealand primary schools. A review of the literature indicates that effective induction is integrated and has four main components: pedagogical development, socioemotional support, professional agency, and structured balance. In addition, New Zealand's induction programmes are reported to be strong by international standards. Literature is synthesised to create a framework of low-socioeconomic schools as induction experts. Although there have been large-scale analyses of New Zealand induction programmes, there has been no research on the integrated induction systems found in low-socioeconomic primary schools.

A mixed-methods approach was used to investigate the support provided for beginning teachers (BTs) in these schools. Methods included a nationwide survey of BTs in low-socioeconomic primary schools, which was mailed to 467 primary and intermediate BTs (44% response rate). Additionally, from all 156 low-socioeconomic primary schools, five exemplar induction programmes were selected and visited throughout the 2007 school year. Survey analysis, success case methods, discourse analysis, and grounded theory methods indicated that induction in these schools is integrated and strong by international standards.

Findings indicate that induction programmes in low-socioeconomic schools are pedagogical, supportive, and well structured; however, not all schools focus on enhancing the professional agency of teachers. Exemplar practices such as peer coaching, university partnerships, on-site BT support groups, curricular leadership roles, and formal programme evaluations were found at case study sites.

Analyses of factor themes, cluster graphs, frequency-utility matrices, documents, events, and transcripts of meetings and interviews reveal several key findings. First, the Hauora model—a Māori concept of balanced pedagogical, spiritual, socioemotional, and physical development—may be applicable to induction in the New Zealand setting. Second, analyses indicate that low-socioeconomic schools have relatively strong induction programmes. Third, some teachers—particularly those beginning after the start of the school year or older teachers in their second year of teaching—may receive varied support. Findings from this research may provide framing for induction programmes in New Zealand as well as for international longitudinal studies of teacher induction models.

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