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Isolation of teacher Education Institutions

Teacher Isolation:-

It is ironic that in a profession which is so centered around human interaction, teachers can find themselves feeling very isolated. in their environment. Whether it is physical (ie. living in sparsely populated areas) or environmental (ie. the only teacher of a certain subject), isolation can affect job satisfaction and ability to perform at their best. In this section we will discuss this phenomenon as it affects teachers in general, language teachers specifically, and where they can find support from isolation.

How can isolation affect a teacher?

Isolation can occur at many different points in a teacher's career. As discussed, isolation can take many different forms; such as physical, environmental or even social. Some teachers work in very rural areas and have little access to other teachers who can support them in their subject area. Similarly, even in bigger communities, some teachers may be the only ones teaching a particular subject in a school. The resulting sense of isolation can be quite overwhelming as the pressure for creating engaging and effective lessons falls on the shoulders of those people alone as they have no immediate way of sharing resources with others. This can greatly increase the pressure a teacher is feeling, and can contribute to future burnout.

Social isolation can also occur when teachers feel isolated from their peers in an emotional sense, even though they are in a social network at the school. For teachers coming into a new school, the rest of the staff might seem bonded and unwilling to let a new person in. New teachers and student teachers entering the school atmosphere can also feel intimidated not only by the staff but by the scope of their roles as educators as well; an unwelcoming reception could contribute to a very negative first impression and those new and student teachers' views of the teaching profession could easily suffer as a result.

It is unfortunate that even though isolation is such a significant concern in the teaching profession, that the behaviour of those in the profession often contributes to the problem.

Teachers are often territorial over their subject area or classrooms, preferring to work unsupervised and uninterrupted. This can create an isolating and intimidating atmosphere in the school. Teachers benefit both from sharing and learning from each other; the more this atmosphere is fostered, the less isolated all teachers will feel.

What contributes to isolation as a language teacher?

Language teachers often make up a minority in their schools with very small departments; sometimes there is only one teacher in a particular department. Not only are language teachers sometimes separated from the other teachers due to their subject area, but also because their subject area is in a different language. Resources can still be shared, but the language barrier creates extra work when adapting the resources.

Language teachers have also reported that their subject area suffers from a particular perception by other teachers who don't take the study of second languages seriously. Unfortunately sometimes this is the case, and it can result in some friction between teachers. However, this perception and the sense of marginalisation that comes with it can be combated by becoming a stronger advocate of second language learning.

Where can support be found?

Teachers feeling isolated can look for support in many areas and schools should make concentrated efforts to promote these avenues to reduce the extent of the problem.

Mentoring programs: Pairing up experienced teacher with newer teachers helps those involved to get to know each other on a personal and professional level, both of which are important when creating a positive school environment. The experienced teachers can provide much needed support with regards to planning, organizing, finding resources and getting to know the school and the teachers.

Professional Learning Community (PLC): PLCs promote communication between related departments; they also facilitate the sharing of resources and the development of a sense of community in the school.

Internet/forums: The internet is a vast resource that provides support for teachers who are looking for other subject-related materials to add variety to their classroom materials. There are many web sites and online communities devoted to sharing and helping other teachers.

Professional Development: Attending subject-specific professional development opportunities is a great chance for teachers to find resources as well as meet other teachers from similar subject fields with whom resources can be shared.

Teacher training programs: Colleges or universities with teacher training programs often have libraries with extensive resource collections, which address the curriculum objectives. Education departments can also be consulted to connect with people who help with collecting relevant resources.

Teacher Education Institution:-

According to UNESCO (2005), teacher education “addresses environmental, social, and economic contexts to create locally relevant and culturally appropriate teacher education programmes for both pre-service and in-service teachers.”

Teacher education generally includes four elements: improving the general educational background of the trainee teachers; increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach; pedagogy and understanding of children and learning; and the development of practical skills and competences. The balance between these four elements varies widely (Perraton, 2010).

Also, Teacher Education Institutions have the potential to bring changes within educational systems that will shape the knowledge and skills of future generations. Teacher education institutions serve as key change agents in transforming education and society, so such a future is possible. Teacher education institutions:

- educate new teachers
- provide professional development for practicing in-service teachers by updating their knowledge and skills
- create teacher education curricula carry out research
- contribute to textbooks
- provide expert advice to local schools upon request
- provide expert opinion to provincial and national ministries of education
- educate and certify headmasters, principals, and other school administrators

“Institutions of teacher education fulfill vital roles in the global education community; they have the potential to bring changes within educational systems that will shape the knowledge and skills of future generations. Often, education is described as the great hope for creating a more sustainable future; teacher-education institutions serve as key change agents in transforming education and society, so such a future is possible. Not only do teacher-education institutions educate new teachers, they update the knowledge and skills of in-service teachers, create teacher-education curriculum, provide professional development for practicing teachers, contribute to textbooks, consult with local schools, and often provide expert opinion to regional and national ministries of education. Institutions of teacher education also perform similar services for school principals who have significant impact on what occurs in schools. Because of this broad influence in curriculum design and implementation, as well as policy setting within educational institutions, faculty members of teacher-education institutions are perfectly poised to promote education for sustainable development (ESD). By working with the administrations and faculties of teacher education institutions, governments can bring about systematic, economically effective change.”

References:-

- Books
- Websites