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I Am, Because We Are: Novice Teacher Mentoring Support Needs from an Ubuntu Perspective

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Abstract

Scholars have been sounding the alarm of early career teacher turnover crises for decades. South Africa is soon to be facing an educational catastrophe because of a shortage of qualified, competent, experienced teachers. Novice teacher attrition is high as new teachers are entering the classroom and experience a sense of shock and overwhelm at the realities of teaching, and often leave the profession early in their teaching career. Globally and in South Africa, the experiences of novice teachers entering the classroom are often described as feeling isolated and unsupported. While there is a plethora of studies about mentoring novice teachers, literature about mentoring novice teachers from an Africanised Ubuntu perspective is scarce. Perhaps the time has come to find African solutions to our African problems. This qualitative study was underpinned by an interpretative phenomenology approach. Using semi-structured interviews, this study aimed to explore novice teacher mentoring needs from an Ubuntu perspective. It was found that novice teachers feel overwhelmed and like they are not coping with the complexities of teaching in their first year. This paper further explores the school micro-community from the Ubuntu principles to support novices and uplift the community. In addition, it explores the potential benefit of a prescribed Ubuntu orientated mentoring programme to formalise and standardize mentoring for novices.

Keywords: Mentorship; Novice Teacher; Teacher Attrition; Ubuntu