

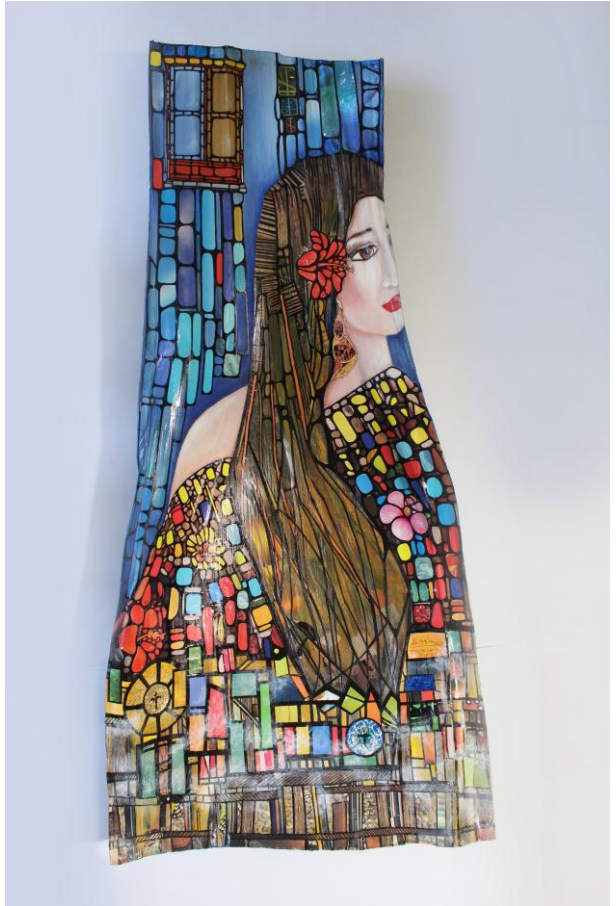
opción

Revista de Antropología, Ciencias de la Comunicación y de la Información, Filosofía,
Linguística y Semiótica, Problemas del Desarrollo, la Ciencia y la Tecnología

Año 34, 2018, Especial N°

16

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
ISSN 1012-1587/ ISSNe: 2477-9385
Depósito Legal pp 198402ZU45



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Mentoring and support system for new teacher development program

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the level of mentoring and support system in the implementation of NTDP and its differences based on school level. The survey design was selected and questionnaire was used as the research instrument. The results showed that the level of mentoring in NTDP was very high and the level of support system was high. In conclusion, the cooperation and commitment of school community in providing various forms of support and guidance can ensure that NTDP is implemented successfully.

Keywords: Mentoring, System, Teacher Development Program.

Sistema de tutoría y apoyo para el nuevo programa de desarrollo docente

Resumen

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo identificar el nivel de mentoría y el sistema de apoyo en la implementación de NTDP (National Team Development Program) y sus diferencias en función del nivel escolar. Se seleccionó el diseño de la encuesta y se utilizó un cuestionario como instrumento de investigación. Los resultados mostraron que el nivel de tutoría en el NTDP era muy alto y el nivel del sistema de apoyo era alto. En conclusión, la cooperación y el compromiso de la comunidad escolar al proporcionar diversas formas de apoyo y orientación pueden garantizar que el NTDP se implemente con éxito.

Palabras clave: Mentoring, Sistema, Programa de Desarrollo Docente.

1. INTRODUCTION

The first year of service is the most challenging time for those who are new in the teaching profession. New teachers faced problems in terms of adapting to tasks Dickson et al. (2014), teaching and learning Confait (2015), relationships with various parties, classroom management, and lack of teaching resources. The difficulty they faced when performing their duty, in addition to the lack of support and guidance make them feel frustrated, isolated from colleagues and at the end leave the profession. This situation requires a special mechanism such as an induction program to support and guide new teachers to successfully face the transition from a student at a teaching institute to

a full-time teacher. Induction programs are implemented in schools all over the world to support and guide new teachers in the early years of service. The main aim of the induction program is to improve performance, maintain teachers' competency in the profession, promote the development of professional and personality, and build the foundation for continuous professionalism development. In the United States, the involvement of new teachers in the induction program has increased by 40 percent since 1990. New teachers who receive this support not only remain in the profession Podolsky et al. (2016), they can even overcome classroom management issues and able to focus on teaching. Whereas in Europe, the induction program is compulsory and part of the policy in teacher certification Kessels (2010) to reduce drop-out rates, improve teaching quality and support the development of new teachers' professionalism. In Japan and China, induction programs are implemented comprehensively by focusing on learning rather than retaining teachers through professional support from school and educational institutions.

In Malaysia, every new teacher is required to undergo an induction program known as the New Teacher Development Program (NTDP) from 2011 to support the development of new teachers' professionalism in achieving professional competency as outlined in the Teachers Standard of Malaysia. NTDP is implemented for a year through structured guidance by experienced mentors and support from administrators and colleagues. In addition to mentoring, new teachers have an ongoing support of the school in carrying out NTDP activities such as professional learning communities, action researches and

internal courses. Three key features of effective inductions include comprehensive guidance, a variety of activities appropriate to the needs of new teachers, and continuous support from various parties. However, the minimum implementation does not have the desired effect as a new teacher does not get the guidance and support as they should. Effective mentoring depends on the skills and experience of mentors, changes in behavior after learning, and the change acceptance level. However, new teachers are found to receive less guidance from mentors Hebert & Worthy (2001) especially in terms of time management and incompatible teaching option. Time management factors include unscheduled meeting, guidance and mentoring sessions between mentors and new teachers, and the tight schedule of activities conducted at the school. Whereas, the incompatible option factor consists of different mentors' options with new teachers and new teacher options that differ from the subject they teach. This situation requires comprehensive guidance from experienced and skilled mentors in the field of specialization so that new teachers can implement teaching and learning more effectively. Experienced mentors are less motivated to take guidance responsibility because of the burden of existing duties Hellsten et al. (2009) and the discomfort they felt when questions raised by new teachers forced them to reflect on their own practice. In addition, mentors are also inept in information and communication technology (ICT) skills, co-curriculum management and file management at school.

In the early stages of teacher development, support from administrators and colleagues is especially needed in terms of psychological and professional support. However, new teachers are found to have less support from the administrators especially in teaching and

learning Mohd (2016) as they are more focused on school management and administration. Whereas in terms of psychological support, new teachers received lack of appreciation and professional recognition from the school Hudson (2012), there was lack of collaboration and they feel isolated from their colleagues Headden (2014), as well as lack of access to human resources and equipment at the school. In addition, the internal courses were 'one size fits all' fails to meet the needs of new teachers in complex organizations. Overall, the weakness in the school's support system towards new teachers is not only disruptive for their professional development but also makes it difficult to succeed in the teaching profession. Based on the problems and challenges identified during the induction program, it is desirable to study the support and guidance to ensure NTDP can be implemented more effectively in the future. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the level of mentoring and support system received by new teachers who have participated in NTDP. In addition, this study is also conducted to examine the different levels of mentoring and support systems based on school level. In particular, the two main research questions are (1) What is the level of mentoring and support systems received by new teachers in the implementation of NTDP?, and (2) Are there significant differences in mentoring and support systems received by new teachers in NTDP based on school level?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As a new teacher, it is a complex task to successfully carry out the role as an instructor. The pre-service training is still insufficient to

fortify their teaching and learning in terms of knowledge, skills, and motivation in facing the situation in the classroom. Based on the teacher development theory Ingersoll & Strong (2011), the school plays a role in providing a learning environment that will help new teachers efficiently perform their duties through guidance and support programs. This guidance and support or induction program has a positive impact on new teachers, particularly in the aspect of teacher commitment and retention in service, classroom teaching practices, and improvement of student learning and growth.

2.1. Mentoring

Mentoring plays an important role in the induction program, especially in helping new teachers to effectively carry out their duties. Mentoring is defined as a process of nurturing professional development that occurs between experienced individuals and less skilled or less experienced individuals in terms of counselling, support, and advice. Meanwhile, Cornell (2003) considers mentors as experienced teachers who accepted new teachers as co-workers and actively participate in learning activities in terms of teaching and professionalism skills. Lim (2014) suggested that mentoring process needs to be based on three principles: (i) personal aspects that include emotional support for new teachers to face conflict, (ii) professional aspects such as knowledge, skills and resources of teaching and learning, and (iii) constructive criticism leading to discussions and sharing ideas related to education, teaching, and social values.

According to Darlinghammond (2010), well-designed and efficiently implemented mentoring programs can enhance new teachers' professionalism in terms of attitude, self-efficacy, and teaching skills. This is supported by Lim (2014), which showed that mentoring programs can enhance the professional, work culture, personal and social competency of new teachers. However, interviews found that new teachers faced several challenges in implementing mentoring programs such as time constraints, the burden of duties, as well as gender and race differences between senior and new teachers. Hudson (2013) considers mentorship as a professional development activity that leads to improved communication skills, develops leadership roles in problem solving, and improves pedagogical knowledge. Fairstein (2016) finds that new teachers who receive guidance from mentors have the advantage in terms of adaptation to the school system including staff and administrators. In terms of quantitative findings, the level of certainty in the selection of profession and self-efficacy is found to be higher when new teachers teach the same subjects as the mentors. Therefore, the selection of mentors needs to be carried out carefully based on the criteria set by each organization. Overall, professional relationships and communication between mentors and new teachers play an important role in determining effective mentoring. In this study, mentoring focuses on the reactions of new teachers towards interaction with their mentors during the implementation period of NTDP in three aspects; the meeting time, knowledge sharing and mentor's concern.

2.2. Support System

Support gained through a comprehensive induction program is very important to help new teachers adapt to the school culture and the local community. The social environment which was different from their experience during the teaching practice also affects the socialization of new teachers, especially in terms of the number of students, student discipline and support from administrators and other teachers at school. This is in line with the teacher development model Fuller (1969) in which in the early stages of their career, they require the support of administrators and mentors to build working relationships with school staffs and this will determine the acceptance of other teachers towards them as a professional in the organization. The key rationale for providing excellent support in the early stages of the service is to further develop the acquired skills during pre-service training and help overcome weaknesses that may cause them to leave the profession. Additionally, the ultimate goal of the support system in the induction program is to increase student growth and teach (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Hanson, 2016; Jayakumar, 2016). In addition, a study on producing a new teacher socialization model found that support systems from the aspects of teaching and learning, tasks other than teaching and learning, as well as the development of teacher professionalism can improve work performance.

Mohd (2016) has identified that are three aspects of the support system for novice teachers namely, support for teaching and learning, administrative, and external tasks. Support from teaching and learning

aspects refer to mentoring activities carried out by new teachers with mentors and other teachers such as ongoing monitoring in the classroom and discussions on teaching feedback. The administrative tasks in addition to teaching and learning include organizational management and organizing special programs through positive involvement between school and the local community. The third aspect of the development of teaching professionalism refers to the independent learning activities carried out by the new teachers and the ongoing training organized by the school or other educational institution. On the whole, the support system is an important aspect in helping new teachers be more prepared to carry out their duties as competent and qualified teachers.

2.3. New Teacher Development Program

The NTDP is implemented in three phases, namely the orientation phase, the mentoring phase and professional development phases that occur simultaneously. The orientation phase is conducted during the first three months aimed at helping new teachers adapt to the school climate. The school climate aspects such as physical environment, social system, as well as relationships with the administrators, teachers, students, communities, and co-workers are the basis of good quality teaching and learning. The content of this phase encompasses educational policies, school culture, co-curriculum management, and student affairs; providing opportunities for new teachers to perform in the real situation. The mentoring phase is continuously implemented for a year with professional, structured guidance and support from an experienced mentor. The program implementation guideline stated that mentoring activities can be

formal and informal for at least two additional hours of the school timetable. The main goal of this phase is to improve the professional competency of new teachers in terms of knowledge, skills and professional teaching values. These components need to be applied in teaching and learning, assessment and measurement of student achievement, co-curriculum, and classroom management.

The professional development phase is carried out throughout the NTDP period which aimed to guide and develop new teachers' professional competency. Guskey (2000) defined professional development as a process and activity designed to develop professional knowledge, skills and attitude of teachers in order to enhance student learning. According to Altun (2011), teachers engaging in professional development activities can indirectly increase the confidence and expertise that later affects all students in their classroom. Professional development will be more effective if teachers are actively involved in conducting action research, collaborating with colleagues, improving teaching practices, and conducting assessments in a formative manner (Haseeb, Hartani, Bakar, Azam, & Hassan, 2014; Okumura, 2017; Adedoyin & Okere, 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted quantitatively using survey methods to answer the objectives and research questions. The survey method was chosen as it can describe the characteristics and provide clear

information about a population. The population comprised of 863 new teachers stationed in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur in 2015. The sample was selected through stratified random sampling technique according to school level i.e. primary and secondary school. A total of 286 respondents were selected which were exceeding the minimum of 270 samples based on the sample size determination table by Bartlett et al. (2001), and at least 266 samples based on the formula by Cochran (1977). There were 98 male teachers (34.3%), while female teachers were 188 (65.7%). In addition, 232 respondents (81.1%) were stationed in primary schools and 54 teachers (18.9%) in high school.

The research data are obtained by using the closed questionnaire items and the answer was available for the respondents to choose. The research questionnaire is adapted from Siti (2016) and Mohd (2016) which consisted of three parts. Part A consists of respondent background information. Part B covers 11 items aimed at measuring mentoring components from the aspect of meeting times between mentors and new teachers, sharing of knowledge between mentors and new teachers and mentors' concern. While Section C contains 11 items to measure support system component from the teaching and learning aspect, external tasks, and professional development of teaching. The five-point Likert scale was used in instruments with ranges of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Item validity was determined by using the correlation value between the item score and total scores, and the correlation between the corrected item value and the total scores. Correlation value for all items was between 0.487 and 0.785. Correlation value greater than 0.4 means the items were

acceptable and have high validity. The Cronbach Alpha value was 0.900 which means the reliability was high.

The data were analysed descriptively and inferentially using the SPSS version 24.0 program. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the first research question, which was to identify the level of mentoring and support system in the implementation of NTDP. Interpretation of the mean score to determine the level of the new teacher support system was divided into five levels which were: 'very low' (mean = 1.0-1.8), 'low' (mean = 1.9-2.6), 'moderate' (mean = 2.7-3.4), 'high' (mean = 3.5-4.2), and 'very high' (mean = 4.3-5.0). MANOVA test was conducted to answer the second research question; identifying the difference between mentoring and support systems in NTDP between primary and secondary schools. Before doing MANOVA, several tests were conducted to examine initial assumptions of analysis such as normality, outliers, and multicollinearity. The results of the analysis show that no serious errors occurred between the sample groups.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. The Mentoring Level of NDTP

The mentoring component is measured in three aspects, namely the meeting time between the mentor and new teacher, knowledge sharing among mentors and new teachers, and mentors' concerns.

Generally, the average for the mentoring component in NTDP is at a high level (mean = 4.22, s.d = 0.49). Mentors' concern aspect (mean = 4.34, s.d = 0.55) is at a very high level. On the other hand, the aspect of meeting time between mentors and new teachers (mean = 4.22, s.d = 0.56) and knowledge sharing between mentors and new teachers (mean = 4.40, s.d = 0.53) are at a high level. Overall, new teachers are found to received excellent guidance from the mentors appointed by the school through mentoring activities in NTDP. This finding is consistent with Sankar (2011) which showed that mentoring in induction programs was successfully implemented through the comprehensive guidance from skilled, knowledgeable and experienced mentors. The selection of mentors in NTDP is based on a number of criteria set by the TED such as having vast experience in the subjects taught by new teachers, skilled and knowledgeable in their field of specialization, initiative and responsibility, thinking reflectively, and a skillfull person to train and guide. In addition, Ingersoll and Smith (2011) found that the guidance received from mentors in the same area of expertise as new teachers and collaborative engagements with other teachers in the induction program make them less likely to move to another school and leave the profession after a year of service.

The NTDP is implemented in three phases simultaneously, namely the Orientation Phase, the Mentoring Phase and the Professional Development Phase. Activity in the Mentoring Phase consists of several aspects such as teaching and learning process, assessment and measurement of student achievement, and classroom management, co-curriculum as well as a special school program. Therefore, the mentoring level for knowledge sharing between mentors and new teachers is very

high, which means that mentoring activity in NTDP covers various aspects needed by new teachers. In addition, the mentor's concern and seriousness in guiding new teachers not only helped to improve knowledge, skills and motivation, but it also provided the opportunity for new teachers to discuss and give their views on solving the problems faced in school. This statement is also supported by Duke et al. (2006) in his study in the United States which showed that new teachers who participate in the mentoring and induction programs in the first year of the service are more likely to be committed to the teaching profession. The interaction between mentors and new teachers while conducting mentoring activities for the aspects of meeting time is at a high level. The mentor is found to be willing to help despite their hectic schedule and is approachable whether meeting directly or through an appointment. Based on NTDP implementation guidelines, mentoring sessions need to be formal or informal for at least two teaching and learning period within a week. However, most mentor and new teachers do informal mentoring due to time constraints such as timing overlaps and involvement in the management of special school programs. Smith (2003) stated a similar finding that informal mentoring sessions are more often conducted during mentoring activities as these methods are more flexible and appropriate and can build positive interactions between mentors and new teachers.

4.2. Support System Level in NDTP

The support system in NTDP is seen in three aspects: support in teaching and learning, support for external work, and support in the development of teaching professionalism. Participants in the support

system include school administrators and colleagues. The results of the analysis show that the level of support systems in the implementation of NTDP is high (mean = 4.293, s.d = 0.462). In particular, support in teaching and learning is at a very high level (mean = 4.337, s.d = 0.524). On the other hand, the support for external work (mean = 4.297, s.d = 0.534) and support in the development of teacher professionalism (mean = 4.293, s.d = 0.462) is high. New teachers get excellent support in all three aspects from school administrators and co-workers. In addition to the guidance of mentors, new teachers also often refer to their colleagues for information and share their views on the problems they faced in teaching and learning. Regular meeting sessions with colleagues and other new teachers help them to interact and work together to effectively solve problems. This situation applies particularly in the transition process in which new teachers face difficulty in adapting the skills and knowledge acquired during pre-service training to the real situations in the classroom. Based on teaching experience, colleagues including senior teachers and administrators give collaboration and assistance needed by new teachers to carry out better teaching and learning. In addition, administrators also support new teachers by providing opportunities to interact with colleagues and encourage their learning.

Support for external tasks such as co-curriculum management and school-specific programs are also at an excellent level. Continuous coaching from Assistant Principal of Co-curricular Affairs, sports teachers, and senior teachers can enhance the confidence of new teachers in managing co-curricular activities. In addition, the implementation of One Student One Sports policy from 2010 provides infrastructure, facilities and sports equipment in the schools which greatly help teachers

and students to smoothly carry out co-curricular activities. 1). In addition to co-curriculum management, new teachers also received excellent collaboration from the appointed school committee members to organize yearly special school program. This finding is in line with Mohd (2016) where new teachers get good cooperation and have a more meaningful relationship with colleagues and support staff in implementing special school programs. New teachers also have good support in the development of teaching professionalism from school and colleagues during NTDP. In the professional development phase, new teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching and learning, and organizational management are strengthened through the implementation of short-term workshops organized by the school. Thus, the administrators always give exposure to the importance of lifelong learning by encouraging new teachers to participate in online and face-to-face training organized by the school and outside parties. In addition, indirect support from co-workers' through knowledge-sharing sessions and discussions in the subject committee provides opportunities for new teachers to improve their professional practice in carrying out their duties. The participation of new teachers in this professional development activity is in line with MOE's main agenda to improve the quality of teachers as set out in the Continuous Professionalism Development Blueprint.

4.3. Difference in Mentoring and Support System Based on School Level

To see the difference between mentoring and support systems in NTDP according to the school level, one-way MANOVA analysis is

conducted to test the null hypothesis. The findings of the Box's M test showed that there are no significant covariance differences between dependent and independent variables ($F = 2.716$, $p = 0.043$) ($p > 0.001$). This means that the covariance difference of the dependent variable is homogeneous across the independent variable. The results of the MANOVA shows that, Wilks' $\lambda = 0.985$, $F(2, 280) = 2.105$, and $p = 0.124$ ($p > 0.05$). The value indicated that the null hypothesis failed to be rejected, in which there is no significant difference in the dependent variables (mentoring and support systems) according to the school level in the implementation of NTDP.

New teachers placed in primary and secondary schools are found to receive the same mentoring in the implementation of NTDP. This is likely due to the mentors appointed by the school have similar academic qualifications, knowledge, and experience. In terms of academic qualifications, the Public Service Department (PSD) has improved the career progression of the teaching profession by combining the Diploma Graduated Education Service Officers (ESO) and Bachelor Graduated ESO for teachers who have gone through the Teacher Bachelor Program. The improvement of this service scheme shows that teachers in primary or primary schools have a high academic qualification of at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, the MOE has set some criteria that the school should consider in selecting and appointing mentors as stated in the NTDP Implementation Guidelines. The selection criteria are the mentors should be knowledgeable, have at least five years' experience in teaching similar subjects as new teachers, be initiative and responsible, thinking

reflectively, and skillful to train and guide. Norasmah (2006) argued that mentors need to have at least three years of experience, maintain a reflective approach, be knowledgeable in subject content, and encourage the professional and personal development of new teachers. The consistent criteria determination for selecting mentors creates equality in terms of mentoring level for all school level.

In terms of support, new teachers in primary and secondary schools receive equal support in teaching and learning, external task and professional development in NTDP. The results are opposite of Norasmah (2006) which found that there was a difference in the support system based on the type of school. School administrators play an important role in providing the support system needed by new teachers in both primary and secondary schools. This is supported by Roberson (2009) who view that administrators are a critical factor in the success of new teachers, especially in providing meaningful and thorough feedback. Based on NTDP's implementation guidelines, school administrators are responsible to provide support for new teacher professional development and implement monitoring especially in the areas of teaching and learning on a regular basis throughout the NTDP period. In addition, supportive and knowledgeable administrators who are willing to provide guidance in teaching and learning can help new teachers cultivate the best teaching practices and maintain research-based approaches in the classroom.

5. CONCLUSION

Support for new teachers is critical in the implementation of induction programs in schools. Without strong and persistent support, only a handful of new teachers can effectively improve student achievement. This study shows that new teachers get very good support from mentors, administrators, and colleagues in helping them perform their duties. Excellent support can help new teachers to socialize in organizations such as adapting to school culture, building good relationships with colleagues, and being knowledgeable in the field of work. Implementation of induction programs clearly indicates that new teachers, mentors and administrators have the potential to enhance professional learning and professional development of teaching. In addition, the ongoing support received by new teachers in the induction program from school administrators and colleagues affects the development of teacher professionalism and retention in service. This is in line with NTDP's main goal to help new teachers adapt to the school culture, expanding the potential of new teachers through the positive attitude and mastery of skills in teaching and learning, as well as developing professional competency.

Based on the results of the study, several suggestions can be made to improve and strengthen the implementation of NTDP, particularly in terms of mentoring and support systems. School administrators need to enhance their efforts in selecting an effective mentor to guide new teachers. The aspects that need to be considered are having experience and expertise in the field of specialization,

teaching the same subjects and at the same level, caring for the performance and teaching problems faced by new teachers, and having good communication skills with colleagues. Additionally, mentors should be given intensive training to improve skills in guiding adult learners, providing reflective feedback, conducting formative evaluations, and building interpersonal relationships with new teachers. Constructive communication, understanding, and feedback skills are important aspects of fostering a relationship between mentors and new teachers. In addition, the NTDP secretariat in MOE should provide reference documents such as specific mentoring modules for mentors to implement more systematic and effective guidance.

School conditions and environments greatly influence career development and success of new teachers. Therefore, school support for new teachers is important throughout the implementation of NTDP. School administrators need to build good relationships, provide adequate teaching resources, provide opportunities for planning and learning, and distribute jobs that are relevant to the ability of new teachers. Additionally, professional development support for new teachers should be enhanced by conducting in-service training and promoting their engagement in action research as well as professional learning communities. In addition, colleagues and senior teachers need to provide support in terms of task management such as co-curriculum, student affairs, and special school programs. To ensure the effectiveness of the program, the NTDP assessment should be carried out comprehensively based on the standards and criteria set by the MOE. On the whole, the cooperation and commitment of the school

community in providing various forms of support and guidance can ensure that NTDP is implemented successfully.

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**UNIVERSIDAD
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Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

Año 34, Especial N° 16, 2018

Esta revista fue editada en formato digital por el personal de la Oficina de Publicaciones Científicas de la Facultad Experimental de Ciencias, Universidad del Zulia.
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