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Exploratory Study on the Use of Personality Questionnaires to Assist in the Selection of Effective Teachers



Eleanor Wong

Action

The Education Research Fund committee approved the project "Exploratory Study on the Use of Personality Questionnaires to Assist in the selection of Effective Teachers" in February 2000. The role of the teacher in moulding the young of Singapore is crucial for Singapore's economic survival and success. It is thus important for the National Institute of Education as the only teacher training institution to receive trainees who are suited to the teaching profession and are willing to learn the attitudes, skills and knowledge required to become effective teachers. It is believed that personality testing may reduce the dropout rate during training as well as reduce the number of unsuitable applicants being accepted as trainee teachers in the first place.

Aim of the Study

The research project aims to increase the effectiveness of the selection of teacher candidates and the training process

of NIE. Specifically, the aims are:

- ◆ to investigate the efficacy of five selected scales of the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) and the Teachers Profiling Questionnaires (TPQ) for developing personality profiles of effective Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) trained teachers in primary and secondary schools;
- ◆ to examine the use of the questionnaires as additional predictors/indicators in order to enhance the criteria for selecting candidates for the teaching profession;
- ◆ to construct personality profiles of effective teachers in the various curriculum subject (CS) areas,

Current progress

Teachers who graduated from NIE's PCDE programmes from 1994 – 1999 and are at present teaching in primary schools, secondary schools and junior colleges were selected to participate in the research project. The list of "effective"

and "less effective" teachers was obtained from Personnel Division, MOE.

The two questionnaires were administered in August and September 2000. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, only 66.5% eventually participated and sat for the questionnaires. The data are presently being analysed and a report will be submitted when the analyses are complete.

Implications

The results of the exploratory study will not have an immediate impact for schools. Instead, personality profiles

of effective PGDE trained teachers would be developed and used as additional predictors to enhance the selection and training of candidates for the Singapore teaching service. Prospective applicants would take the tests. Members of the recruitment panels could then pose questions around clusters of traits and views on education and training and probe the applicants' answers in these areas to help assess the applicant's suitability in becoming a teacher.

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