

The Complexity of Hiring, Supporting, and Retaining New Teachers Across Canada

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Foreword

During the past decade, one of our summer traditions is to have a group of former work colleagues join me at the cottage for a couple of days of “girl time”. We came together as a social group about a decade ago when, as school principals, we would travel together to regularly scheduled out-of-town principals’ meetings. As the distance required about an hour of travel each way, over the years, we became each other’s professional and social support networks.

About 9 years ago, I moved out of the public school system and into a faculty of education teaching job, where part of my focus has become research into the teacher education practices we espouse and their impacts on schools and children. Our summer get-togethers have continued (and indeed, many other social events throughout the year) as times for us to share our experiences as professionals and friends. We reflect on changes, and gain perspective as we hear the stories and interpretations of our colleagues and close friends. In recent years, I have often heard from this group about their concerns and frustrations when they face the task of hiring new teachers. Concerns are many but they generally narrow down to one theme...principals feel that they are losing control of the process of hiring, supporting, and retaining the teachers who work in their schools. They feel frustrated because of the tension between the requirement that they, as principals, optimize the work of their teaching staff but have so little control over who their teaching staff might be and how these professionals are supported throughout all stages of their careers. It is from the discussions with this group of friends that my interest in teacher hiring practices has evolved.

My editorial colleague, Dr. Blaine E. Hatt, and I have had many conversations about this topic as we have undertaken related research cooperatively over the past 5 years. These conversations resulted in our application to the Canadian Association of Teacher Educators (CATE) to edit a national book on this topic.

The stories shared by my group of principal friends are not unique. As other colleagues research issues related to hiring, supporting, and retaining new teachers in Canadian schools, concerns about the viability and integrity of what we are doing, how we do it, and how legislation either supports or hinders the process of hiring and supporting the strongest teachers, are being examined. We know much about how selecting the best candidates to be our school’s teachers impacts student learning. However, much of the research that has been undertaken in this area has been done in an American context. This book was developed in an effort to bring together researchers who are examining these issues in a Canadian context.

The book celebrates the work of 17 Canadian researchers who have focused on all aspects of a professional teaching career, from teacher preparation, to hiring practices, support networks and frameworks for professional growth in early career timeframes, and career trajectory topics as teachers mature in the profession. This group of Canadian researchers includes many writers who have been part of Canada’s cohort of principals and system administrators at other points in their own careers, and, in some chapters, includes the voices of their new colleague cohorts who are initiating their own research careers as Ph.D. or Ed.D. students.

The foci of the chapters are many and varied. However, they have been brought together to reflect themes that we feel resonate a universal Canadian reality for teacher educators. The challenge of hiring and supporting new teachers is crucial to the outcome of creating effective schools that advance student learning. This is especially important in educational communities that are evolving as the nature and people of Canada changes. Through further research, we can learn

to support and celebrate our rich cultural differences as a Canadian society through the culture we build and nurture in our schools.

The book is organized so that chapter foci evolve in a sequence that indicates a typical career path for a new teacher: teacher preparation, hiring, early career supports, and finally, career maturation.

Structure in the book

The book starts with a provocative and well-researched article by Dr. Gerald Galway from Memorial University in Newfoundland. It provides a hopeful look at teaching and hiring, especially in the context of Atlantic Canada. As this author states, “If we know anything about education systems, it is that forecasting teacher demand and attempting to control teacher supply are two difficult and often contested practices”. Dr. Galway challenges, through extensive data, the often taken-for-granted premise that faculties of education are graduating more teachers than our society needs.

In Chapter 2 of this book, Dr. Clare Kosnik, Professor at OISE/U of T, and her colleagues and Ph.D. students, Lydia Menna and Pooja Dharamshi, examine the preparation of teachers, and specifically how teachers are prepared to teach literacy. These authors contend that the depth of understanding of curriculum concepts of teacher candidates upon certification is sufficient to name concepts and to do so effectively in interview contexts. However, extensive longitudinal research uncovers the lack of confidence that early career teachers identify related to their ability to actually teach in ways that align with these concepts. These authors consider what this research means for how we examine understanding as we attempt to hire the best teachers.

Dr. Lyle Hamm, an assistant professor in Educational Administration and Leadership at the University of New Brunswick, examines the issue of diversity in our teaching population. He explores the challenges of a changing Canadian demographic in urban and rural contexts and considers how these changes inform the types of hiring decisions we should be making to ensure that our school staffs become more culturally diverse in background and understanding. He considers how our traditional interview hiring practices can be used to explore diversity values and strategies for engaging diversity in teaching among teacher applicants.

The theme of hiring for diversity is revisited in Chapter 4 by Dr. Jim Ryan, a professor in the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. In this chapter, Jim and his colleague David Jack, examine the limitations and latitude of hiring practices and point out that principals who hire teachers participate in a process that in many ways is established in policy. In a thorough review of the literature about teacher hiring practices, David and Jim show that across many districts, teacher recruitment processes can range from highly centralized for hiring teachers in urban contexts to highly decentralized, especially when hiring new teachers. They also found that job specificity impacts teacher recruitment – high demand teaching positions limit the applicant pool. This study reports on hiring priorities in a large urban district, where the authors tried to determine the factors considered most important by principals when making hiring decisions. In this study, the researchers found that principals consider diversity dimensions to be the least important considerations when hiring new teachers, but that experienced principals were likely to value these dimensions of teacher expertise more highly than their less experienced colleagues. This chapter also reports on the challenges that principals perceived with hiring for diversity, including timing issues, regulations, and resistance.

In Chapter 5 of this book, Dr. Maria Cantalini-Williams, an associate professor at Nipissing University on the Brantford campus, and former curriculum consultant, examines how the practicum experience can, and has been, used in some teacher preparation programs to provide teacher candidates with breadth in their exposure to teaching in other cultures and opportunities to engage in peer mentorship as a strategy for ensuring their own professional growth in a collegial approach. She considers three models for enriching the practicum experience to these ends and provides recommendations for how outcomes of each of the models can inform how we hire and support new teachers. Maria concludes that: “The evidence strongly indicates that teacher education programs would ideally include innovative practicum placements, both within and outside local school systems, to meet the demands, challenges and opportunities of the teaching profession, in its broadest form”. She proposes use of the CANWILL framework to guide those who hire teachers. Maria suggests that this framework could support reflections about the criteria that might be uncovered in interview contexts to determine the extent of experience teacher applicants may have acquired with such practica.

Dr. Katina Pollock, an associate professor at the University of Western Ontario, examines the contingent nature of teacher work in Ontario under Regulation 274 and identifies ways that supply teacher/substitute work is substantively different from full-time teaching contract work. Her findings demonstrate that several elements of substitutes’ teaching were characteristically different from permanent teaching. These differences include: daily preparation; rapport with students; classroom management; lesson content; and teaching strategy implementation. She concludes that the contingent quality of non-permanent teaching has implications for how we might better develop and deliver professional learning for newly hired teachers and arguably, what we address with these applicants in teaching interviews.

As we turn our attention to actual hiring practices for the selection of new teachers. Dr. David Kaufman and Alice Ireland explain the value of simulations as a component of hiring practices. Dr. Kaufman is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University, and conducts research on digital games and simulations for learning and other uses. Alice Ireland, co-author of this chapter, is an educational consultant in Vancouver, BC. She was formerly Executive Director of Simon Fraser University’s Simulation and Advanced Gaming Environments (SAGE) for Learning Project. They explain in this chapter how we might use simulations of teaching and teaching related tasks to help jurisdictions select teachers for their schools. Several examples of how such simulations are used in other contexts are considered.

Dr. Jerome Cranston is the associate dean (undergraduate) and an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba. His work in Chapter 8 reviews decades of research that have elucidated how stereotypes which influence a hiring team’s perceptions and assessments of applicants’ capabilities, may affect hiring decisions of new teachers. This chapter investigates how hiring myths can be promulgated as truth when school leaders do not sufficiently analyze the reasons by which they act, and do not examine the assumptions, commitments, and logic of administrative life. In this chapter, Jerome frames the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are evident in a wide body of research as requirements to teach effectively and he provides a useful framework for triangulating the data that might be available to administrators to inform their hiring decisions.

Chapter 9 of this book is contributed by Dr. Jim Brandon from the University of Calgary. Jim brings his breadth of knowledge from his work as a former school superintendent to examine the challenges of selecting strong teachers for northern, sparsely populated regions in Alberta.

He examines ways that four northern school divisions, the provincial government, and teacher preparation programs are striving to realize the promise of the Alberta Task Force for Teaching Excellence (2014) that “For every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher.” In the face of seemingly insurmountable geographic, economic, social, and cultural challenges to preparing, attracting, developing, and retaining excellent teachers in northern and remote Alberta contexts, Jim examines the strategies that seem to be working. His work has resulted in four assertions or analytical generalizations that chart productive pathways forward.

In Chapter 10, three researchers who have worked as long time colleagues at Nipissing University in North Bay, Ontario, examine connected themes that guide our selection, support and retention of teachers. Drs. Blaine Hatt and Nancy Maynes have completed several common research projects over the last six years. In this chapter, new researcher and Ph.D. student Joanne Kmiec, join them to explore existing evidence in an Ontario context of practices and processes that are currently used to hire new teachers and, while examining Reg. 274, advocate a multi-stage hiring process in the context of essential qualitative and quantitative characteristics in teacher applicants that are desirable ‘look fors’ in teacher hiring practices. Preliminary data in an ongoing study of province-wide (Ontario) board hiring practices is provided. Finally, a multi-stage hiring process is proposed. It addresses concerns with current hiring practices and establishes a comprehensive approach to hiring that enables schools/boards to benefit their students by providing them with access to the best teachers focused on improving student learning and pedagogical success.

Dr. Clive Beck, a professor at the University of Toronto/OISE, reports in Chapter 11 on many sources of data related to teacher growth once they start teaching. He considers self-reported sources of professional growth and identifies several areas where post-hiring growth typically occurs. Gains were reported in program development skills, activity and strategy planning, devising effective and engaging classroom routines, individualized assessment, classroom organization and management, and community building. Clive concludes that teaching is difficult but new teachers found many sources of informal support during their early years in the profession to help them learn and enrich their teaching. Additionally, this chapter focuses on many formal supports that can help new teacher growth and points out the critical role that school principals can and should play in helping new teachers access these supports. Dr. Beck concludes the chapter by suggesting a resource bank for teachers to help all professionals learn from each other.

Our hopes as your read

As you read this book, it is our hope that you will develop a better understanding of the complexities of hiring, supporting, and retaining teachers in the profession. These challenges are common to many areas across the country. This is an area of teacher preparation research that is in its adolescent years in Canada. There is scope for further research of the topics that are addressed in this book.

As you start your reading journey about this topic from the many perspectives of our authors, we want to thank them for their diligent attention to this important topic. We look forward to further association with this talented group of researchers and writers as we develop our own investigations in this area.

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CHAPTER 1

Is Education Still a Viable Career Option in Atlantic Canada?

By Gerald Galway, Memorial University, Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores several questions inherent in the discourse surrounding teacher supply and demand with a focus on the Atlantic Provinces. I examine the demographic context of education in Atlantic Canada and discuss some of the indicators and historical trends that bear on the employment outlook for new teacher graduates. Based on the available data, I evaluate the employment prospects for new teachers in the region and identify a number of often-overlooked factors essential to understanding the teacher labour market. Lastly, I speculate on some wider questions about education as a career path and the value of an education degree.

Keywords: education, student enrolment, demography, indicators, teacher supply and demand, employment, labour market, Atlantic Provinces

INTRODUCTION

In fall, 2014 our faculty was contacted by the CBC to be part of an on-air panel for a phone-in show on education in Atlantic Canada. The topic for discussion was: *Are full time permanent teaching jobs a thing of the past?* This was, of course, a deliberately provocative question, intended to generate debate about the proposition that classroom teaching as a career is on life-support. Public opinion has it that newly minted teachers are facing considerable uncertainty about their employment prospects, and universities should seriously reconsider the number of graduates they release into an already-bloated teacher labour market. Everyone seems to know an education graduate who spends years doing supply teaching and working short-term contracts before finding a permanent, full-time teaching position.

In the recent past, the discourse around teacher oversupply has intensified as evidence has emerged in several recently published reports about a widening gap between the number of unemployed or underemployed teacher graduates and the availability of permanent full-time classroom positions (Government of Nova Scotia, 2007, 2012; Ontario College of Teachers, 2013, 2014). In some regions of the country there have been calls for a pullback on admissions to teacher education programs, and some provinces have already enacted policies intended to do just that. In 2013, the Government of Ontario reduced funding and announced other changes to teacher education programs, leaving universities in that province to adjust and downscale the ways in which they organize and deliver pre-service teacher education (Government of Ontario, 2013).

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations endorsed some of the Ontario changes noting that doubling the length of teacher education from one year to two will help align programs with those at other Canadian universities. Other changes, however, such as scaling back per-student funding by a third and reducing seats in teacher education programs by 50 percent – from 9000 to 4500 places – were criticized as threats to educational quality while placing Ontario students who wish to study education at a significant disadvantage (Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, 2013).

The rhetoric surrounding the push to steer young Canadians away from teaching conjures up images of throngs of desperate pedagogues dutifully pouring coffee at Starbucks or taking orders at MacDonald's. Yet, when my colleagues and I talk to graduates from our education programs, things don't seem nearly as bleak. In a recent internal survey of our 2014 graduates, almost half told us that they were able to secure teaching jobs by the time they graduated. Some accepted positions in rural and northern communities, either in the Atlantic region or elsewhere in Canada. A few took advantage of offers from recruiters to teach in the United Kingdom and Asia. But most of those who found positions said they were working, either in full-time or part-time positions, in the province or were working as supply teachers in order to build teaching dossiers.

If we know anything about education systems, it is that forecasting teacher demand and attempting to control teacher supply are two difficult and often contested practices. Difficult because the range of demographic factors and political and economic drivers required to predict fluctuations in teacher demand are complex and unstable, and many are out of the control of governments and universities. Contested because there are widely differing viewpoints about the wisdom of regulating access to professional programs in universities using standard labour market principles and benchmarks more often reserved for trades-based and commercial occupations whose participants have a relatively narrow and specialized skill set.

In this chapter I explore some questions inherent in the teacher supply debate with a focus on the Atlantic Provinces; for example: how volatile is the teacher labour market?; to what extent does demand for teachers track enrolment?; and how are career trajectories for teachers changing? I begin by recounting some of the past efforts of educational planners to predict the direction of the teacher labour market in Canada. Next I review the demographic context of education in Atlantic Canada and examine some of the indicators and historical trends that bear on the teacher employment outlook for new teacher graduates. I'll also discuss some of nuances of the education labour market that are typically not factored into estimates of teacher demand. Lastly I will speculate on some wider questions about education as a career path. Much of the discussion that follows is grounded in research and informed by teacher supply and demand indicators; but, some of what I'll say is based on my experiences, over three decades working in and researching schools, education ministries, and universities.

DATA SOURCES

This chapter does not purport to be a teacher supply and demand study – comprehensive supply and demand reports use more precise data and more sophisticated methodologies than I will employ here. However, it is useful to consider some key statistics – such as patterns of enrolment, historical trends in the number of teaching positions and new teacher certification data – and to examine some of the indicators that can be derived from these numbers. Most of the basic population data used here were available through the Canadian Socio-economic Information and

Management Database (CANSIM), a large on-line repository of Statistics Canada data. Current and historical student enrolment and teacher data cited in this chapter were acquired through: 1) excerpts from the Elementary-Secondary Education Survey (ESES) and other historical statistics available on-line from Statistics Canada; and 2) the published statistics and reports of the Governments of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The government departments in the four provinces provided data on teacher certificates by year; however, data for some years were unavailable. Some data are estimated or interpolated¹.

THE TEACHER LABOUR MARKET

Over the past three decades, the teacher labour market in Canada, and particularly in the Atlantic provinces, has been as unsettled as the succession of often-conflicting research that has attempted to forecast its trajectory. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, several provinces, including Nova Scotia, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Manitoba, and Newfoundland and Labrador, have attempted to track teacher supply and demand (Crocker, 1998; Dibbon & Sheppard, 2001; Press, Galway & Barnes, 2002; Press, Galway & Collins, 2003; Theberge, 2002). As early as the 1970s some educational planners in Newfoundland and Labrador were worried about a surplus of teachers that was forecast to extend well into the 1980s (Warren, 1979), while others were warning that enrolments in education programs would not be sufficient to meet the domestic demand for qualified teachers (Cluett & Cramm, 1979). Theberge (2002) noted similar inconsistencies between teacher projections for Manitoba that were generated by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) in 1989 and those of an inter-organizational task force whose report, published just one year later, came to a different conclusion. The CTF's predictions of an increase in demand for elementary teachers throughout most of the 1990s followed by a decline, were contradictory to those of the Task Force, which projected a steady demand for teachers, especially in program areas such as French immersion, music, and special services.

In 2001, the issue of teacher supply and demand gained national attention when the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada held a pan-Canadian symposium on teacher education to examine current trends and future directions. Six research papers on topics related to teacher supply and demand were commissioned from experts throughout the country. The research painted a diverse picture of teacher demand that varied, both regionally and by subject area specialty. Basing their projections on the assumption that only about 75 percent of education graduates actually become teachers, Gervais and Thony (2001) predicted a shortage of teachers extending to the mid-2000s followed by a significant national surplus by 2010. Ouellette (2001) forecast significant enrolment decline in Quebec by around 2003-04 signaling a drop in demand as well as an increase in teacher mobility. However, retirements a few years earlier all but eliminated the active pool of qualified individuals who were waiting to get into teaching, prompting concerns about a shortage in some areas. Writing about the British Columbia context, Grimmatt and Echols (2001) found province-wide teacher shortages at both elementary and secondary levels, particularly in specialized areas such as French second-language (FSL), mathematics, physics, chemistry, business, and technology education. They projected an across-the-board teacher and administrator shortage in British Columbia by 2006. At about the same time, the BC Teachers'

¹ Enrolment and FTE teacher data for Prince Edward Island (1996-97 and 1997-98) are interpolated. The enrolment figure for Nova Scotia (2013-14) is projected based on the 2012 Nova Scotia Public Education Teacher Supply and Demand report. FTE teacher data for New Brunswick (1994-95 to 1996-97) are based on pooled data minus an estimate of non-school based educators. FTE teachers for Nova Scotia (2012-13 and 2013-14) are projected.

Federation, citing a BC Ministry of Education survey, pointed to a number of school districts that could not recruit teachers in sufficient numbers and warned of a general teacher shortage – defined as districts having difficulty filling vacant positions, assigning teachers out of field, or cancelling courses (BC Teachers' Federation, 2001).

Working in the Newfoundland and Labrador context, Dibbon and Sheppard (2001), reported that teacher supply and demand were in relative balance for some sectors while certain intermediate and high school specializations such as guidance, French, mathematics, and chemistry were in short supply. The study also pointed to a downturn in the number of available substitute teachers and “serious problems recruiting teachers for the rural and remote areas of the province (p. 129)”.

According to MacDonald (2011), Ontario was expecting to lose 45 percent of its teaching force between 1998 and 2008 through retirements. In response, the provincial government began to ramp up funding to teacher education programs, funding an additional 1500 seats in one-year programs annually, and over several years, increasing the number of seats in all teacher education programs in that province to 9000 annually. At the same time, in 2006, Australia's Charles Stuart University was accredited to offer teacher education programs in Ontario (New York State's Niagara University had already been accredited) and, together with several American border colleges, began graduating teachers in large numbers. The number of teacher retirements that was predicted was short of its mark and, by 2005, the teacher shortage in Ontario was beginning to transform to a surplus in all but a few areas such as French, science, math, and technology. (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013, p. 1).

By 2008, research and opinion was converging: enrolment decline was not a regional phenomenon but was national in scope. The CTF began warning about regional imbalances between the number of teacher graduates in comparison to available teaching positions and the possibility of a national oversupply (Tibbetts, 2008). The CTF was responding to two reports, a 2007 *Nova Scotia Public Education Teacher Supply and Demand* report that highlighted an overabundance of teacher graduates in that province, and a similar report from the OCT forecasting a long-term oversupply of teachers (Ontario College of Teachers, 2007). Several recent reports (Government of Nova Scotia, 2012; Ontario College of Teachers, 2014) reiterated concerns about oversupply, but with some caveats. In the case of Ontario, a combination of fewer teacher retirements and many more newly licensed teachers throughout the late 2000s into 2012 resulted in a fourfold increase in surplus teachers over the decade. Since 2013, however, the number of teacher candidates dropped substantially and the College predicts a return to historical teacher retirement levels. After 2016, it is expected that the annual number of required teachers will begin to increase.

The Nova Scotia study published in 2012 confirmed a strong supply of teachers, and raised concerns about an oversupply in some areas of the province while identifying teacher shortages and regional variations in demand for specialists in some subject areas including technology education, physics, physical education, and French. The report also noted a decrease in the number of teachers certified in that province and an overall decrease in the pool of available substitute teachers.

The reasons for so much turbulence in the teacher labour market relate to a combination of factors: natural population change, migration patterns, and, as some have suggested, policy interventions by ministries and school boards (MacDonald, 2011). In the Atlantic region these kinds of policy changes have ranged from a few modest incentive strategies intended to attract teachers to hard-to-fill positions (Press, Galway & Barnes, 2002; Press, Galway & Collins, 2003) to more systemic practices such as early retirement incentives or the hiring of retired educators

as substitute teachers or for longer-term teaching positions (Willick, 2012). In Ontario, the policy changes have taken place on a larger scale. From a sustained escalation in the number of seats in university programs and foreign university accreditation to the sudden reduction by half of the seats in 2013, the policies of provinces such as Ontario, tend to spill over into the Atlantic region. MacDonald (2011) points out that the Ontario government didn't actually cut the number of funded teacher education seats until 2011. This is consistent with the trajectory of new teacher certificates issued in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, all of which saw a stark increase in out-of-province certificates in the mid 2000s, followed by a significant drop off since 2010-11.

The foregoing discussion provides a very brief overview of the teacher labour market in Canada and the difficulties in establishing a reliable forecast of teacher demand. In the following discussion I move to the specific circumstances of the Atlantic context, where the pattern of enrolment decline began much earlier than elsewhere in the country.

DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF EDUCATION IN ATLANTIC CANADA

Demography and Student Enrolment

A major challenge facing teachers entering the education workforce in the Atlantic Provinces is a significant contraction of the P/K-12 system brought on by sustained enrolment decline and the purposeful consolidation of schools and school districts. Associated demographic factors, notably out-migration, changing fertility rates and an aging population, have had a profound impact on the number of school-aged children in the region. Newfoundland and Labrador, for example, has experienced more than 40 years of declining birth rates, out-migration (of mostly younger persons) and rural depopulation. These factors have shaped enrolment patterns, and despite a number of enhancements to the province's teacher allocation model (Galway, 2014, 2012; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000), demand for teachers dropped by 30 percent in the last two decades.

Recent migration statistics show that since 2000, residents of Atlantic Canada, and in particular people living in rural communities in the region, have left in far greater numbers than those moving in or returning from other parts of the country. In a 2010 analysis of sub-provincial economic regions, Statistics Canada identified ten regions of the country with the highest year-to-year population declines (Statistics Canada, 2010)². Not surprisingly, six out of the ten hardest hit regions are located in rural parts of the Atlantic Provinces – four in Newfoundland and Labrador, one in New Brunswick and one in Nova Scotia. Notably, between 2001 and 2006, about 20 000 Newfoundlanders relocated to Alberta, representing approximately a third of that province's interprovincial migration over the period. Since 2008, however, there has been some reversal of this trend.

Most of those who leave Atlantic Canada are young people under 30, whose homes are in rural areas of the region (Statistics Canada, 2008). Many who leave their home communities do so to further their education; some may return, but a large proportion choose to enter a more robust job market than is available to them in the region. According to Statistics Canada, over the five-year period (2009 to 2014) the Atlantic Provinces lost about 23 000 young people between the ages of 15 and 29 (Statistics Canada, 2013). The increased losses of the 15-29-year-old age group are

² Analysis is based on the period July 2006 to July 2007

particularly notable because this is the group most likely to contribute to a decline in births.

The scale of this loss is higher in comparison to other provinces; however, the tendency of young people to move away from home is a fairly widespread occurrence, even though many Atlantic Canadians tend to frame the issue as a regional phenomenon. In fact, almost half of Canadians aged 15 to 19 move away from their home community within ten years (Statistics Canada, 2008). Urbanization, in all its forms, has been drawing people from rural areas into larger centers for many decades. Stockdale (2004) observes that within the European context “depopulation has been endemic in rural areas since the 1850s...and recent research confirms its continuation” (p.168). Urbanization in the Canadian context has paralleled the European experience; census records show the percentage of Canada’s population living in urban areas rose from 62 percent in 1951 to 80 percent in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2009).

Out-migration and urbanization have seriously impacted school enrolment patterns in Atlantic Canada, but the most profound challenge to the sustainability of the school-aged population is a troubling drop in fertility rates, which have been below replacement levels since the 1970s. Population decline is first felt in schools. The effect of changes in birth and net-migration on overall population levels is relatively slow, but changes in birth rates are more obvious in early age groups. Similarly, the migration is mainly confined to particular age groups, such as those moving away for post-secondary study or to seek employment. But a modest decline in the number of births in a given year is expressed in a drop in Kindergarten enrolments five years later, and a pattern of decline becomes cumulative over successive grade levels. Over the past five years the number of births has dropped in three of the four Atlantic Provinces (Prince Edward Island was the exception) with the annual decline in each province falling between 100 and 150 (Statistics Canada, 2014). With the exception of Prince Edward Island (whose fertility rate has tracked the national average of 1.61), fertility rates in the Atlantic Provinces ranged from 1.45 to 1.54 in 2014 (Statistics Canada, 2013). The replacement fertility rate – the rate necessary to sustain a population – is generally regarded to be around 2.1 for industrialized countries.

Figure 1. Public school enrolment in the Atlantic Provinces, 1994-95 to 2014-15

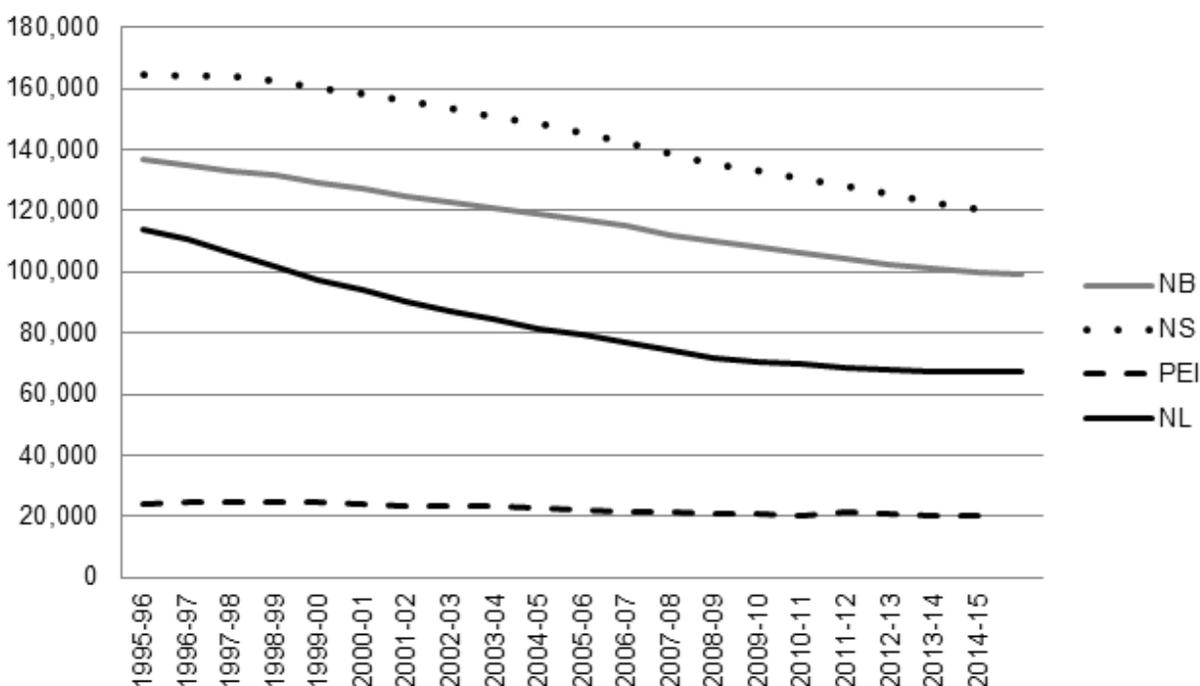


Figure 1 tracks enrolment in the four Atlantic Provinces over the twenty-year period, 1993-94 to 2013-14. Over the period, the number of school-aged children in the region fell off by 30 percent or about 1.6 percent per year. All four provinces experienced considerable enrolment decline, but to differing degrees – from 16 percent in Prince Edward Island to 41 percent in Newfoundland and Labrador. Enrolment in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick fell by 28 percent and 27 percent, respectively. While Newfoundland and Labrador underwent the most severe overall drop in the population of K-12 students, the rate of decline has slowed considerably in the past five years. Kindergarten enrolment has remained steady at about 5000 students since 2003-04, signaling a period of relative stability with only marginal downward changes expected in the school-aged demographic. By contrast, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are continuing to lose students at an average annual rate of 1.6 percent and 2.0 percent, respectively. Enrolments in Nova Scotia schools are predicted to continue to drop at a relatively constant rate until at least 2017-18 (Government of Nova Scotia, 2012) while enrolment change in New Brunswick is also expected to continue along a parallel track.

Similar to the other two Maritime Provinces, public school enrolment in Prince Edward Island schools is forecast to decline at a pace equivalent to about two percent per year and drop below 18 000 students by 2017. A major study commissioned by the Government of Prince Edward Island concluded that the rate of decline in the number of students would lessen by 2017 but provincial enrolment decline would “continue into the 2020s and begin to stabilize only toward the end of that decade” (Government of Prince Edward Island, 2008, p. 38).

In terms of demography and enrolment levels; therefore, we can summarize the education context in Atlantic Canada as follows:

1. For every 100 learners in Atlantic Canada schools two decades ago, there are only 70 today.
2. From year to year, there has been some variation in the rate of decline with the greatest enrolment loss (2.5 percent) occurring in 2006-07. Since 2006-07 the rate of decline in the region has dropped below two percent a year and in the most recent year was about 1.2 percent.
3. The rate of enrolment decline varies across the region; in the Maritime Provinces we can expect to see continued enrolment loss between one and two percent per year for at least the next decade.
4. Given that the greatest enrolment losses have already occurred, barring any substantial economic downturn, we can expect a relatively stable or a marginally lower population of students in Newfoundland and Labrador over the same period.

Student Enrolment and Teachers

The demand for teachers refers to the number of new teachers who will be required annually by educational jurisdictions in the four Atlantic Provinces. Typically, teacher demand is influenced by several factors including: 1) the number, grade level and distribution of students; 2) the number of teachers including attrition due to teacher retirements, or other factors; and 3) teacher resourcing policies and allocation models. To gauge the employment prospects for new graduates we must also have some sense of the supply of new teachers in relation to demand. But even with the most robust data sets, it is difficult to account for other unpredictable changes. While acknowledging that enrolment is the fundamental driver of teacher demand, there is little evidence to suggest that

teacher demand is tightly coupled to enrolment. Figure 2 illustrates the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) – the ratio of student enrolments to full-time equivalent teachers – in the four Atlantic Provinces over the period 1994-95 to 2013-14. As can be seen in the chart, the proportion of teachers in relation to students increased significantly in all provinces over the period, thereby lessening the impact of enrolment losses on the overall teaching force. At the beginning of the time series the PTR in three Maritime Provinces was approximately 17.0. However, by 2013-14 it had improved to 13.1 in New Brunswick and 12.7 and 12.5 in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, respectively. The PTR has historically been lower in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 1994-95 there was one teacher for about every 15 students in Newfoundland and Labrador schools. The improvement in PTR over the period was more gradual than in the other provinces and now stands at 12.6, similar to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. In 2011-12, the most recent year for which comparable data were available, the PTR for Canada was 13.8 compared with 12.7 for all of Atlantic Canada.

Figure 2. Pupil-Teacher Ratio, Atlantic Provinces, 1994-95 to 2013-14

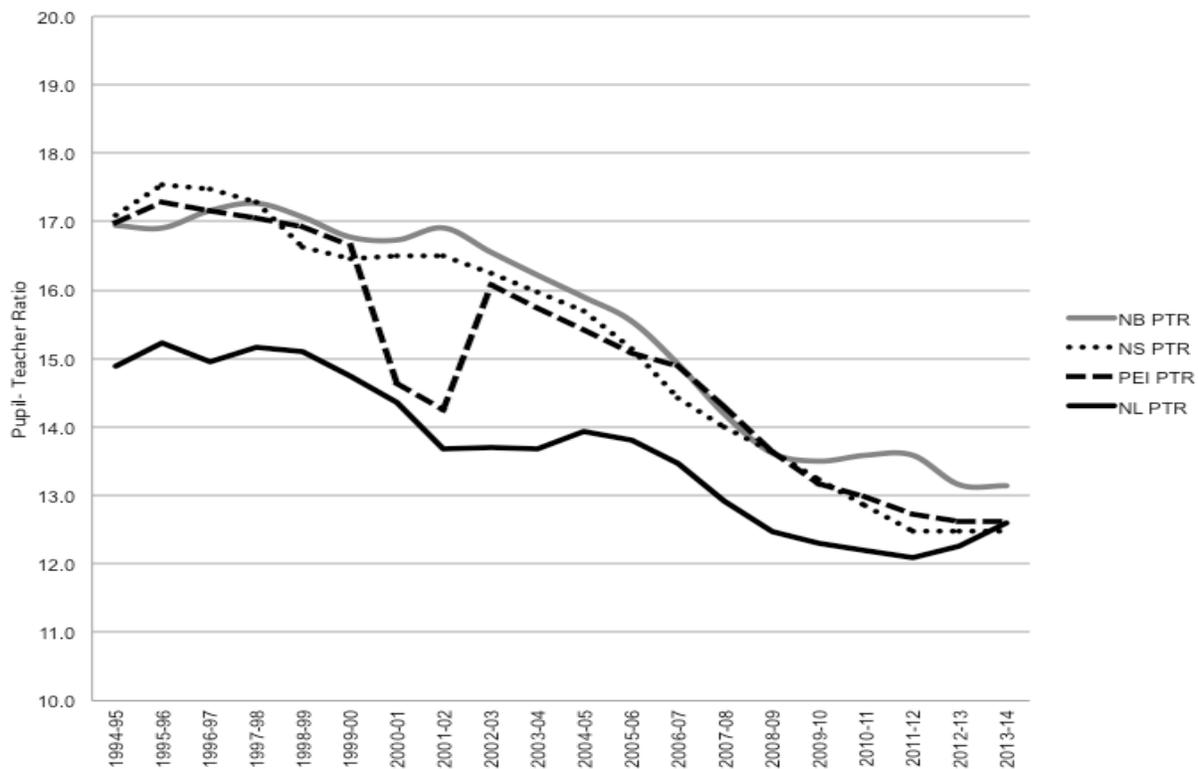
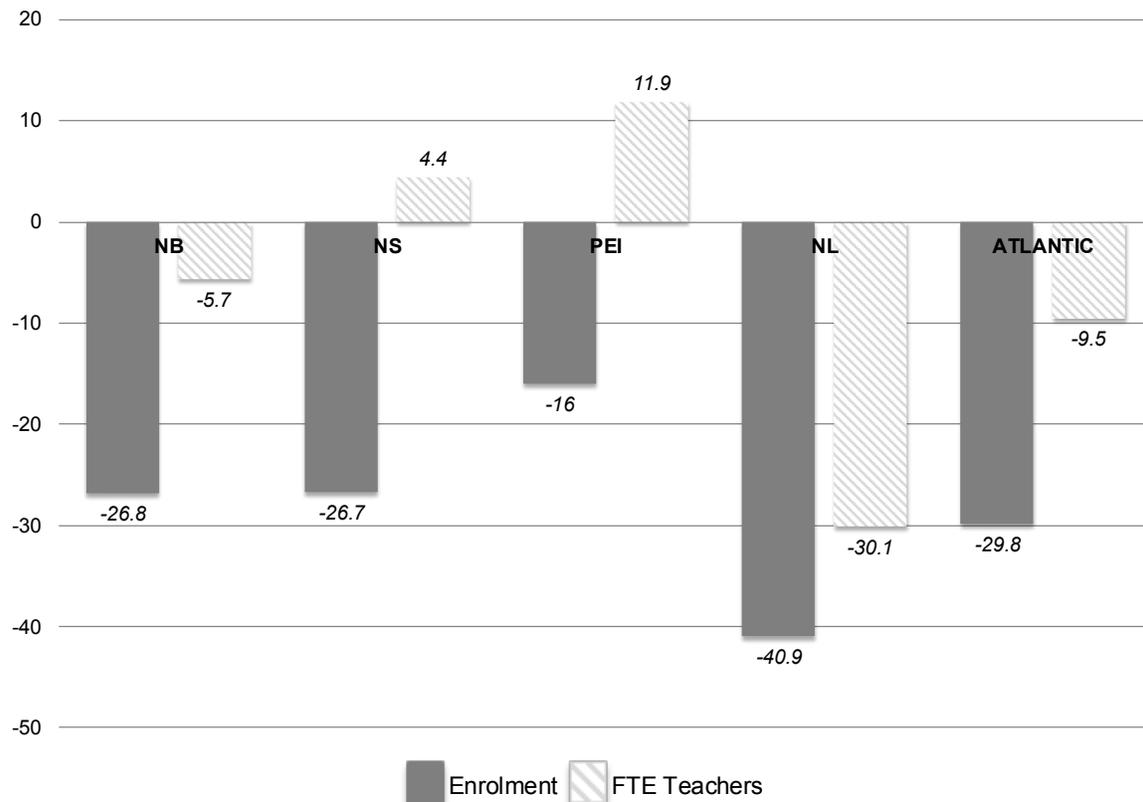


Figure 3 depicts the percentage change in enrolment and full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers over the same period. As noted, all provinces experienced profound enrolment declines over the period, but none of the four jurisdictions reduced teaching positions proportionately. Since 1994-95, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia actually increased the number of teachers by approximately four percent and twelve percent, respectively. The other two provinces registered a teacher decline but not in proportion to enrolment loss. For the region as a whole, the number of students fell by 30 percent; however, there was less than a 10 percent decline in the number of teachers.

Figure 3. Percent change in enrolment and FTE teachers between 1994-95 and 2013-14, Atlantic Provinces



To summarize, in terms of teacher resources in Atlantic Canada we can describe the education context as follows:

1. Over the past two decades, there has been some falloff in overall number of teachers but not in proportion to the decline in the school-age population. For every three teachers that could have been eliminated, based on enrolment numbers alone, provinces chose to retain two.
2. These policy choices have had the effect of establishing lower PTRs, which are likely to be sustained or further improved into the future.
3. Generally speaking, schools in Atlantic Canada are better resourced than schools in other parts of Canada.
4. If we believe that the relative number of teachers in the education system is representative of the health of the system, it follows that schools in Atlantic Canada are now much better off than at any time in the past.

Teacher Certification

Two useful indicators of teacher labour market conditions are: 1) trends in the number of new teacher certificates awarded (both for domestic graduates and out-of-province certifications); and, 2) the proportion of new teachers in relation to the overall population of FTE teachers. While these indicators do not account for those teachers who are already certified but have not secured

full time teaching positions, it is nevertheless a worthwhile barometer of the proportion of new graduates from education faculties in comparison to the employed teaching force. Table 1 presents data on new teaching certificates, by province, for the period 2003-04 to 2013-14. In each of the years for which data are available, New Brunswick recorded the highest number of teaching certificates issued, followed by Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. The breakdown of local versus out-of-province graduates varies considerably by province and over time. For example, the annual number of out-of-province certificates is relatively small in Newfoundland and Labrador when compared to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. In Nova Scotia, until 2010-11, substantially more certificates were issued to out-of-province education graduates, but this number has dropped significantly during the last several years. Unfortunately there is no breakdown of certificates issued to New Brunswick graduates versus out-of-province graduates.

Table 1. New teacher certificates awarded in Atlantic Canada, by province, year, and graduation status, 2003-04 to 2013-14

Year	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia		Prince Edward Island		Newfoundland/ Labrador	
	Total	NS Grads	Other	PEI Grads	Other	NL Grads	Other
2003-04	987	374	381	-	-	-	-
2004-05	1036	366	427	-	-	258	38
2005-06	1126	364	643	-	-	286	34
2006-07	1235	370	659	-	-	314	27
2007-08	1070	382	604	-	-	331	36
2008-09	1040	397	553	87	89	255	41
2009-10	1247	438	485	90	228	246	41
2010-11	1258	488	359	82	103	321	47
2011-12	1131	443	308	88	144	379	76
2012-13	877	444	265	79	72	290	66
2013-14	-	385	254	80	67	281	54

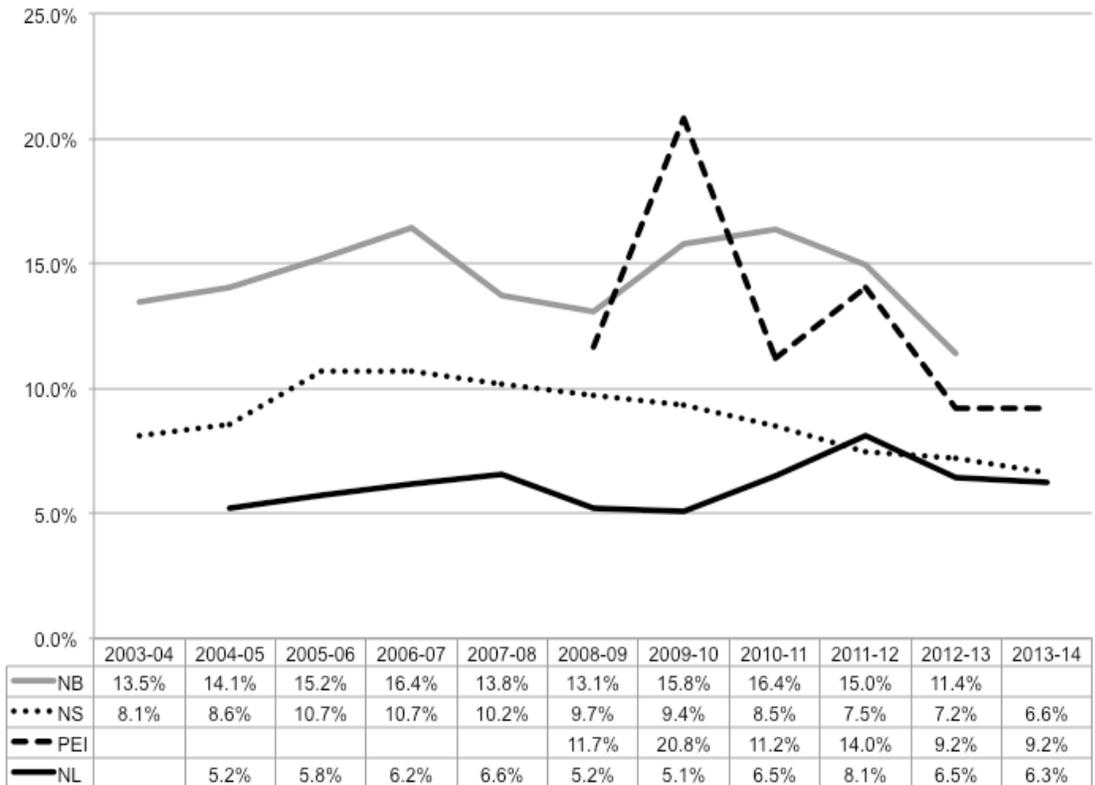
Source: Departments of Education, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland/Labrador 2013-14. Figures for PEI are estimated, based on a total number of certificates awarded.

In terms of total teaching certificates issued, New Brunswick has been fairly constant for most years in the range of about 1000 to 1250, but declining to under 900 in 2012-13. Nova Scotia has followed a similar trend but this is almost entirely accounted for by a drop in certificates awarded to out-of-province graduates; this figure having dropped by more than 60 percent since 2006-07. In Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island the number of certificates is also lower, having declined by almost 40 percent in the last two years.

Figure 4 illustrates the annual number of new teacher certificates as a percentage of total FTE teachers. This indicator gives us a sense of the overall pattern of new entrants to the profession and whether the number of new entrants is stable or trending up or down, relative to the employed teaching force in each province. New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island show a consistently higher proportion of new certificates in relation to the other two Atlantic Provinces, with Newfoundland and Labrador registering the lowest. While there is overall variability across the four provinces, the data show a general downward pattern, meaning fewer new entrants relative

to existing positions. The downward movement is more consistent in Nova Scotia, where there are many fewer out-of-province graduates than in the past. The most current figures ranged from 6.3 percent in Newfoundland and Labrador to 11.4 percent in New Brunswick.

Figure 4. New teacher certificates awarded as a proportion of total FTE teachers, Atlantic Provinces, 2003-04 to 2013-14



In terms of new entrants to the teaching profession in Atlantic Canada we can summarize the education context as follows:

1. There are fewer new teachers entering the profession now than in the recent past.
2. There has been a substantial decrease in the number of out-of province entrants into the teaching force in the Maritime Provinces.
3. The proportion of new entrants relative to FTE teaching positions is decreasing.
4. Generally, the data overestimates the number of new entrants to the teacher labour market in Atlantic Canada. Because all graduates are required to be certified in their province of graduation before applying for certification elsewhere, a substantial number of new entrants are likely to hold teaching licenses in more than one province.

Substitute Teachers

Although we often tend to decry substitute teaching as a difficult, and sometimes-lengthy right of passage into a full-time teaching position, it constitutes a substantial component of the teacher labour market. Unlike professionals in almost every other sector, a teacher who is away from the school on any given day and unable to perform his/her duties, must be replaced by another teacher. Because of the custodial function of schooling, there is an expectation that the work to be carried out will be covered by another professional rather than cancelling classes/activities and discontinuing the supervision of students. This means that the education enterprise, to be effective, requires a reliable and adequate pool of substitute teachers who may be called upon in emergencies, or when teachers are away from the school for any other reason. School districts value good substitute teachers because they preserve classroom continuity so that learning continues uninterrupted. Supply teaching also provides opportunities for teachers to work in different educational contexts, and further develop their teaching skills and teaching dossier.

The latest (2008-09) figures from Nova Scotia placed the demand for substitute teachers at approximately 892 FTE positions or approximately 9.2 percent of the permanent teaching force. More recent data from Newfoundland and Labrador (2012-13) indicates the same relative demand for substitutes at 9.2 percent of the permanent teaching force or the equivalent of 495 positions. Yet, even with these data, it is a difficult task to estimate a reasonable and adequate number of substitutes needed for the teacher supply pool. Some substitute teachers, for a host of reasons, are not mobile or choose not to relocate for employment. Many others appear to be willing to work fewer days and/or remain longer in the supply pool, if it means they can make their homes in or near larger communities in the region. *The Nova Scotia Teacher Supply and Demand Update Report* (2012) describes wide variations in the number of available substitute teachers across school districts. For example, in 2008-09, more than a third of the supply pool was located in the Halifax area and taught in that province's largest school district. The report predicted an insufficient supply of substitute teachers to meet the demand in more rural school districts, especially in particular subjects or specialty areas.

Based on these statistics, and accounting for regional differences and subject area need, a conservative estimate of the number of substitute teachers required to meet school district requirements could reasonably be as high as 10-12 percent of the regular full-time teacher complement. It can be reasonably assumed that the requirements in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are not appreciably different from those in the other two provinces. Therefore, we can estimate the demand for substitute teachers in Atlantic Canada to be in the range of 2500-3000. Because most teachers are in the substitute market temporarily and are tantamount to "free agents" they tend to be more loosely identifiable as a group. However, substitute teaching comprises a significant component of the available employment for teachers. Without this sizeable contingent of substitute teachers, the school system would soon become dysfunctional.

Teacher Retirements

Complete information on teacher retirements in the Atlantic Provinces was difficult to acquire from publicly available sources; as such the data are limited in scope. Nova Scotia provides the most comprehensive information on the number of teachers who retire or leave through attrition. The 2012 *Nova Scotia Public Education Teacher Supply and Demand Update Report* includes past and projected retirements up to 2017-18. Newfoundland and Labrador also makes this information

available but does not provide projections. Similar data for New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island were not available. For this reason it is more difficult to describe regional trends in teacher retirements.

The data show that the majority of teachers in The Atlantic Provinces are age 40 or older. In New Brunswick (2012-13) the average age of teachers was 41, followed by Nova Scotia (2008-09), and Newfoundland and Labrador (2013-14), each at age 45. Over the period 2009-10 to 2012-13, teacher retirements in Newfoundland and Labrador have averaged 4.1 percent or approximately 220 annually, with an average retirement age of 55. Just over 22 percent of teachers are age 50 or older, while almost 40 percent (2400 teachers) are age 45 or older – the youngest teachers in this group being within ten years of retirement age. Over the same period, in Nova Scotia, an average of 339 teachers (3.4 percent) was projected to retire annually, decreasing slightly to about 310 teachers annually until 2017-18. As of 2008-09 about 39 percent of teachers had reached age 50 or older, while 53 percent (4539) were age 45 or older.

Although the data are incomplete, several observations can be made relating to teacher attrition:

1. Assuming an Atlantic Provinces retirement rate of 3.5 percent, approximately 850 teachers annually can be expected to retire over the next several years.
2. A significant number of teachers in the region are approaching retirement age.

DISCUSSION

Important demographic trends are shaping the size and composition of the education system in Atlantic Canada. Declining fertility and migration have contributed to a 30 percent drop in enrolment in the region over the last 20 years. But, a smaller system also presents policy opportunities to improve the quality of teaching and learning, by reshaping program delivery through investment in teachers, or perhaps more precisely, by retaining teachers who would otherwise be lost from the system if provinces followed a rigid, enrolment-based resource model.

The data presented in this chapter show that teacher demand in the Atlantic Provinces has not tracked enrolment. Notwithstanding a substantial loss of students, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island employ more teachers in the system now than twenty years ago. In New Brunswick the number of teachers has declined slightly over the period but not in proportion to the loss of students while in Newfoundland and Labrador, where the teacher decline was greater, the pupil-teacher ratio remains among the lowest in the country. The data also show that new entrants to the teacher labour market are on the decline, especially among out-of-province education graduates. Regionally, the number of new teaching certificates issued dropped by almost 30 percent since 2009-10. Finally, the age profile of teachers in the region, coupled with teacher retirement data, while incomplete, indicates that we can expect teachers to retire in fairly large numbers over the next five to ten years.

These are all positive indicators for prospective education students who wish to enter the teaching force. For these reasons and the ones I will address in the following discussion, I believe opportunities for new teacher graduates in Atlantic Canada are not as grim as public opinion would suggest.

Predicting Teacher Demand

For several reasons, predicting teacher supply and demand is a tricky business. As Crocker (1998, p. 90) notes, attempting to predict the future is a challenging exercise, made more so because “the numbers are there to see, even many years after the truth is known”. There are also some questions for which there are no definitive answers, for example, how should we define the supply pool? In other words, how many education graduates should be reasonably included in the pool of available teachers? Often, when we discuss teacher surpluses we use absolute figures like the number of education graduates or the number of certified teachers. But these numbers are likely to be overestimates, since some education graduates never actually seek work as classroom teachers. Some demographers rightly assume that teaching, like any profession, involves a level of attrition to professions other than classroom teaching. In one projection model, Gervais and Thony (2001), for example, used data from the 1995 *National Graduates Survey*, to set an attrition level of 25 percent in estimating the pool of available teachers in Canada. The 2012 *Nova Scotia Public Education Teacher Supply and Demand Study* uses an attrition rate of 19 percent. Therefore, equating the number of education graduates with the pool of teachers actively seeking classroom positions in any given year almost certainly overestimates the supply pool.

Educational planners must also make fixed assumptions about labour market conditions that may change or may not account for the mediating effects of policy changes that improve teacher-resourcing models. The allocation of teacher resources is an inherently political process and, as we have seen, the number of teacher positions to be filled is not necessarily patterned after student enrolment. Funding and deployment of teaching resources have traditionally been a source of public controversy, especially in jurisdictions facing enrolment loss. Fundamental changes to instructional delivery, such as the introduction of full day Kindergarten, class size caps and the shift to inclusionary practice, to name a few, create additional demand for teachers, entirely independent of overall student enrolment. Enhancements to teacher resource models are common features of provincial budgets (Galway, 2014); similarly, cuts to teachers, such as those announced by the Nova Scotia government in the recent past (Jackson, 2012) also impact the reliability of teacher demand estimates.

The Politics of Teacher Reductions

By any standard, teachers comprise the most significant resource used in the education system. While the provinces and/or school districts provide individual curricula and physical resources, teachers have more sway over the quality of classroom instruction than all other support personnel. Financially, teacher salaries constitute the highest single component of the education budget, they are the largest professional group working in schools, and they assume the primary academic and custodial responsibility for the welfare of students. For these reasons policy choices around teacher resources are among the most important and controversial issues for governments and school boards. Population (enrolment) decline is another enormously challenging and politically sensitive social issue. It is fervently challenged by parents and community leaders who often conceptualize the phenomenon as temporary – the result of an economic slowdown or a short-term blip; it is contested by politicians, who understand the financial and political implications of population downturns, and it is feared by teachers and school administrators, whose careers and personal lives may be directly impacted. For those with a strong personal connection to the local school community, the traditional policy responses to smaller school populations – school closures or consolidations, extended bussing distances, teacher reductions, program cuts, and relocation

bursaries – run counter to local sustainability goals held by provinces, and are almost always resisted by the school community (Galway, 2012; Sheppard, 2012; Sheppard, Galway, Brown & Wiens, 2013).

One of the best predictors of future trends is past practice. Given the historical trends showing that provinces tend to sustain teacher resources in the face of enrolment decline, a strong argument can be made that teacher demand will not track further reductions in student population, at least not at the same pace. Operational requirements, for example, the need for inclusive classrooms to be resourced differently, improvements in teaching conditions, such as class size caps as prescribed in teacher collective agreements or government policy documents, and political exigency all combine to mitigate against a drop in teacher allocations in direct proportion to enrolment.

What is the Value of an Education Degree?

In the discourse surrounding teacher supply and demand some questions that invite further exploration relate to the broader value of an education degree and the place of education programs in universities. For example, should we really expect every education graduate to become a classroom teacher? And if not, does this signify some kind of failure of teacher education programs, or waste of a university degree? I have known scores of education graduates who mobilized the learnings acquired from their degree programs as preparation for parallel and ancillary professions in the field of education. Several observers have commented that many of the skills and much of the content knowledge acquired through programs offered in faculties of education are transferable to a host of related occupations (e.g., Blouw, 2013; Ryan & Cooper, 2010). The skills and learnings of teachers range from coordination and planning to research, curriculum development, training, technical writing, communications, and relationship management. These are the same skills needed in occupational areas such as program development and management, corporate and public sector training, recruitment, and a range of others.

Questions about teacher supply are closely connected to fundamental ideas about how broadly we conceptualize the work of education graduates and how well the skill sets acquired from teacher education programs open opportunities in other related occupations. If we adopt a narrow perspective on education programs we restrict their value as preparation for other professional areas and confine the vocational prospects for education graduates to classroom instruction. Therefore, as teacher educators we must encourage our students to resist adopting a utilitarian outlook that essentializes the functional value of an education degree to a single occupation. Admissions to professional university programs like education should not be normalized in the same way as seats in college programs like welding or pipefitting. Regulating seats in professional programs might seem like sound labour market planning to some people; but for others it is perceived as an affront to the freedom to pursue one's career aspirations. As Blouw (2013, p.7) points out:

Universities are primarily in the business of positive human development. They focus on enhancing the abilities of our graduates to communicate clearly and effectively, to analyze, to confront ambiguity with clear methods and confidence, to break down problems into manageable parts, to think critically and to question deeply.

Should faculties of education, therefore, be concerned with the local job market for teachers? It would be unproductive for faculties to admit all applicants who meet minimum entrance requirements, without due regard to the demand for teachers in the respective province

and region. Several universities in the Atlantic Provinces have historically had a strong local orientation as part of their *raison d'être*. In its governing documents, Memorial University, for example, specifically references a special obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Universities and professional schools must behave responsibly, with due consideration to the fiduciary responsibility that comes with being a publicly funded institution. It follows then that a faculty's first responsibility is to the provincial education system. However, there must also be consideration of the points raised in the foregoing discussion; first, that education programs generate graduates with a range of transferable skills and many go on to productive careers in non-classroom based occupations and second, that professional programs should not be tightly coupled to local labour market conditions. Crocker (1998, p.88) suggests a balanced approach to setting admission levels:

[Provinces] must be concerned with producing sufficient teachers to meet [their] needs. This does not, in itself, mean that a faculty must be primarily local in its orientation, nor does it prevent any faculty from taking students from any source or restrict prospective teachers from operating in a national market.... Unfortunately, the system becomes unbalanced if some provinces are producing far too many teachers and others are relying on their neighbours to meet their demand for teachers.

Faculties of education do need to monitor local employment conditions for teachers, but that does not mean seats in education programs must closely approximate available positions in provincial schools. It does mean that faculties must exercise fiscal and social responsibility and fidelity to local circumstances.

Should We Prepare Teachers for the International Market?

This leads to another related question: should we be preparing teachers only for the domestic education market? Fifteen years ago, Dibbon and Sheppard (2001) recognized that the forces of globalization and technology were driving a rethinking of the traditional work environment and career path for teachers:

Since the last generation of teachers entered the profession, the job market has changed dramatically. [...] As the first cohorts of career teachers pass through the retirement years, we would be somewhat naive to assume that their career pattern will serve as a model for the current and future generations of teachers. (p. 132)

The work environment for teachers, like so many other professions, is changing. We no longer work in a labour market where people begin their careers in full-time positions immediately upon graduation and remain in those jobs, relatively uninterrupted for 30 years. It is no longer the case in health care, the applied sciences or a range of other professions. And, there is little doubt that today's graduates are far more open to discontinuous career trajectories. Presently there is a worldwide demand for western-educated teachers (Hoare, 2010; Sagan, 2013) and many new graduates express enthusiasm for teaching in other jurisdictions, either in Canada or further afield.

One of the best examples of a professional program whose graduates embrace international workplace opportunities is engineering. Every year universities in Canada graduate thousands of engineers, many of whom find employment working, where they are needed, on projects around the globe. As a former deputy minister and now an associate dean with responsibility for teacher education programs, I hear a great deal about the "problem of teacher oversupply". As a society we seem to applaud the fact that Canadian universities are filling international positions in finance,

infrastructure development and other fields with engineering and business graduates. Yet when graduates from education faculties accept teaching positions abroad, their success is somehow undervalued as if they were settling for a second-class career choice. If a teacher – like an engineer or a MBA graduate – decides to work abroad, we tend to bemoan the fact that there was no position available in the school down the street and call for a cull of teacher education programs! I am always intrigued when we cite international employment statistics in recruitment literature for our applied science and engineering programs. Yet if too many education graduates find employment abroad, someone is likely to problematize it as an unproductive use of public funding.

Should we be preparing teachers for the international market? Unquestionably yes. We should embrace all opportunities for those students who find their way into education programs. And as teacher educators, we must contest the idea that education graduates confine their sights to teaching in local schools. Not only does this marginalize the value of an education degree, it propagates the popular myth of a perpetual oversupply of teachers. Moreover, it positions teaching as a localized and inward-looking profession, rather than one with international prospects. In our experience international opportunities are becoming more competitive in terms of the attractiveness of the placements as well and the salaries and benefits; they are, therefore, likely to attract more graduates from the Atlantic region in the future.

Are Career Trajectories for Teachers in Atlantic Canada Changing?

This discussion is not intended to downplay the aspiration of many teachers to teach in their home communities. In addition to their work in education, teachers have been the foundation of many communities across Atlantic Canada, serving as volunteers, civic officials, and community leaders and in a host of other community-building roles. However, teacher graduates who are determined to remain in their home communities or to locate to larger centers can expect a lengthier and more circuitous route into the profession than their predecessors. My colleagues and I (Sheppard, Galway, Brown & Wiens, 2013) talked to school board trustees and superintendents throughout Canada on a range of issues related to school board operations. Based on these interviews and other discussions with school board officials, we believe new teacher graduates should be prepared to be more mobile than those entering the system just a decade ago, and work in several shorter-term positions before earning a position in one of their preferred schools. Given the amalgamation of school districts, in Atlantic Canada – particularly in Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island – the seniority provisions of collective agreements may well impact opportunities for transfer, requiring new teachers to be more flexible, perhaps teaching in several schools before securing a permanent position.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In the recent past, media interest in teacher supply and demand has spawned a torrent of stories whose narratives might well serve to put off some young graduates from seeking entry to faculties of education. In this chapter I have attempted to separate the rhetoric from the new reality of education as a career choice. Like other jurisdictions in Canada, the teacher labour market in Atlantic Canada continues to experience considerable downward demographic pressure but we are far from closing the doors on teacher education programs.

The indicators presented in this chapter portray a more challenging entry path into the profession than would have been the case a generation earlier; however, the outlook for education

graduates – especially those who are predisposed to working in rural and/or international contexts – is more promising than popular opinion would suggest. The indicators for the Atlantic Provinces tell us that:

- Enrolment is continuing in a downward trend, but the loss of teaching positions has not kept pace. While enrolment dropped by 30 percent over twenty years, the number of teaching positions dropped by only 10 percent.
- All indications are that any loss of teaching positions in the future will not track enrolment loss.
- Since 2011-12 there are fewer teachers entering the workforce than in the past and there has been a substantial decrease in new out-of-province entrants. There are also fewer new teachers relative to FTE teachers and this is continuing to decline.
- The number of teacher retirements is expected to continue between 800 and 900 annually as a large segment of the teaching force approaches retirement age.

As to the proposition that education, as a career choice, is on life support, there is a delightful irony to the story I related at the beginning of this chapter. The CBC call-in program I referenced in the introduction never did work out the way the producers had intended. The unemployed teacher graduates who were slated to be part of the guest panel actually found teaching positions and were unavailable to participate.

Is education still a viable option in Atlantic Canada? School governance structures, curriculum delivery, educational technology and pedagogy and dependence on content knowledge will all continue to change and evolve, but there will always be a need for teachers. Learning is a social activity where good teachers encourage, question and stimulate curiosity and ingenuity. As long as Canadians continue to value, support, and trust our schools they will need well-educated, caring, and motivated teachers. And as long as international opportunities continue to grow there will be many avenues for teachers to work in different geographic and cultural contexts.

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CHAPTER 2**Preparing Student Teachers to be Literacy Teachers:
Literacy Teacher Educators Balancing Multiple Demands**

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ABSTRACT

This study involved 28 literacy/English teacher educators in four countries: Canada, the U.S., UK, and Australia. The goal of the study was to examine their backgrounds, pedagogies, research activities, identity, and turning points in their lives. Seven of the participants who are Canadian are presented in this chapter. Data analysis (using NVivo) revealed all wanted to prepare their student teachers to be effective literacy teachers; however, they had vastly different goals for their courses and employed a wide range of pedagogies (including a variety of readings and assignments). Most found their student teachers wanted a focus on practical tips and strategies which was a challenge because the teacher educators wanted to balance theory and practice. As a result of the vastly different opportunities for learning in their courses, student teachers graduated from their programs with varying skills and were exposed to different theoreticians. We conclude with some suggestions for induction support for new teachers.

Keywords: literacy teachers, induction support for literacy teachers

INTRODUCTION

“Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope.” Kofi Annan (nd)

The growing recognition of the importance of being literate has led to a number of global initiatives to eradicate illiteracy (UNESCO, 2006). The necessity of acquiring strong literacy skills to live a productive life is increasingly being recognized: “Literacy is a fundamental human right and the foundation for lifelong learning. It is fully essential to social and human development in its ability to transform lives. For individuals, families, and societies alike, it is an instrument of empowerment to improve one’s health, one’s income, and one’s relationship with the world” (UNESCO, 2006, p.5). There is a realization that poor literacy skills impact on both the economy and on the well-being of individuals. To achieve this ambitious goal of improving literacy for all students, governments (e.g., Ontario Ministry of Education) have enacted policies and committed resources to improving the teaching of literacy. At the local level, school districts have made literacy a priority in their curriculum guidelines and in their professional development offerings for teachers. The Toronto District School Board (2011) argues: “Language is the most powerful tool learners have for developing ideas and insights, for giving shape to their experiences, and for

making sense of their world and their possibilities in it” (p. 1). Since literacy is a priority for school districts, many offer workshops for new and experienced teachers on various aspects of literacy teaching.

Teachers play a key role in helping children acquire appropriate literacy skills for communicating in our information-driven society; however, becoming a strong literacy teacher is a complicated process. Literacy teacher educators (LTEs), those who work with student teachers, have a heavy responsibility because becoming an effective literacy teacher is not a straightforward process. LTEs are key to improving literacy instruction and in turn pupil achievement (Rogers, 2013). Yet the work of LTEs is an under-researched area (Kosnik et al., 2013a). To address this gap in the literature we are conducting the large-scale research study, *Literacy/English Teacher Educators: Their Backgrounds, Visions, and Practices*, which investigates 28 literacy teacher educators (LTEs) in four countries: Canada, the U.S., England, and Australia. Two of three phases of the study have been completed which has as its overall goal:

- to study in depth a group of literacy/English teacher educators, with attention to their backgrounds, knowledge, research activities, identity, view of current government initiatives, pedagogy, and course goals.

This chapter addresses two specific research questions:

- What kinds of opportunities for learning do Canadian LTEs provide for their student teachers?
- What challenges do they face?

In this chapter we consider seven Canadian LTEs who work in Canadian universities; focusing on a subset from the larger sample allowed us to focus on the Canadian context and to go into more depth regarding their practices. In the final section we draw on the findings of a longitudinal study of beginning teachers to provide some suggestions for enhancing pre-service programs and induction support. We begin this chapter with a discussion of literacy.

CONTEXT

Literacy is a vast process that ranges from simple decoding of words to critical analysis of text. The continuum of defining literacy ranges “from viewing literacy as a simple process of acquiring basic cognitive skills, to using these skills in ways that contribute to socio-economic development, to developing the capacity for social awareness and critical reflection as a basis for personal and social change (UNESCO 2006, p. 147). If we are to accept literacy as a social practice that is culturally embedded (Gee, 2000) we must move from conceptualizing it as a defined set of skills that can be taught (transmitted) in a classroom to a far more interactive process where social media and multimodal representations are part of our regular literacy practices. Further, literacy practices should not be seen as being confined to the school classroom; rather, literacy can be seen as a tool for social change (Freire, 1993).

Conceptualizing literacy so broadly is often startling for student teachers coming into literacy methods courses with a narrow definition of literacy, thinking of it as specific skills for reading and writing usually based on their own elementary schooling experiences (Kosnik et al., forthcoming). Such a narrow focus is inadequate if teachers are to teach **all** students to be literate in the 21st century and to encourage them to see themselves as knowledge-producers. However,

embracing a more expansive understanding of literacy is a challenge for student teachers, who are often more concerned with learning classroom management techniques and/or acquiring a “bag of tricks”. Given their narrow view of literacy and literacy teaching their filters often limit what they learn in teacher education. As a result the transition from student teacher to teacher is often difficult because they quickly realize that all children do not learn the way they learned.

As digital technologies become more prevalent in our daily lives, providing multiple ways to communicate our understanding of literacy needs to evolve. The fact that literacy now encompasses a broad set of practices including access to others far beyond our local communities and with students often having rich out-of-school literacy lives, teachers and LTEs need to revise both conceptions of literacy and school-based reading and writing programs (Gee & Hayes, 2011). The proliferation of opportunities to express ourselves in multimodalities (e.g., Instagram) and the easy access to others beyond our local context (e.g., digital communities) has led many scholars to ask: What does it mean to be “literate” in the 21st century (Alvermann & Hinchman 2012; Kress, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011)? The dramatic changes in how we communicate are changing our understanding of literacy; simply reading hardcover novels or writing essays are literacy practices that only capture a miniscule number of available opportunities. Since on a daily basis we use many literacy processes (e.g., text messaging) students need a broad range of skills and in-depth knowledge to harness the available opportunities and to remain “safe” in a digital world.

When student teachers arrive at the literacy methods courses in their teacher education programs their own backgrounds and views influence how they respond to the material and engage in the learning opportunities offered (Kosnik et al., forthcoming). LTEs often design their courses to offer a range of opportunities to help their student teachers think differently and more expansively about literacy. Ghiso et al. (2013), a renowned critical literacy teacher educator, “showcases pedagogies within her courses that invite pre- and in-service teachers to disrupt deficit assumptions about students’ languages and literacies, and to view these as connected to their own varied histories and identities” (p. 52). However, all student teachers are not receptive to this expanded view of literacy.

Kosnik et al. (forthcoming) in their study of 28 LTEs asked their participants about student teacher response to this more progressive and expansive view of literacy. The LTEs described the challenges they faced in their literacy methods courses as follows:

Dominique felt her student teachers just wanted her “to tell [them] how to do it right, like what’s the right way”. Similarly, Sara’s student teachers did not understand why she did not have “the right answer...they see it as complicated, well it is complicated, complex. So it’s been a life struggle.” Other student teachers drew heavily on the pedagogies used in their childhood and could not see why these would not work with all children. Dominique found it was difficult for some student teachers to embrace a more critical stance because “throughout their whole career they have had a path of how to do it well and how to do it right.” When they came into her class she said “we are going to think differently about literacy instruction because each of your kids is different”. This was hard for them. She noted that the “whole time they were skeptical”; for some, it was fear of the unknown, while for others it was the narrowness of their vision of literacy that filtered their response to the course (forthcoming).

Providing powerful opportunities for learning in teacher education is not simply a matter of presenting a string of “activities”; rather, literacy courses need to be conceptualized around a

coherent set of principles (Kosnik et al., 2013b; Kosnik et al., 2015). In addition to selecting course content carefully, teacher educators must tailor their pedagogy for higher education. Loughran (2008) coined the term ‘a pedagogy of teacher education’ because a specific pedagogy for teacher education is necessary. It “involves a knowledge of teaching about teaching and a knowledge of learning about teaching and how the two influence one another in the pedagogic episodes that teacher educators create to offer students teaching experiences that might inform their developing views of practice” (p. 118).

What should teacher educators try to achieve? Zeichner (2005) concludes that simply trying to transmit knowledge about good teaching to student teachers is inadequate because there is so much more to be learned than a number of pedagogical strategies. Teacher educators require a distinct set of pedagogical skills because one cannot simply replicate one’s practices as a classroom teacher in the university setting. Murray and Male (2005) argue that there is no direct application of the skills used for teaching children to teaching adults.

When we focus specifically on the discipline of literacy we acknowledge that LTEs need to design their courses and use a pedagogy which draws on a number of bodies of knowledge: a pedagogy of teacher education; historical and current research on literacy; recent curriculum resources (e.g., commercially-prepared reading series); traditional and progressive literacy teaching practices; the public’s view of literacy; and professional resource materials (e.g., journals and web-sites for teachers). In turn, student teachers need to acquire knowledge in all of these dimensions of literacy if they are to be effective. LTEs use various strategies to help student teachers: model a range of literacy teaching strategies (including digital technology); share children’s literature and young adolescent fiction; encourage student teachers to unpack their own assumptions about literacy; organize out-of-school activities where student teachers work with at-risk children; carefully select readings that are both theoretical and practical; and thoughtfully design assignments that bridge theory and practice (Williamson, 2013; Yandell, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

We interviewed participants twice over the period April 2012 to August 2013. Each semi-structured interview took approximately 60–90 minutes. We asked the same questions of all participants, but added probe questions and welcomed additional comments. Most of the questions were open-ended in that they sought more than a yes/no responses or simple factual answers.

The first interview had five parts:

- background experiences;
- qualities (in their view) of an effective literacy educator;
- identity (e.g., their academic community);
- turning points in their career (personal and professional); and
- research activities.

The second interview had four parts:

- framework and goals for their literacy course(s);

- pedagogies used and reasons for using them;
- assignments and readings; and
- how and why their views and practices have changed over the years.

Interviews were done either face-to-face or on Skype and were audio-recorded and transcribed. Much of our methodology was qualitative, as defined by Merriam (2009) and Punch (2014). Qualitative inquiry was justified as it provided a depth of understanding and enabled the exploration of questions that did not on the whole lend themselves to quantitative inquiry (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative inquiry opened the way to gaining entirely unexpected ideas and information from participants, in addition to finding out their opinions on simple pre-set matters. We used a modified grounded theory approach: not beginning with a fixed theory, but generating theory inductively from the data using a set of techniques and procedures for collection and analysis (Punch, 2014). As the analysis progressed, we identified key themes and refined them—adding some and deleting or merging others—through “constant comparison” with the interview transcripts. As Strauss (2003) stated: “The basic question facing us is how to capture the complexity of the reality (phenomena) we study, and how to make convincing sense of it” (p. 16). For data analysis, we used NVivo, and went through a number of steps, which included coding the interviews and analyzing course outlines.

Our seven participants have a range of experience as both classroom teachers and instructors in higher education. See Figure 1. All teach literacy/English methods courses for either elementary/primary or secondary student teachers.

Figure 1. Background of Participants (at start of the study in 2012)

Participant (Pseudonyms Used)	Years at the University	Years as a Classroom Teacher
Margie	16	10
Jane	9	31
Lance	20	25
Sharon	16	8
Amelia	10	11
Jessie	7	0
Martha Ann	22	16

FINDINGS

All of the LTEs were mid- to later-career teacher educators. They continued significant connections to local school districts either through research they were conducting in schools and/or professional development sessions they offered to teachers. All felt that becoming out of touch with schools was their greatest challenge and all made extraordinary efforts to remain current in the fullest sense of the word.

1. Course Content

All LTEs developed well thought-out and comprehensive curricula for their courses.

Some described their courses as “survey,” which introduced students to many topics, while others developed their courses as “in-depth” focusing on just a few topics. When asked to what extent their courses were consistent (i.e., topics covered, approach) with those taught by other LTEs in their institution, five of seven responded that it was “low,” and two responded it was “somewhat” consistent. Further, only two of seven LTEs used a common syllabus with those who were teaching the same course.

Not surprisingly, the course content varied tremendously across the seven teacher educators; the goals ranged from becoming professionals to gaining familiarity with children’s literature. The weighting they gave each of the various topics varied; therefore, each course was distinctive.

Building on student teachers’ knowledge of literacy

Through their courses, the LTE’s aimed to develop student teachers’ knowledge of the field of literacy. Their syllabi reflected the importance of both traditional processes (e.g., reading and writing) and expansive literacy practices (e.g., drama, media). In regards to traditional literacy practices, the LTEs explored a range of literacy topics through the use of weekly readings, class discussions, and assignments. Topics included: fluency; reading comprehension; informational and narrative writing; writing conventions; language development; assessment; and the writing process.

To help student teachers gain an expansive view of the field of literacy many LTEs addressed sociocultural issues related to literacy learning and instruction. Jessie and Martha Ann introduced the notions of out-of-school literacies such as community and family literacy practices. Further, they facilitated discussions of issues related to multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice in the hope of deepening student teachers’ knowledge. Many LTEs modeled the use of culturally-relevant and culturally-responsive pedagogies with their student teachers. For example, Amelia held a number of classes on culturally relevant children/young adolescent literature. She explained:

[I focus on] teaching teachers how to critically select books...to look at different genres, and to be able to think about different authors, illustrators, and themes. We need to look more broadly, more diversely with a focus on social justice and on Aboriginal education.

Many LTEs described the important role media and digital technology play in literacy teaching and learning in the 21st century. Four of seven LTEs (Martha Ann, Jane, Jessie, Amelia) included media literacy or critical media education as topics in their course syllabi. When discussing the use of digital technology in their courses, several mentioned the importance of using it in meaningful ways rather than simply as “edutainment”. Amelia explained the goals she had for her student teachers when using digital technology: “I want them to be able to talk about a book that’s electronic and digital, and how to still use that book as a read-aloud, but also to connect to the reader and their comprehension”.

Addressing school district policies with student teachers

Although most LTEs included government documents as required readings, not all felt that teaching the government initiatives was their responsibility. When asked to what extent teacher education programs should be preparing student teachers for government initiatives, only two of seven responded it should be a priority. Martha Ann felt that teaching government initiatives gave student teachers a clear understanding of the context in which they would be teaching. Similarly, Jane regularly had her student teachers “engage with government documents”. She posed questions

such as: “How do you see the components [of literacy] being addressed? How does the curriculum become more complex as the student moves through the grade levels?”

Interestingly, five of seven LTEs felt that addressing government initiatives should not be a priority; their views ranged from absolute opposition to even addressing government materials to making it a low priority. They believed that knowing how to teach all students effectively was of more importance than spending precious time learning the current government documents. The LTEs described their priorities as:

- Jessie: identify individual pupil’s “ways into literacy” and learn how to recognize individuality and learn to develop appropriate curriculum for that child.
- Margie: “begin with the students, regardless of where they are.”
- Sharon: “introduce student teachers to effective teaching and to the theories of children’s language and literacy development”.

Helping student teachers to develop their own approach to teaching literacy

All seven LTEs encouraged student teachers to develop their personal approach to teaching. Lance said, “We have to teach students to find their own practice and their own values”. By introducing various theories and teaching strategies, the LTEs gave student teachers opportunities to think about the practices which best aligned with their philosophy. By having student teachers identify a personal approach to teaching literacy, the LTEs believed it would help them gain confidence. Margie explained, “I’d like the [student teachers] to develop a sense of self-efficacy. I’d like them to be willing to take the initiative and continue learning ... empowered to go out and make a difference”.

Rather than advocating for a narrow view of literacy, many explored the complexity of literacy teaching. Sharon, for example, emphasized the need to “approach the teaching of literacy as you follow the child...not seeing their children as a class but seeing each child as an individual”. Accordingly, Sharon addressed: multicultural teaching, multiliteracies, critical literacy, and drama-based teaching. Jessie wanted her student teachers to understand the “importance of questioning and constructing meaning through a critical, multiliteracies lens” and so immersed them in multi-modalities, multiliteracies, critical literacy, and arts-based pedagogy. By presenting multiple lenses to view literacy, the LTEs expanded student teachers’ understandings of literacy teaching and learning. In turn, the LTEs encouraged student teachers to develop a personal approach to teaching literacy by drawing on their growing knowledge base. Being able to articulate a personal approach to literacy will help student teachers when they go for a job interview because they can state their beliefs about effective literacy teaching.

2. Reading and Assignments

A useful strategy to better understand the goals of the LTEs’ courses is to inquire into the readings assigned to the student teachers. Three of the seven used a textbook (e.g., Bainbridge & Heydon, 2012) while others provided student teachers with a collection of readings. These readings ranged from very practical texts (e.g., Swartz, 2006) to highly theoretical texts (e.g., Rosenblatt). As a result, the theoreticians and researchers to whom the student teachers were introduced varied tremendously. For instance, some student teachers were introduced to reader response theory while others were not. Even the theories of how children learn to read were not consistent; some LTEs

held more traditional (phonics-driven) views while others were more progressive (constructivist). As a result, student teachers graduated from their programs with markedly different views of literacy learning and teaching.

It is often quipped that assessment drives the course. Assignments are often the main focus for student teachers; therefore, we wanted to determine the types and number of assignments. Similar to the earlier section on goals for courses, there was a vast range of requirements. Some LTEs felt that student teachers have an excessive number of demands on them so they have the minimum number of assignments often focusing on the practical aspects of teaching literacy, while others believing that literacy is foundational to schooling, set many assignments – some quite theoretical. Figure Two shows the diversity of assignments among the seven LTEs.

Figure 2. Assignments Set for the Course

Assignment	Number of LTEs who set this assignment in their course
Unit plan	5
Digital technology (e.g., create a digital text)	4
Case study of a child	4
Literacy autobiography	4
Writing process (student teachers engage in extended periods of writing, take their writing through the entire process from idea to finished product)	3
Reading log	2
Portfolio	1
Assessment (assessing a child’s reading or writing development)	1

Connecting academic courses with practice teaching is often seen as integral for student teachers to understand and apply theory. This helps the program have more coherence (Zeichner, 2005). To this end, some LTEs had an assignment to be completed during practice teaching while others did not. Jessie required student teachers to tutor a child and was quite specific in how they did this task. They had to use an iPad. “[T]hey had to think about reading ... and figure out how do you teach reading through an iPad ... Which was difficult [for the student teachers]. There was a steep learning curve.” In class they regularly “unpacked” this experience thus bridging the academic program with practice teaching. Also bridging the academic courses and practice teaching, Lance had his student teachers closely observe the associate teacher’s literacy program while Jane had her student teachers interview a child about writing. Given the structure of the program Amelia could not connect the two components of the academic course with practice.

As noted in the Context Section, digital technology is significantly impacting on how we communicate. Yet we found the use of digital technology varied widely and not all LTEs had readings or an assignment directly related to digital technology. Jessie, as noted above, used technology extensively and engaged student teachers in discussion of how our understanding of literacy is changing. Amelia, whose area of research is multiliteracies, had an assignment that required her student teachers to use digital technology “to create a digital text based on traditional children’s book”. She hoped this assignment would introduce student teachers to features of digital technology because it would help them realize that children have different learning styles and that

digital technology can play a key role in differentiating instruction. Amelia regularly modeled “instructing with digital technology”. In a slightly different vein, Martha Ann who was a strong proponent of multimodalities did not focus on technology; rather she used artistic modes. For example, her student teachers did a Me Project which “takes a couple of weeks to do ... it is a way for them to introduce themselves ... and they have to use at least two symbol systems ... I’ve had people do videos ... One [student] did his using Lego .. It was just incredible. He even had a ring on the Lego creature to show that he was just engaged”.

Margie had her student teachers do an inquiry project, which they shared at the end of the course in a carousel-type event. By contrast, Sharon took the student teachers through the entire writing process experience, devoting precious class time to giving student teachers feedback on their writing. The writing process was approximately one third of the course.

The variety and creativity in the LTEs’ assignments is impressive; however, the skills and insights the student teachers acquired through them vary significantly. There were profound differences in the use of technology in courses and the extent to which student teachers did an assignment focusing on digital technology. Should this be a concern?

3. Student Teacher Response

Overall, student teachers seemed to respond positively to the literacy courses. Each of the LTEs reported they enjoyed teaching their literacy courses and received high course evaluations. While they readily acknowledged the student teachers’ enthusiasm for learning, they also identified some of the complexities of literacy teacher education. More specifically, the LTEs drew attention to the initial resistance student teachers’ exhibited to taking a mandatory course on literacy; moreover, as the course unfolded the student teachers’ privileged the “practical” over the “theoretical,” which was not how the LTEs conceptualized the courses.

Student teachers’ filters

The LTEs reported that many of the student teachers voiced an initial resistance to completing a literacy course as part of their teacher education program. During data analysis the student teacher resistance was mentioned so frequently we developed the node Student Teachers’ Filters. Through careful examination we identified a number of factors contributing to this resistance. For some the prospect of teaching literacy provoked anxiety because they had struggled with literacy throughout much of their prior schooling. Jane recognized that “some student teachers” entering her literacy course “may feel totally negative about their own language arts experience, and they wouldn’t go close to it with a ten foot pole; that’s because they really hated language arts”.

Amelia also noted how prior school experiences limit the way student teachers think about literacy, which in turn undermines their engagement with the literacy course. She suggested there “is an insecurity on their part because when they come in they have a tendency to gravitate towards stuff that they remember as a child. And I keep saying to them you need to move beyond that. There’s much more choice here.” Amelia’s approach to literacy teacher education attempts to broaden the way student teachers think about literacy by inviting them to consider the role digital technologies, media, and culturally responsive children’s/adolescent literature play in contemporary literacy teaching.

Several of the LTEs also noted that student teachers’ initial views of literacy were often restricted to the “traditional” reading and writing activities of the kind they completed in school.

This narrow definition of literacy can be somewhat problematic because it neglects to consider the diverse range of literacy practices that people engage with on a daily basis. Martha Ann said the student teachers in her courses:

...were actually shocked to see how much media and digital technology is incorporated into language arts, and that all texts are considered legitimate for language arts. They were shocked at that idea...They don't even think about all the variety of texts that are in literacy. They're shocked when they think, oh my God we're instant messaging one another, we're on the Internet constantly; this is all literacy.

However, once the student teachers had the opportunity to engage with literacy through the multifaceted frameworks and learning opportunities presented in their literacy courses, they came to recognize the legitimacy of diverse literacy practices. Jessie stated that most student teachers "were very receptive to multimodality, multiliteracies because they were of that generation. So they were very comfortable with texting and with virtual spaces, and so that was welcomed by them".

Student teachers' concern for the "practical"

In general, the student teachers wanted their literacy courses to emphasize "practical" strategies and tips, rather than devote time to the "theoretical" dimensions of literacy teaching. In many cases, student teachers seemed to envision literacy teaching as the implementation of a generic toolkit of strategies that could be readily applied to any classroom. While the LTEs did provide numerous practical strategies, they also endeavoured to broaden student teachers' understanding of theory through the use of course readings, assignments, lectures, and class discussions. The student teachers were often not very receptive to the "theoretical" aspects of their literacy courses. Amelia confided, "the [student teachers] said that they would like the readings to be more focused in [the practicalities of] teacher education".

As an experienced LTE, Lance also found that student teachers could be quite impatient with theory. He commented, "it's still this thing that I'm sure every bit of research would tell you, they want the magic, give me the answer, they still want that. I just say that with every practical lesson there is theory behind it." While Lance acknowledged the student teachers' concern for gaining practical skills and strategies, he astutely emphasizes to them that practice and theory are intertwined, and must be considered in tandem.

DISCUSSION

The seven literacy teacher educators in our study are truly hardworking, committed, and thoughtful individuals who care deeply about their student teachers. Looking over their course outlines and data from the interviews we sense they are very thoughtful and deliberate in the design of their courses. They model a range of teaching strategies and the design of their assignments aims to deepen knowledge. They purposefully employ a pedagogy of teacher education. Interestingly, the LTEs develop their courses based on what they believed beginning teachers needed to know. They draw on their strengths as researchers, their work conducting in-service sessions with teachers, and their experiences as classroom teachers, which results in them developing and delivering quite different courses.

Given the vastness of the field of literacy, some of the LTEs stress children's literature, others

the writing process, while for others inquiry is the focus of the course. Some have the changing nature of literacy and communication as central features of their courses while others address these topics incidentally. Although no literacy course can “do it all” the variety among courses results in student teachers completing their program having had vastly different experiences. Yes, teacher educators should teach from their strengths but it raises the questions – Is there a knowledge base that new teachers need to know to be effective literacy teachers? The answer is probably a yes and a no. One-size-fits-all curriculum does not work in schools nor does it work in higher education. Nevertheless, we wonder to what extent there should be more consistency in courses. The International Reading Association (1996) standards for literacy instruction provide some broad principles, which might be of use to LTEs. Using these guidelines along with studies on new teachers such as the work by Hoffman et al. (2005) would help LTEs identify features of effective literacy instruction. Further, we know that there is not consistency in the number of literacy courses required in teacher credential programs. In some programs student teachers are only required to take one course while other programs have three required courses and opportunities for elective literacy courses. This unevenness in the number and content of literacy courses impacts on student teachers when they go for an interview and once they are hired. Most likely those who have taken three courses are better prepared to teach literacy. Given that literacy is a priority in school districts, faculties of education may need to reconsider their minimum requirements regarding literacy courses.

The LTEs in this study do not collaborate with colleagues because there is little time to meet and the leadership of their programs does not create space for these conversations. More opportunity for them to learn from each other, share course syllabi, discuss challenges, and set common goals and assignments might prove to be beneficial for their own professional development, as well as for their student teachers. Since time to meet is at a premium they may find resources such as, *Literacy teacher educators: Preparing student teachers for a changing world* (2013), useful because this text describes the work of 28 literacy teacher educators including their goals, pedagogies, and assignments. Given the limited time devoted to literacy instruction in teacher education programs, we recognize that LTEs can only do so much, which then leads to the central question: How do you decide what topics to prioritize? What are essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions for new teachers to acquire? We need much more research to begin to unpack and address these two key questions.

Finding a balance among the many competing demands is an ongoing struggle. For those of us with a long history of working in education, we know that initiatives come and go. The pendulum has swung between extremes (no phonics to phonics-driven programs) and presuming teachers will have many years in the profession, determining to what extent you prepare student teachers for current school district initiatives is difficult. The LTEs in our study try to balance addressing current initiatives with helping student teachers develop a broad approach to literacy instruction. A broad approach to teaching literacy is essential because new teachers will teach students with a range of interests and abilities (Allington, 2013). All students do not learn in the same way so new teachers need to have a broad approach and a repertoire of teaching strategies. And further, all school districts do not have the same emphases or expectations. Some school districts endorse a heavily-phonics driven approach while others are more concerned with using and integrating digital technology as a form of communication. Hence student teachers need a range of skills, an understanding of best practice, and awareness that emphases come and go. Another issue that requires reconciling is the gap between what student teachers want and expect from a literacy course (e.g., endless stream of practical strategies) and what LTEs offer. Finding

a balance between the competing demands is difficult and each LTE addresses student teachers' expectations differently. Nevertheless, the pressure from student teachers to focus on the practical is a significant issue without an easy answer.

BEYOND THE INTERVIEW

As was evident in the Findings Section, the seven LTEs do not for the most part explicitly prepare their student teachers for either the job interview or for being a fully responsible classroom teacher. Given the shortage of time, this may not be feasible and further, teacher educators do not know what every school district is “looking for”. Since most teacher educators base their literacy courses on research and their own extensive experiences, they are providing student teachers/beginning teachers with what they believe teachers need to know. Given that school districts' views on literacy have swung widely (from no phonics to a heavily-driven phonics program) it is not adequate to prepare student teachers for the latest fad or emphasis. As one teacher educator noted, “we are not peons of the government; we are professionals and researchers” hence they see their role as much more than simply preparing student teachers for the latest local government initiative. Further, new teachers do not simply teach in their local school district. In recent years Canadian teachers have secured employment in a vast range of schools: public school in downtown Toronto, private school in Vancouver, public school in northern Canada, community-based program in Chicago, international school in Milan, and private school in Singapore. Each of these schools has a different context, curriculum, and expectations. There is not an agreed upon approach to literacy teaching and each of these schools uses a different interview process. However, we believe programs as a whole need to spend more time devoted to ensuring student teachers have a greater repertoire of skills with a solid and realistic vision for teaching. This cannot be accomplished by just one LTE in one course; rather, programs need to think about what beginning teachers need and modify the entire program based on the research on new teachers.

In wondering how new teachers fare, we draw on the work of Kosnik and Beck's longitudinal research on teachers (Kosnik & Beck 2009; Beck & Kosnik, 2014). This is highly relevant because they have been following 45 teachers for the last 8-10 years. Their research findings definitely have implications for the work of LTEs. Below is a short summary of a few of their key findings relevant to this chapter and suggestions for LTEs which we believe would go a long way in helping new teachers thrive.

Kosnik and Beck (2008) found that student teachers quickly acquired the jargon of literacy—a balanced literacy program, accommodate all learners, or culturally responsive teaching. And when they are preparing for their job interviews they believed they needed to use all of this jargon in order to get the job. However, once they began teaching they quickly realized that they did not fully understand the concepts behind the jargon or how to actualize them. For example, many teachers in the Kosnik and Beck (2009) study described having no idea how to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of particular students even though they knew the jargon of modifications and accommodations. In teacher education, we need to make sure that student teachers truly understand the concepts and know what they look like in practice. Through the use of videos for example, student teachers can “see” what the concept (related to the term) looks like in practice. In teacher education we need to move beyond the jargon because just knowing it provides a false sense of security. And in job interviews, interviewers need to probe by asking for examples to ensure the candidate truly understands the concept and knows how to implement it.

Given the limited time devoted to literacy instruction in teacher education, all topics are not addressed and LTEs tend to focus on particular interests. In Kosnik and Beck's longitudinal research (2009) they found that in the first three years of teaching many new teachers flounder because they are often overwhelmed by the demands on them. As a result they tend to cherry pick activities (e.g., search the internet for a "good" activity). Also, many used activities they had experienced as elementary school students. They fell back on what they knew and did not approach literacy in an expansive way. Although many of these activities are useful in themselves they do not lead to a coherent program. In teacher education, we need to talk about a coherent program and provide examples of long-range plans for different grades so that student teachers acquire the concept of program coherence and have examples of how to address the multiple strands of literacy. One new teacher noted:

The technical literacy elements that I learned [in pre-service] underpin everything I do. However, I needed some way to bring those items together so I could see the larger picture ... I knew a number of strategies that would be useful to me. But tying it all together ... was lacking. (Kosnik & Beck, 2009, p. 13)

Student teachers want "tips" and "tricks" – yes we should provide these but they must be part of an overall program. One of the ways to do this is to look at high quality reading/literacy programs.

Beginning teachers often think they need to invent the literacy program because that is what they had to do in practice teaching. Often in practice teaching they had to be creative and invent lessons and units. As a result they do not know how to use a textbook or reading program. Of course any formal program should not be followed prescriptively, but if new teachers used a program as a basis, carefully selecting activities and stories, their literacy programs would probably have greater coherence. And if they spent less time trying to locate and invent activities their program planning would be more manageable (hence they would not be so exhausted) and they would have time to think about what they are trying to accomplish in their classrooms. Further, they need to understand how to "work with" the formal government curriculum. After three years, a new teacher in Kosnik and Beck's study (2009) finally reached the point where she:

... learned how to read between the lines of the curriculum expectations. I've become better at saying, Okay, I know how this would look. When I first started, I'd read the expectation and only thought of the expectation in one way – literally, that means they need to do this. Whereas I now see a variety of different ways of realizing the expectation. (2009, p. 17)

In teacher education we need to help student teachers learn how to use the formal curriculum, not to simply learn the strands or elements.

Induction support is necessary because once beginning teachers start teaching they are often surprised by the complexities of classroom teaching. For example, they are often overwhelmed by the demands of classroom management, the number of "housekeeping" activities to which they must attend, the range of abilities, the expectations of parents, and the lack of resources. Beck and Kosnik (2014) in their research on new teachers found that beginning teachers will only realize the complexity of teaching once they start teaching. A fifth year teacher who is part of their longitudinal study noted:

Coming out of teachers' college, your view of teaching is very theoretical. You've learned the importance of integration and differentiation, general ways of dealing with parents, ide-

al practice kinds of things. But it's only when you're trying it that you grasp what it means and what the balance is. (2014, p. 3)

Beyond learning how to deal with the many practicalities of teaching, the huge decision-making role of teachers is often not apparent to new teachers; for example, what to teach, how to teach it, and when to teach. A third year teacher in the Kosnik and Beck study (2009) offers this suggestion to LTEs:

In the pre-service program the instructors didn't want to be prescribing ... But I would have liked someone to say, "This worked for me, here is one thing you can do or a variety of things. There are many out there but you can start with these and then see what works for you." I do not feel there was enough practical knowledge being passed around. (2009, p. 23)

During practice teaching and in the academic program the decision-making role is almost invisible because the associate/cooperating teacher typically makes those decisions. In both settings we need to talk to student teachers about their decision-making role. During both the pre-service program and the early years of teaching a different kind of support is needed. New teachers need to be introduced to the bigger picture of literacy teaching and how all of the pieces of teaching fit together to create a coherent literacy program that meets the needs of the diversity of pupils in an inclusive class community. This is an enormous task which is beyond the scope of this chapter. We offer just a few suggestions in addition to the ones described in the Findings Section: carefully organized observations of effective literacy teaching and debriefing after the observation to discuss the teacher's goals and strategies; watching videos of effective literacy teachers and analyzing them; carefully selected readings which combine theory and practice; (e.g., Alverman & Hinchman, 2012); student teachers doing a literacy autobiography to identify how their experiences act as filters; and student teachers being introduced to high quality resources which they can use as a beginning teacher (e.g., Read, Write, Think website). LTEs need to follow their graduates or read research on new teachers which will most likely help them appreciate what new teachers need and how they can learn it (e.g., Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy 2000; Wold, Young, & Risko, 2011). For a more detailed description see *Teaching in a nutshell: Navigating your teacher education program as a student teacher* (Kosnik & Beck, 2011) which provides a thorough description of teaching strategies and activities for student teachers (in both the academic courses and practice teaching) to enhance their learning in teacher education.

New teachers need special support during their induction years, due to factors such as having to prepare lessons for the first time, become more proficient at classroom management, and most other basic aspects of the teacher's role (Beck & Kosnik, 2014, p. 133). Through carefully organized induction support new teachers will not revert and replicate the teaching they experienced as pupils (e.g., decontextualized teaching of spelling and grammars skills) or cherry pick activities. Induction support with carefully chosen mentors who have both a broad knowledge of literacy and of teaching can help with the practicalities of teaching, help the new teachers think deeply about their approach to literacy, and develop an identity of a teacher as an informed decision-maker.

We recognize that induction support is costly; however, there should be opportunities for new teachers who are teaching the same grade to come together to talk about their literacy programs, exchange ideas, provide support, discuss the changing nature of literacy, use of digital technology as a tool for literacy learning, and share resources, all guided by an experienced literacy teacher. And in particular, they need opportunities to address the new teachers' specific questions/issues.

New teachers need a place to raise their questions and access to an experienced teacher to help address them. Beck and Kosnik (2014) identified seven forms of support for teachers: induction and early mentoring; coaching and later-career mentoring; professional learning communities; workshops and other short PD events; professional courses; degree programs; and formal teacher leadership. (See Beck and Kosnik, 2014, p. 131-142 for more detailed description of each.)

After the interview and securing a teaching job, new teachers need much more than a grab-bag of strategies if they are to be effective. The LTEs in this study are acutely aware of this complexity. They truly hope they have helped their student teachers acquire the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to be effective literacy teachers. Yes, it will take many years for teachers to develop their teaching style, accumulate a repertoire of teaching activities, learn to gauge pupils' needs, and understand the politics of schools, yet it is hoped that their literacy teacher education courses provided them with the foundation upon which to build.

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CHAPTER 3**Hiring and Retaining Teachers in
Diverse Schools and Districts**

By Lyle Hamm, University of New Brunswick

ABSTRACT

School leaders across Canada are responsible for hiring teachers who will fit into their schools and communities, continually building their educational capacity and pedagogy and serving their students and families to the best of their professional abilities. As Canada continues to experience demographic change in all regions of our country, educators will be called upon to serve students and their families from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Drawing from research in Alberta and New Brunswick, I argue that hiring committees must engage their prospective teachers in difficult conversations and complex scenarios during the interview. These interviewing strategies may allow interviewing teams to discover and hire teachers who will thrive and be committed to social justice, equity and responsive education principles and increase their commitment to serve in diverse schools and communities.

Keywords: hiring teachers, hiring for diversity, social justice and equity

INTRODUCTION

Canada's demographics continue to change. Where once, larger cities were the primary destinations for increasing numbers of new immigrants to Canada, today, rural regions across the country are transforming into diverse cultural, linguistic, religious and racially diverse communities (Ryan, 2003; Stewart, 2007; Wilson-Forsberg, 2012). Canada's communities are culturally and linguistically changing at a rapid pace everywhere. This is due in large part to our robust provincial economies and federal policies on immigration which are linked to attracting people from all around the world for various employment and life fulfilling opportunities (Wallerstein, 2005). No longer are Canada's multicultural centers strictly confined to cities like Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver. Today, places like Steinbach and Winkler in southern Manitoba, Florenceville-Bristol in New Brunswick and Brooks, Alberta are examples of smaller towns and cities in Canada that are also welcoming new immigrant Canadians into their communities.

The phenomenon of demographic change continues to inspire educational researchers across multiple fields seeking to understand its impact on educators in Canadian schools. Researchers consistently point out that teacher education programs across Canada and North America are still predominantly taken up by white and middle class pre-service teachers (Battiste, 2013; Lund, Bragg, Kaipainen & Lee, 2014). Consequentially, many teachers struggle to gain the valuable

skills and perspectives that are necessary to serve new immigrant children and understand their family backgrounds, cultures and worldviews. Teachers, administrators, educational assistants, additional support staff (i.e., custodians; cafeteria staff) and parents who are or will be recruited and hired to serve in diverse educational communities, need to increase their professional capacity to work in diverse schools.

As I consider my early experiences as an educator in western Canada in the early 1990's, I often reflect on how ill-equipped I was to guide my students to examine and disrupt the biases and stereotypes (mine included) that often flowed unchallenged in the privileged, white, Christian, predominantly Eurocentric educational landscape. Unfortunately, the education program I was part of did not have mandatory courses on diversity and cultural awareness. In hindsight, these would have been helpful.

As a university educator now in 2015, it is not my desire to place blame on university institutions. I am aware that many education programs across our nation have responded, or are responding, to the demographic imperative that writers have advocated for across North America (Banks et al, 2005; Dei, James, Karumanchery, James-Wilson & Zine, 2000; Solomon, Levine-Rasky & Singer, 2003). Nor is it my intention to suggest that this work and the ideas in this paper are new. They aren't. Many Canadian scholars have been researching and advocating for change and transformation in Canadian school systems for years (Goddard & Hart, 2007; Ryan, 2006; Shields, 2010). In fact, the significant ideas and findings in the work of many of these researchers have inspired me in my teaching and research. I have been fortunate to see the benefit of teachers increasing their understandings of multiple cultures and languages and becoming aware of worldviews other than their own.

Attracting and hiring teachers for diverse contexts

In the context of this writing, what may arise through dialogue at the interview table may determine how prepared teachers are for diverse classrooms and communities. For instance, interview committees can construct classroom and school scenarios (Maynes & Hatt, 2014) and encourage prospective teachers to consider how they might respond if given the actual opportunity to do so in a diverse setting. It has been reported that teachers often struggle to gain skills to serve new immigrant children, especially if educators do not understand the cultures and background experiences of their families or take the time they need to learn more about their students (Howard, 1999; Villegas, 2007). Through small case situations, hiring committees can obtain a better reading on teachers to determine if they will be committed to social justice and equity principles of inclusive education. Once hired, professional growth must be ongoing and be sustained through focused school and personal professional development related to the complexity that characterizes diverse classrooms, schools and communities in Canada. Through ongoing PD, teachers then have the opportunity to gain relevant skills they need to serve all their students, particularly new immigrant students who often exist on the margins in their schools.

New Brunswick and Alberta – A unique contrast of demographic change occurring in Canada

Atlantic news media consistently report on the steady outflow of people to the western provinces of Canada in search of better economic opportunities for themselves and their families (Huras, 2014; Chilibeck, 2014). In his world systems analysis, Wallerstein (2005) describes how large businesses and corporations recruit workers nationally then globally when a region's work

force is insufficient in keeping up with labor demand. This phenomenon is present in both Alberta and New Brunswick (Broadway, 2013; Wilson-Forberg, 2012).

Both provinces seem to exist at opposite ends of the economic spectrum. Yet, it becomes an interesting reality that industries and governments in both regions are working to attract people from outside Canada's borders to fill in their labor gaps. In Alberta, this has largely been due to job creation in the energy sector and in the service industries that are interconnected. In New Brunswick, my recent observations and experiences suggest to me that it is due to job vacancy, mostly in the secondary and tertiary industries. Through an educator's eyes, provincial politics and economic realities – either robust or not – make little difference for educators who are serving increasing numbers of new immigrant children in their classroom. Teachers who are hired and responsible for children in both provinces are experiencing comparable classroom complexity while striving to deliver an equitable, democratic and increasingly outcomes-based education within an educational landscape characterized by many forms of social diversity.

If teachers are insufficiently prepared to work in diverse classrooms, they may experience fatigue, stress or even burn-out that could cost them time away from work as well as added cost to employers (Hamm, 2004). Teachers and educational leaders who adhere to principles of social justice, as described in the work of Banks (2004), Lund (2003, 2008), Ryan (2010), Theoharis (2007) and Villegas (2007) must prepare themselves to learn and work flexibly in complex, fast-changing and diverse organizations. I believe it is important for school leaders across Canada to attract teachers to their districts who bring with them a contemporary and diverse knowledge base and diverse set of abilities. Further, it is important that educators demonstrate a willingness to engage respectfully with a multiplicity of global perspectives throughout their careers (Battiste, 2013; Shields, 2010; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

At the turn of the century, Hodgkinson (2002a, 2002b) encouraged educators in North America to get ready for an increasing demographic shift. "It is a demographic pattern of diversity that has implications for teachers and principals in terms of three major elements: transiency, racial and ethnic diversity, and poverty" (Hodgkinson, 2002a, p. 4). Educators who ignore demographic challenges do so at their own peril (Goldberg, 2000) and they may confront difficulty and complexity that will create personal turbulence and anxiety in their day to day practice. Citing United Nations statistics, Goddard (2007) reported some 300 000 000 people are on the move around the planet at any one time. Other Canadian studies (Hamm, 2009; Ryan, 1999b, Stewart, 2007; Wilson-Forsberg, 2012) have addressed the impact, opportunities, and challenges brought on by rapid demographic change in rural and urban schools and communities. It is important for educators to know about demographic changes in our country as "the new millennium will witness mounting tensions in schools and these pressures will be fuelled by the conflicting interests of multiple stakeholders" (Dei et al, 2000, p. 2). Given these realities, it is then reasonable to expect in diverse schools and communities, that it is important for district hiring teams and committees to focus attention and effort on interviewing and selecting teachers who will not only survive, but also thrive in the diverse contexts which they will be serving.

Hiring committees need to explore the complex issues of race and color with their teacher candidates as these issues create barriers to learning and result in fear and mistrust in the school community. Avoiding these difficult discussions at the interview might give the new teachers a

false representation of their pending working life and diverse school community. The committee then inadvertently places teachers in situations that later may cause them to experience anxiety and stress, leading to poor and disrupted service (Grady, 2001; Hamm, 2009).

Reflecting on the job interviews I have been part of - both as a prospective employee and as an administrator in diverse schools - the first question guiding teacher hiring in this work is: What are the specific skills and knowledges that superintendents, principals, and hiring committees should seek in candidates during interviews when hiring teachers for positions in diverse schools? Undoubtedly, there will be common questions posed to all teachers hired in schools that are related to their backgrounds and interests in learning and teaching. However, for the diverse setting, it is my belief and understanding that a teacher will be challenged in ways that teachers in traditionally homogeneous settings may not experience. Further, I am also interested in conversations about diversity that may emerge during the interview. Questions posed to prospective teachers might indicate their level of preparation for the position as well as their level of excitement related to working in a diverse classroom. For example, hiring committees may learn if teachers who are being interviewed are interested in hearing the stories of their students and are likely to provide time and space for children to share them in the classroom (Wilson-Forsberg, 2012). Will the teachers being interviewed take the initiative to invite the parents and friends of their immigrant students in to share their experiences so that reciprocal and dialogical learning (Freire, 1970) can happen among the students, families, and educational community? If teachers simply focus on the pillars of accountability that many provincial governments have adopted (Ryan, 2012; Schmidt, 2010), it will be difficult for them to form authentic relationships with their students and families, especially if the educators only focus on testing and academic outcomes.

A second question guiding this work is one that I was equally interested in during my doctoral research and administrative service afterwards; it relates to ongoing professional learning (Hamm & Cormier, 2014; Holmes, 2013). That is, What strategic professional development topics should educational leaders in diverse schools focus on as priorities for teachers and support staff that may better support professional growth, instructional and collective capacity and personal and professional wellness for teachers and support staff in diverse schools? I will address these questions in the discussion and concluding sections of this chapter. These 2 questions may help hiring committees to know at the interview if the applicant is committed to on-going professional development and if, given the opportunity, they will contribute their voice and energy to professional development initiatives on diversity.

BACKGROUND EXPERIENCES OF NEW IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

In diverse schools, educators should know and challenge themselves, confront their biases (Santoro, 2009) and investigate the status quo in the school and the community where they work (Shields, 2004). It is important that educators learn as much as they can about the backgrounds of the people they serve, particularly the new immigrant students and their families who are new to Canada. “The better you know the local demographic ‘fingerprint,’ including race/ethnicity, religion, income, transiency, and parents’ educational backgrounds, the more effective you will be” (Hodgkinson, 2002a, p. 7).

Teachers welcoming new immigrant students into their classes cannot be sure what the previous education and lived experiences were like for them in their former countries or refugee camps, especially if the students and their parents are not comfortable or acquainted with speaking

the dominant language of the school and community (Rubin & Bhavnagri, 2001). The home countries of many new immigrant students may have been “torn by civil war, internal strife, and violence” (McDonald, 2000) resulting in significant gaps in their education, especially if they have been out of school for extended periods of time or transient while fleeing conflict.

Several researchers report that many people arriving in their host countries and new schools may have suffered severe traumas (Pryor, 2001; Smith-Davis, 2004). The narratives of many of these children can astonish educators and “listeners may assume that survivors’ stories are far beyond most people’s experiences” (McDonald, 2000, p. 692). In Alberta, one of my junior high students from Afghanistan informed me that he watched his home destroyed by a rocket as he and his family fled in their car. His lived experience influenced my teaching experience.

It is important for teachers in diverse schools to learn about and understand that many refugee students and their families may have been “subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, rape, and torture” (McDonald, 2000, p. 690). Gunderson (2000) found that some refugees were from professional backgrounds but their credentials were not valid in their receiving country. Inkster (2006) revealed a common reality in the lives of many immigrant families in her work in Alberta as many parents new to Canada often work in service sector jobs. The change in financial and social capital can be devastating for many of them and their families (Hamm, 2009). The following section examines multiple complexities that teachers and administrators in diverse schools often encounter.

Religious and cultural diversity

Teachers being hired for diverse schools need to consider that new immigrant children and their families reflect a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is crucial for all teachers to learn the norms and observances celebrated by the children and their families (Hamm, Sears & Peck, forthcoming; Ryan, 2003). Cultural norms and expectations by immigrant parents of their sons and daughters also present background situations that require attention and cautious investigation by teachers and administrators. This is what Coelho (1998) refers to as the cultural conflict between home and school. “Some parents react with fear and suspicion when they feel that their children are being attracted to aspects of North American culture that the parents find disturbing” (p. 41). These conflicts could be generated through the students’ association with music, media, digital technology or clothing styles or in the perceived opposing norms and values between the school and children’s home (Banks, et al. 2005). Ryan (2003) described a dilemma in one of his studies where a principal dealt with immigrant parents of two girls who were not allowed to date boys. However, the families soon learned that the girls were in fact going against the strict norms of their religion and culture. The father of one of the girls made the situation more complicated as he wanted the principal to clear up the situation quietly at school or he would contact school board officials. New teachers, as well as leaders, need to be aware of these possible situations in diverse schools and be prepared to respond effectively to them.

Loneliness among new immigrant students

Loneliness among new immigrant and minority students has not received the attention it requires from researchers, suggests Kirova (2001). Often the feelings of loneliness experienced by the new immigrant students are associated to the loss of culture, unexplained cultural differences or when they find themselves in a culturally split inner world “when students close off a part of their cultural self for another part” (Pardhan, 1998, p. 36). Kirova (2001) reports on a common

dilemma for teachers; that is, “how do they help diverse students in becoming accepted members of the classroom community if they cannot rely on a common language to communicate?” (p. 261). Teachers need to know that many immigrant children in the early grades cannot get the help they may require on their homework from their parents because they do not understand the language of instruction (Pryor, 2001). Further, teachers hired in diverse schools should be aware of the shifts in power that can occur in families due to language acquisition. Coelho (1998) reports that:

Children often acquire English more quickly than their parents, and may sometimes be required to act as family negotiators and go-betweens. Teenage children may also have part-time jobs after school and on weekends. New responsibilities sometimes cause children to claim rights, privileges, and independence at an age that would be unthinkable in the home country. (p. 41)

My colleagues and I often experienced this situation with many of our students and families in Alberta. We found we often had to serve as mediators with students and parents who were in conflict.

School issues – stereotyping

In an educational environment that reflects increasing student diversity on so many levels, teachers have to reconstruct their ideas about students, their learning styles, and how they will teach and work with all children, regardless of their backgrounds. Ryan (1999b) writes, “one of the consequences of this high level of diversity is that many teachers know little about many of their students. Frequently, they misidentify them” (p. 102). In order to teach children from diverse backgrounds, who may struggle with learning in the dominant culture and language of instruction, teachers have to first break the stereotypes and attitudes they may harbour and see these children as capable learners (Banks, et al. 2005).

School issues – racism

Racism presents complex challenges for educators in Canada. Discriminatory events occur in classrooms and hallways as well as on playgrounds and field trips among students and families who are part of a diverse school and community (Hamm, Field notes, 2013). It is important for educators to prepare themselves to identify these difficult moments as an educational opportunity and pay attention, even search out, and become consciously aware of overt or covert discriminatory situations in their school communities. In British Columbia, Gunderson (2000) reported that “immigrants confront racism in many forms” and that “the source of the racism varied from that which had immigrated with them to that which sprang from their new environments” (p. 696). Ryan (1999b) investigated racism from both historical and contemporary perspectives and documented how some of his participants perceived racism at work in their educational environments. Other researchers explored how racism and inequitable practices are institutionalized (Banks, 2001; Starratt, 2005) as well as sometimes grounded in the attitudes and practices of educators (Lund, 2006).

In Alberta, Kelly (1998) described both overt and covert racist attitudes and structures that were present in two schools where she conducted research. Of significance, she found the behaviour of “controlling gazing and glaring” (p. 101) were non-verbal acts used by members of the dominant student group “to control social spaces and social interactions” (p. 101). Kelly

(1998) reported the perspectives of black students in the school about the ways they perceived the dominant white group of students racialized them in their educational environments through the “gaze”. She writes:

The importance of the gaze is that it allows individuals belonging to a dominant group to control social spaces and social interaction. Blacks are made visible and invisible at the same time under the gaze. For example when young Black males are seen it is often with a specific gaze; eyes that see the “trouble-maker,” “the school skipper” or “the criminal”. The gaze constrains as it removes the degree of autonomy that would allow free physical and social movement. The purpose of the gaze is that it should subdue those who receive it and make them wish to be invisible. (1998, p. 101)

Further, two of Kelly’s respondents indicated that they were uncomfortable with the literature being studied in their classrooms and when racial terms were encountered through classroom oral reading, the gaze would again fall on them by fellow classmates. “This sense of discomfort was heightened especially if they were the sole black student present, as they often were. They perceived themselves as being under the gaze, as fellow students in the class would turn and look at them or glance slyly to see their reaction” (Kelly, 1998, p. 105).

Lund (2006) revealed an incident where covert racist attitudes of two members of his teaching staff were sent to him in an email. He describes how the staff members were planning a “Native themed” skit to be performed at a meeting for the principal of the school who was retiring. Given the historical and modern day accounts and realities of many groups of marginalized people in Canada, particularly First Nations Peoples who continue to struggle with racism and marginalization (Battiste, 2013; Goddard, 2007; Saul, 2014), it is important for members of the dominant European cultures to become more aware of their own racial attitudes. Educators need to work to disrupt and dismantle any negative ideas they may be harbouring and this includes the oft-subtle jokes that are directed toward varying diverse groups of people who share Canada.

Hire the most prepared individuals

It is important that teachers who are being interviewed for positions in diverse contexts are prepared to work in complex environments. From my experiences as an educator and researcher in several diverse schools, I believe that it is imperative for hiring committees to find out what prospective teachers know about diversity especially regarding the background experiences of their children, which may include traumatic events such as war or time spent in refugee camps. Conversations can then take place at the interview on topics like religious and cultural diversity in the classroom, school and community, marginalization and student loneliness, as well as on stereotyping and racism that will occur in the course of the teacher’s professional experiences in the school and community. Finding out how the teacher will respond to these events and realities is an important determining factor for committees as they staff their diverse schools.

THEMES TO CONSIDER WHEN HIRING FOR DIVERSE SCHOOLS

I have drawn data from two research projects to develop my argument that teachers need support as they struggle to gain skills to serve diverse communities. One project was a doctoral study based in southern Alberta. This study looked at collective leadership in a school and community undergoing rapid demographic change (Hamm, 2009). The school under investigation

welcomed students from various places in the world; many of them arrived from regions that were experiencing war.

Data are also considered from a study that investigated student and teacher understandings of diversity in New Brunswick (Hamm, Sears & Peck, forthcoming). The data support my proposition that it is imperative for hiring committees to select teacher candidates for diverse schools carefully through a rigorous interviewing process. Part of this process involves the recruiting and hiring of teachers and designing professional development that will support them in their classroom pedagogy. It is my belief that school leaders also need to be grounded in knowledge of diverse communities and globalization; this will guide them in their interview protocols and help them support their colleagues in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms.

Figure 1 presents seven interrelated themes that emerged from the data in the Alberta study. Using a qualitative case study approach, I used surveys and interviews to gather data from administrators, teachers and students in one diverse high school in a community undergoing rapid demographic changes. The study revealed that educators found it challenging to respond to the changes in their school and community. The students spoke in depth about their experiences related to adjusting to their new realities of attending a western Canadian school. Though the school had responded effectively in many ways, the educators still believed they had huge gaps to address in their pedagogy and professional development that they believed would ultimately support all their students better. The illustration (Figure 1) outlines several challenges that the educators and students encountered in their daily educational experiences in the school as well as some of the challenges they faced that existed within the community. One of the main themes that emerged was that focused professional development on issues related to race and diversity was absent in the school. This predominant theme in the research is evidenced by the theme's central place in the model. At the conclusion of the study, it was evident that it was only through focused and ongoing professional development that educators could effectively respond to the challenges (i.e., the six other themes) they were facing.

Figure 1. Seven interrelating themes (Hamm, 2009)



Specific for hiring committees in diverse districts in Canada, the following analysis and explanation of the data provide further evidence for engaging candidates with difficult questions and conversations to ensure the committees select the best teachers for their school communities. As a former school administrator in a diverse school, I believe it is important to let the prospective educator know the challenges and more importantly, the opportunities that may emerge from the complexities that they may face in their new roles.

Language barriers and deficit thinking about immigrant youth

Teachers should not view language barriers as a problem and deficit for the student. In linguistically diverse schools, educators and students may often only focus on the language barrier and ultimately lay the blame for poor achievement directly on the student. If educators perceive language as a barrier instead of as an asset, this perspective will position the student in a deficit learning situation right from the start. The immigrant student will remain disadvantaged in the courses they take from that point on and their academic and social progress may be stalled. It is important for educators to be aware of how they view language and also be aware of how they communicate to students. One teacher participant in the study corrected her own language when she became aware that she was employing what she described as “baby talk” in her communication with new immigrant students. She said:

Or instead of saying, ‘can you please grab your pencil’, you’ll almost mimic the student and say, ‘can you grab pencil?’ And you miss certain words because they miss certain words...once you pick up [on] yourself that you realize you’re doing this, ‘cause you want to make it as short as possible at first, you stop and ... (pause) because it’s just not right talking to someone like that. (Hamm, 2009, p. 128)

School-based and district administrators, teachers, school trustees and community members such as parents who work together to recruit, interview and hire teacher candidates need to find the right “fit” in diverse schools. That means finding teachers who visualize equitable futures for all their students and do not get stuck in deficit thinking.

Challenges with time constraints, curriculum pacing, and delivery

Time constraints to teach the curriculum, and pacing of lessons, were viewed by several educator participants as impediments for learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. One teacher described how he had to adjust his programming for new immigrant students, stating that, “pacing is a huge issue because I find that they can’t handle the course at the same pace as the other (students)” (Hamm, 2009, p. 144). Administrator perceptions supported the teacher’s view that pacing was a salient concern, especially when linguistically diverse students are among the students in the classrooms. “Certainly, the ESL kid will learn differently and at a different pace... some are going to take more time and energy than others and maybe the ESL kid will be one of those kids” (p. 145).

Educators have to pay attention to the needs of all their students, but they also have to get through the curriculum objectives in a timely fashion, in large part due to the semester system that locks educators into their teaching schedules. A student participant reflected on her junior high experience and compared it to high school, explaining that the pace is often difficult to keep up with especially when there is competition for teacher time.

Societal factors affecting the school

Community and global activities affect educational activities in schools across Canada and teachers and administrators are encouraged to keep informed of these developments at both levels. For instance, a conflict in a far-off country can have implications and ramifications for communities and schools that welcome people from those regions. In their research, Dimmock and Walker (2005) label this phenomenon as the community societal or social influences that stretch into and influence the school community, thus having an impact on the everyday lives of the multiple members sharing the school.

The interview participants in Hamm's study (2009) described various aspects of the changes going on in the school and community they worked in and discussed many of the responses they had constructed or chosen to adopt that allowed them to address the pressures they experienced in their classroom and administrative roles. Continuous change in the community's population impacted the educational service delivery at times. One teacher said the changes caught them by surprise. She said:

... it's hard to be prepared for families that are coming. The immigration here doesn't really notify us; they're not allowed to tell us when students come in; it would be nice to know that sometimes...so it's hard to plan for these rapid changes. (Hamm, 2009, p. 150)

The situation becomes more complicated for educators if the students and their families have spent time in refugee camps. Often students will demonstrate behaviours that helped them survive the traumatic experiences in the encampments (Hamm, 2013, Field Notes). These behaviours may range from pushing and shoving in student line-ups to violence that manifests for various reasons on the playground or at other community venues. Situations like this may often yield immediate discipline for the students involved. In reality, there may be deeper issues at work that educators need to investigate. My suggestion is for educators and leaders to dig further and understand possible root causes for the behaviour and educate students and families accordingly, rather than assigning the behaviours to student selfishness or bullying that may result in suspensions for them.

Equity issues

Educators in Hamm's study (2009) were concerned about fairness in testing and assessment protocols – both for the ESL students and for the students from the mainstream dominant population in their classes. One teacher struggled with modifying exams that would better serve the ESL students and at the same time also challenge the other students for whom language did not impose a barrier. Another teacher described feeling “locked” into high school courses that couldn't be modified stating, “The ESL learner has to come in and take the course whether they're prepared for it or not” (Hamm, 2009, p. 156). If a teacher struggles with sharing instructional time and cannot provide new immigrant students the educational support they need, isolation and marginalization may be the unfortunate consequence. According to Watt and Roessingh (1994) many students abandon all hope and drop out, fall out or get pushed out of the educational process. This is similar to what Merchant (1999) found in her study in a rural school in the Midwestern United States where Mexican immigrant students sat quietly in their classes like silent ghosts. Merchant (1999) said the immigrant students were unable to comprehend what the teachers were communicating and instructing and were unfortunately isolated inside the classroom. One student in Hamm's study (2009) suggested that new immigrant students need to:

... slow down ... it's not your fault...like back home you're like...smart as they are and people that are here. If they go to my country and then see how it is they would feel the same way. So, I would say, slow down and take your time and learn and ... that's how they became ... they went to a higher class ... they went to kindergarten, and elementary and stuff like that. But the people that are coming right ... straight to (here) ... they never had that ...they never got to colour on the book. (p. 161)

Relationships – racism as a reality

The relationships among students in diverse schools will vary and educators who will be hired to serve in these schools need to be alert to racial discrimination and various forms of marginalization that may occur for many students. One student who was part of Hamm's study (2009) said it was important for teachers to engage new students to see if they needed help. Other participants described feelings of loneliness when they first came to Canada and entered the school system. Another reality is that new immigrant students often tend to stay within their own cultures in school, seeking the comfort of friends with whom they can communicate in their native languages outside classes where the majority language is the norm for instruction as one teacher in Hamm's study (2009) confirmed:

If I see them in the hall, I find that their peer group is often other people from their same country or that speak their same language – not necessarily communicating a lot with other Canadian-born students in the mainstream school. (p. 165)

In this case, teachers may need to work harder to bring students together or there will be limited knowledge, understanding and acceptance among students from the dominant and minority student populations as another educator described in length:

I find some students are more accepting of diversity than others are; they look down on it. When you ask them what immigration means, the first thing they say is, um, a Black person. They don't necessarily understand that people come from all different places and immigrate to Canada from many different countries. They don't understand what the word means. I think that sometimes they don't necessarily have any understanding of what this type of community is besides the fact there's a lot of, what they would say, Black people living amongst them. I've noticed ... that some of the students don't know what a turban is or what an East Indian culture is; they only seem to be aware of people that are coming from Kenya and places like, with darker skin that they seem aware of. They don't necessarily seem aware of the fact that there's other people from different cultures coming here. (Hamm, 2009, p. 167)

Hamm, Sears and Peck (forthcoming) have found similar realities occurring in New Brunswick schools as that province continues to welcome newcomers from all over the world (Passaris, 2012). Limited engagement between dominant and minoritized youth in schools may invite complex situations that make it challenging for educators to provide an effective response. For instance, one student participant from Pakistan described her perception of a racial incident that was disconcerting for her.

When I went to high school, it was bigger than junior high or any other school I went to, and there were a lot of people, some people were prejudging and they were, kinda racist towards you cause there were not very many people in the high school from different cultures as there were in junior high...Which was kinda hard, and, but some people are

really nice and some others were just...they weren't mean or anything, but yeah, when they looked at your scarf, if you were wearing a scarf or if you were wearing a dress sometimes, they would look at you, and be, like, what are you wearing? You know, the look. (Hamm, 2009, p. 168).

She explained this incident further suggesting that, "The look...they just look at you, like, you are a different person...you're different...I don't know...you don't belong in that area, like you shouldn't be there" (p. 168). This perception links to the research conducted by Kelly (1998) in two schools in a large Alberta city where she reported on marginalizing and racist attitudes toward black minority students.

In the following section, I will discuss the implications from the data and research grounding this work as they relate to hiring practices in Canadian schools, particularly in diverse schools and rapidly changing communities.

Discussion - Implications for hiring committees

Teachers being interviewed for positions in diverse schools must have background knowledge of diversity and be willing to learn about racism and particularly about how it is present in diverse schools and communities. Hiring committees must construct and pose questions during interviews that may help them determine a candidate's preparation and commitment to addressing and educating for challenging social realities as they encounter them. Teachers must be prepared to disrupt stereotypes, racism and discrimination in their classrooms and schools and not simply defer all incidents to the office (Hamm & Doğurga, 2014). It is my belief that new and more experienced teachers will be able to perform these educational tasks more effectively if they have supportive leadership teams in the school.

The data that I have reviewed, in addition to the research I have drawn from for this writing, indicate to me that hiring committees have significant responsibilities to find the right fit of teachers for diverse classrooms across the country. I have conceptualized the topics in Figure 2 (below) to support interviewing committees when they develop questions and case study scenarios (Maynes & Hatt, 2014) for the interview process when they are hiring teachers for diverse schools. Specifically, I believe all interviews for diverse school placements must address the topics under Column 1. Additionally, these topics may be extended into professional development opportunities for diversity education for the teachers throughout their school year.

Figure 2. Topics for interviews; PD possibilities

Column 1 - Topics to Promote Interview Discussions	Column 2 - Topics for Professional Development
Building Relationships/Community Engagement	Learning About and Engaging Diverse Communities/Inviting Parent Leaders/Challenging Ethnocentrism
Stereotyping/Racism/Discrimination/Social/Cultural Capital/Access to School Space/Exploring Worldviews and Personal Bias	Racism/Discrimination/Power/Social and Cultural Capital/Student Marginalization
Global Understandings/Current Events/War and Conflict/Refugee Camps	Corporate Recruitment of New Immigrants/Temporary Foreign Workers/Permanent Residency
Pedagogy/Diversity Education	Unpacking, Investigating and Contesting Curriculum
Differentiation of Instruction/Pacing of Lessons for Learning	Lesson/Unit-Pacing/Accountability/School Structures/Intentional and Unintentional Tracking of Students

Building relationships in and out of the school

Building relationships with new immigrant students and their families is crucial for new and experienced educators (Bernard, 2010; Pollock, 2012). Positive relationships with their teachers keep the students engaged in their learning and increase their trust. During the interview, school leaders must inquire if candidates can strategize effective ways to engage new immigrant students, especially since many children arrive throughout the year. Getting students involved immediately is crucial for their sense of belonging in the classroom and school community. It is important for committees to ask the candidate how they will conceptualize and organize their classroom and programming to ensure that their new immigrant students are not taken out of their classes unnecessarily (Nieto & Bode, 2008), as this will disrupt the flow of their education and eventually marginalize them and cause them to disengage.

Further, it is important for educators in diverse schools to be committed to engaging new immigrant parents as many of them misunderstand the nature, context and norms of North American schooling and the communities to which they now belong. I have found that some teachers experience anxiety when they are called upon to communicate with parents who do not speak the English language fluently (Hamm, 2013, Field notes). In such cases, teachers have to be encouraged and supported by their leaders to make it their educational priority to engage new immigrant students and parents who are unsure about school protocols. Through active engagement, teachers may increase their effectiveness in generating and sustaining a genuine dialogue with students so that they will be able to draw on what the students know and care about and be able to monitor their engagement and success (Banks et al., 2005). This may also set a more inclusive inquiry-based learning atmosphere in the class where all students have the opportunity to share and learn from each other's perspectives, experiences, and life stories.

Courageous conversations about racism

In diverse communities, leaders who deny racism exists or who may be reluctant to discuss

racism at the interview, place new teachers at risk. Teachers in diverse schools will continually confront racism and they will be required to educate their students about it. Racism is a topic that may be explored in textbooks and novels and serve as good starting points to enter into these conversations. However, in diverse communities, racism is real and circulates in multiple ways. Hiring committees need to ask difficult and challenging questions at the interview to give the candidate(s) a chance to think about how they might respond to incidents of racism and discrimination in a “conflict problem-solving exercise” (Maynes & Hatt, 2014, p. 28).

Racial situations have a tremendous impact on students and teachers and confronting it educationally is a quality proactive approach. Further, Banks et al. (2005) suggest that teachers need to identify their own attitudes and cultural assumptions toward different cultural groups and engage the cultures of their students. “Change has to start with educators before it can realistically begin to take place with students” (Howard, 2007, p. 18). This will support the teacher in building their cultural competence and proficiencies and increase their ability to form authentic and effective relationships across differences (Howard, 2007).

Knowledge of the world and what is happening in it

The trends in Canada indicate that immigration will continue at its current pace (Bélanger & Malenfant, 2005). Increasing background knowledge of and communication with immigrant students and their families, and what they may have experienced prior to arriving in Canada, may inspire educators to adjust their curriculum. Knowledge is power for teachers and if they remain unlearned or even confused as to why their community has changed rapidly in culture, language, race and religion, it will be difficult for them to escape from the stereotypical assumptions that they may have about their new community members. Conversations that can occur between educators, students, and parents create dialogical relationships that “seal” participants together (Freire, 1970, as cited in Ryan, 1999a, p. 4). Further, teachers must review the curriculum resources they employ to help them support students in their academic quests.

Focused professional development - commitment to social justice and staffing

Principals are responsible to identify what the school and teachers require regarding professional development. It should not be strictly driven through district office policy; individual schools need to address their own unique challenges through professional development activities that are relevant for their individual school context. It is not uncommon in some communities in Canada to have schools within the same district reflect totally different student demographics. Therefore, a common district-driven professional development protocol might only be relevant for some of the schools that fall within the boundaries. Teachers and school-based leaders have to be able to set their own PD agendas based on what they feel their students and community members need and the services that they can provide for them in and out of the class.

Further to this consideration, Walker and Dimmock (2005) suggested several priorities for principals who serve in multiethnic schools which relate to the hiring process. One priority was for school leaders to develop “a strong ethical or moral core focused on equity and excellence” and demand that the staff members they hire and supervise have similar values that “cohere with principles of social justice and equality” (p. 294). Building a teaching staff with similar philosophical foundations is important and invariably involves hiring practices for administrators. Cultural competence may be a desirable quality that administrators look for in their teachers. At the very least, finding and hiring staff who have a willingness to learn and understand the cultures

and background realities of their students and school communities is vital for administrators in multiethnic schools. Walker and Dimmock (2005) suggest it should be an administrative priority to make every attempt to recruit and retain “staff members with cultural and ethnic backgrounds similar to those present in the school community” (p. 296). For district leaders in Canada, this might mean widening their recruitment strategies to include education programs in Canada and perhaps the United States that are drawing teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds into their education program. I believe this recruitment strategy shows the dedication of the school district to the students and community in their service.

Re-engage the curriculum

Educators in multiethnic schools must continually engage with the curriculum and how they implement and teach it. If the curriculum and pedagogy are not matching the student composition of the school, the principal and administration team have to take proactive measures to encourage teachers to adjust classroom structures to improve student learning that addresses inequality and disadvantage (Howard, 1999; Shields, 2004; Theoharis, 2007). This may be a daunting task for administrators, especially in larger schools. Teachers in diverse schools cannot be left alone in a school that has been impacted with rapid demographic changes. They require a robust agenda for professional development that addresses the complexity of diversity in their school.

One strategy as suggested by Walker and Dimmock (2005) is for school leaders in charge of professional development to promote “the infusion of culture and cultural issues into the curriculum...to counter racism and other forms of discrimination” (p. 298). This is a significant pedagogical action by educators and important in diverse schools. Nieto and Bode (2008) point out that students are still exposed to hegemonic interpretations of history. They write:

American Indian children may read about themselves as “savages” who were bereft of culture until the Europeans arrived; African Americans often read sanitized versions of slavery; Mexican Americans read of the “westward expansion,” with no information about the fact that their ancestors were already living on the lands to which Europeans were “expanding”... Little wonder then, that school curricula and real life are often at polar extremes. (p. 129)

Boothe (2000) said infusing culturally sensitive activities into daily instructional strategies may increase respect for diversity among students, but administrators must ensure that their teachers go beyond “food, fiestas and festivals” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, as cited in Dimmock & Walker, 2005, p. 186). One-time-only school cultural celebrations do not provoke deep learning in children and may even widen the gaps in relationships between students and their teachers as culture becomes something exotic instead of becoming a daily celebrated part of the school culture and community.

Understanding social and cultural capital

It is important that teachers who are interviewed for jobs in diverse schools have knowledge about social and cultural capital and get the opportunity to respond to questions in the interview about how having these forms of capital can tier students. As I mentioned earlier, many immigrant students struggle gaining access to space due to limited understanding of how that space may be contested, secured, and coveted by the students from the dominant student groups. A case study scenario could be developed by the hiring committee describing a fictional social event between

students from the dominant and minoritized population. Conversations about equity and equal access for all students can be part of this interview conversation; new teachers could consider how they might disrupt the power structures they encounter between groups in the case scenario. “Pro” actions like this might then lead to further discussions between students and teachers about the importance of inclusion in school, what it means and looks like in social environments like schools and how it can be achieved. After all, the school is a microcosm of society reflecting the larger social environment outside the school walls. Conversations centered on these issues at the interview will encourage teacher candidates to view the complex imagery that exists in the diverse school environment. Knowing what may be expected of them will put them in a better position to serve their students beyond the interview.

Sharing and clarifying worldviews and bias

Lastly, it is important for teacher candidates at interviews to receive the opportunity to share their vision of the world and how they wish to contribute to the betterment of lives within it. This naturally invites the new teachers to expose and represent their worldviews and, through the open dialogue with the hiring committee, consider what biases they may have that they need to be aware of in order to serve in a diverse school. As Santoro (2009) suggests, “teachers need to move beyond their own worldviews in order to develop and understand their students’ perspectives” (p. 39). With increasing self-knowledge, teachers find themselves in a better position to be open to other viewpoints and, more importantly, they provide themselves the cognitive structures to question and challenge themselves, their worldviews and their pedagogy. Closely scrutinized self-knowledge thus becomes a critical function for a teacher to serve in a diverse school, live in a diverse country, and contribute to a diverse society. Palmer (2007) reminds us... “When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. I will see them through a glass darkly, in the shadows of my own unexamined life – and when I cannot see them clearly, I cannot teach them well.” (p. 3)

FINAL THOUGHTS

In a perfect educational world, educators might possess deep sources of wisdom and resilience required to work in diverse schools with children and families entering their classrooms and communities from all over the world. In reality, it takes ongoing learning by educators, often through trial and error, to perform the demanding social and educational miracles each day that communities demand of them. The world is changing at a rapid pace and educators feel and experience these changes in their classrooms. So do their students.

The interview is a brief moment in time for hiring committees to make a decision that is going to affect a person’s life and ultimately the lives of the children they will serve (Maynes & Hatt, 2014). I have argued here for difficult questions to be constructed by committees and posed to teacher candidates at the interview table that will help the committee determine if that person has the confidence, character, fortitude, and resilience to contribute their leadership for young lives. I believe this task is more complicated for hiring committees in diverse contexts as “research on diversity in teacher education has found that many of the teachers assigned to teach diverse students in urban schools are concerned because they do not have the confidence in their ability to work well with students, interact with parents from diverse backgrounds, and feel inadequately prepared to teach students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds” (Lopez, 2013, p. 292).

Canada is ripe with diversity (Hamm, 2009). It is my belief that every corner of our country will be impacted by demographic change in the near future. Canada is welcoming; Canada is a land of opportunity; Canada needs workers to contribute to its economic development. These are the modern day headlines that attract newcomers to this resource-rich land. When asked about their journey to Canada, the immigrant parents who were part of my school community in Alberta would always default to imagery associated to opportunity, freedom, and civic responsibility. They wanted a chance for themselves and their children, much like my grandfather did when he and his family fled Russia in 1921.

If districts wish to serve new Canadians effectively, they have to ensure the teachers they hire are ready and willing to engage in a life-long learning process that may allow them to thrive and sustain their educational career in a diverse country. They cannot possess deficit views of learning for immigrant children (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004); they cannot say that race is not important and that they are color-blind and will treat everyone equally, for surely, this will not be equitable (Banks, 2001). Further, teachers have to understand the impact of the collision of their worldviews with those of many of their children and families.

Above all, I believe that interviewing committees have to be able to talk about race and racism directly because racial issues will continue to confront Canadians (MacDonald, 2015). As Solomon et al, (2006) remind us, “the reality is that racism hurts all of us” (p. 155). In diverse schools, in diverse communities, racism needs to become part of a perpetual conversation that teachers are comfortable with and do not shy away from discussing. Racism will show up as graffiti on fences near schools; it will show up on walls in bathrooms; it will show up in community venues (Hamm, 2009, 2013, Field notes). Educators need to discuss this and the actions necessary to educate students who will be our leaders of the future. Sadly, “the pain of not addressing racism is all the more dangerous particularly in educational spheres where the minds, subjectivities, and futures of minoritized youth are influenced by the information present in the curriculum and in the interactions with their teachers” (Solomon et al, 2006, p. 155).

Reflecting on my first teacher job interview in 1991, I wonder how prepared I was at that time and if it is fair of me to advocate what I am suggesting here. I did not know the region I was being hired to teach in was going to change as it eventually did. My professors and mentors supported me the best they could for the times. However, the professors I learned with were neither economists nor demographers who could look long into Canada’s future and project the demographic changes that were on the horizon. Globalization and internationalization were not the common words they are today. There were wars and conflicts in 1991 when I graduated, but the war and genocide victims and refugees from large encampments in many African and Middle East nations did not arrive in Canada and in the communities I taught in until the late 1990s and early 2000s.

We have knowledge today we did not possess 25 years ago. I believe our future educators and leaders need to prepare themselves for a continuously evolving career. No longer can teachers simply espouse being life-long learners; they will have to demonstrate what being a life-long learner actually looks like through active and continuous ongoing professional development (Hamm & Cormier, 2014). Continuous learning will be the significant determining factor and is a demographic imperative (Banks et al, 2005) for career survival for teachers and leaders who wish to remain in service in our diverse Canadian communities.

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CHAPTER 4

Hiring for Diversity: The Principal's Role

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ABSTRACT

Despite the presence of diverse groups of educators and statements of intent to diversify the teacher workforce, evidence indicates that this workforce is becoming less diverse. In an attempt to understand how this is occurring, this study examines the teacher hiring process. In particular, it explores the role of perhaps the most influential people in the process: principals. In particular, the study looks at how principals' views on diversity are reflected in their hiring practices. To examine this phenomenon, we employed a mixed method approach that included a survey of principal hiring practices in a particular diverse school district and interviews with ten principals. Findings revealed that principals: value diversity attributes less than other teaching qualities; tend to separate teacher diversity traits from what they see as ideal traits; are skeptical about the value of a diverse workforce; and have to work within recent policies that deplete the potential hiring pools

Keywords: hiring for diversity, hiring teachers, principal's role in hiring teachers

INTRODUCTION

Canada is becoming increasingly diverse. The foreign-born and visible minority¹ populations and those who speak languages other than French or English continue to increase (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2011). This increase, however, has not been accompanied by a similar rise in the employment of foreign-born and visible minority residents and those whose first language is not French or English in the professions (Ryan et. al., 2009). This trend is evident in the teaching profession in many countries around the world (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Picower, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2004). It is also apparent in Canada (Ryan et. al., 2009) where the difference between the proportion of visible minority teachers in the teacher workforce and the proportion of visible minority citizens in the general Canadian population is painfully obvious; it runs from a low of 4.2 percent in the province of Quebec in 2001 to a high of 28.8 percent in Vancouver in 2006. More than this though, this proportion has actually decreased between 2001 and 2006 (Ryan et. al., 2009).

This widening gap between the proportion of visible minority teachers and their white

¹ The Canadian Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." Statistics Canada also uses this term to categorize diversity issues, and since the numbers we cite originate with Statistics Canada, we are bound to the term. It, however, has been criticized by the United Nations and the Canadian Race Relations as "discriminatory" and "racist".

counterparts is puzzling, at least in some respects, because the support for increasing diversity in the teacher workforce is so strong (King, 1993; Dei, 2003; Sleeter & Tao, 2007). Indeed, many educators, policy makers and scholars recognize the value of a diverse teacher workforce and have taken measures to promote it. Support for diversification is evident in current policies and academic writing and research. For example, the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009) requires that, "The board's work force should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented" (Policy and Program Memorandum 119/13, p. 5). This policy and others take their lead from academic literature that supports this diversification. Among other things, it claims that a more diverse teacher workforce can improve the learning habits of racialized² students. Despite claims to the contrary (See for example, Cizek, 1995), this growing body of literature contends that racialized teachers' role modeling can inspire racialized students (Santaro, 2007; Adair, 1984; King & Wilson, 1990; Foster, 1990) and that the former are well positioned to deliver relevant pedagogy to marginalized students (Allard, 2006; Smith, 1989; King, 1993). Another reason for diversification is the idea that everyone has the right to work in professions for which they are qualified. Unfortunately, this right has not been realized in Canada. For example, 70 percent of immigrant professionals, many of whom are racialized, have difficulty finding work in Canada (Galabuzi, 2006).

Some groups of racialized teachers also have difficulty finding teaching jobs in Ontario. One of these groups is internationally educated teachers (IETs). A study commissioned by the Ontario College of Teachers (2006) found that even those who were able to pass the province's licensing requirement had difficulty finding jobs. They are six times more likely to be unemployed in their first year of teaching than their Ontario-trained counterparts, and experience persistent and disproportionately high unemployment rates one year after graduation even in high-demand districts in the GTA. One of the many IETs who participated in the study indicated that despite his experience and qualifications, he noticed an "undeniable preference for non-immigrant teachers over immigrated ones" (p. 28). The report concludes that despite the fact that many of these teachers are highly experienced, they are nevertheless "shut out of their profession". It appears, then, that many IETs experience difficulties when they attempt to get hired. While many of them have managed to acquire qualifications and certifications, they stumble in the next step – the hiring process.

Is it possible that these hiring processes actually work against these diversification efforts? What happens in these processes? How do those involved in the process view issues of diversity? How are their views reflected in their hiring practices? Research tells us little about hiring and diversity in education. The study we describe here attempts to fill this gap by exploring this hiring process. In particular, it focuses on the role of perhaps the most influential of those who are involved – principals – and looks to reveal how their views on diversity are reflected in their hiring practices.

HIRING FOR DIVERSITY

Principals who hire teachers participate in a process that in many ways is established in policy. This is not to say, however, that they don't have some degree of latitude when it comes to

² "Racialized" is the term used to reflect the process that has created disadvantage based on physical attributes. This process creates categories that become socially significant for the purposes of exercising power (Galabuzi, 2012).

making decisions about such things as increasing the diversity of their teaching staffs. Ultimately, though, the kinds of decisions they make in these situations will be associated with the views they have of diversity.

Approaches to Diversity

Both public and private organizations have promoted diversification efforts for a few years now. In business, the case for workforce diversity has stemmed from anticipated improvement in meeting business goals, principally productivity and profitability (Litvin, 2006; Simkins, 2000). Much of the research in diversity in business presumes that the right mix of workers, if obtained, would help an organization reach strategic business goals (Cox, 1993; Larkey, 1996). The few studies on perceptions of diversity indicate a range of views – from seeing diversity as legitimate to believing in the necessity of acquiring access to integration and learning. This paradigm, however, limits the concept of diversity to its most basic form – that of the workforce representing the faces of the general population, while continuing to reflect the values of the dominant group.

In education, scholars have explored views of diversity as expressed in actual practice, in this case the classroom. One of the best known is Sleeter & Grant's (1987; 2006) typology of the range of approaches to teaching. They range from narrow parochial views that emphasize assimilation and assume deficiencies, to a recognition of the need to challenge the structural barriers that prevent meaningful equality. This typology is similar to others in the field (e.g., Banks, 2004). Generally, they range from explicit to implicit devaluing of diversity, to various types of acceptance, to views that recognize the value of and obstacles to meaningful diversity. Sleeter & Grant (1987) and Banks (2004) make the point that educators' views on diversity will influence the way they teach. Views of diversity will also impact how administrators do their work, including hiring.

Research has also explored school administrators' responses to diversity. Lumby (2009), for example, explored leaders' approaches to diversity in two schools. He sorted school leaders' beliefs about diversity into four categories: *indifferent* (diversity is not associated with school outcomes), *entryist* (diversity is a factor in analyzing trends in school outcomes; efforts are made to compensate), and *multicultural* (diversity is central to achieving equity of access and opportunity; efforts are made to improve), and *systemic* (diversity is a factor in all elements of school operation and governance; efforts are made to transform). Even though Lumby (2009) does not highlight teacher hiring specifically, his results suggest that views and approaches to diversity would have an impact on the hiring process.

The Hiring Process

When school administrators are engaged in hiring, arguably the most crucial administrative task for a principal, they generally describe their hiring objective as selecting the best person for the job (Mason & Schroeder, 2010). "Best" emerges from a combination of factors that include the ability to perform the technical and professional requirements of the job, demonstrating past capabilities in teaching, and increasingly, articulating a set of values and beliefs shared by the organization (Braun, Willems, Brown, & Green, 1987). To realize their objectives, principals follow a hiring process similar to that documented in the occupational literature; it generally includes recruitment, screening, selection, and offering the job (Kogan, Wolff, & Russell, 1995).

Teacher recruitment efforts are subject to many of the same factors that affect other labour

market trends related to changes in population. Depending on the size and context of school districts (e.g., sparsely populated, geographically large, rural vs. densely populated, geographically small, urban), teacher demand can fluctuate significantly within political jurisdictions. This has occurred in Ontario. Over the past 10 years, even though the population has increased incrementally, student enrolment has declined by large numbers in many publicly-funded school districts and increased marginally in large suburban districts (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2013). Across many districts, teacher recruitment processes can range from highly centralized for hiring teachers in urban contexts (Levin & Quinn, 2003) to highly de-centralized, especially when hiring new teachers (Lui & Johnson, 2006). Job specificity also impacts teacher recruitment – high demand teaching positions limit the applicant pool; jobs are advertised for a longer period of time, with compromises occasionally made by school administrators in order to fill a position in a timely manner (Liu, 2002). Affluent suburban districts have fewer challenges in recruiting teachers than do rural or inner-city districts (Liu, Rosenstein, Swan, & Khalil, 2007) which, for suburban schools, means the screening and selection process may need to be more competitive; for other districts this is less so. Timing has also been identified as a factor in recruiting teachers (Engel, 2009). School districts may be disadvantaged if their recruitment timelines are later than in neighboring districts, especially in times of high teacher demand and low supply. This disadvantage is magnified when recruiting high demand teachers in less desirable (rural and/or disadvantaged) districts.

Screening is often the next step in teacher hiring (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008) and serves to narrow the potential pool of applicants further (Cable & Gilovich, 1998). A number of screening tools is available to school administrators, each designed to reflect the need to learn about the teacher applicant as well as accounting for the various components of the teacher's work. Screening begins with the required credentials for a position, with additional criteria added at the discretion of the employer and in accordance with relevant labour law. For instance, an employer may screen by years of experience in an effort to estimate an employee's skill level, but may not use age as a screening criterion because it could be used as a means to discriminate against older or younger workers. Screening tools are also known to include work samples, cognitive ability tests (e.g., SAT scores), job knowledge tests, and integrity tests (such as absenteeism records), all believed to help predict future job performance (Ryan & Tippins, 2004). Work portfolios, performance appraisal reports, resumes, and oral and written language proficiency assessments are also used to varying degrees to include or exclude teacher candidates from obtaining an interview.

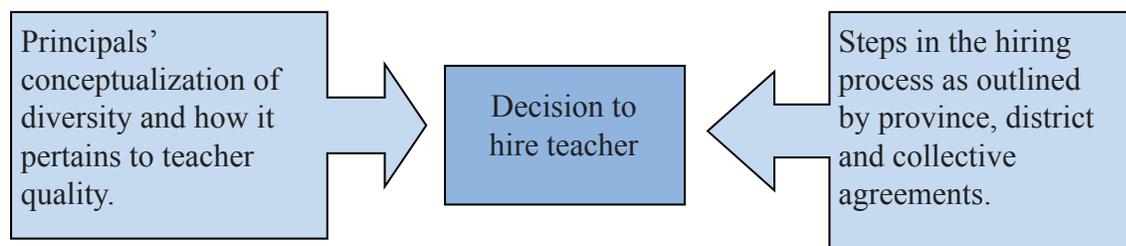
Information gathered in the screening process is weighed largely through a personal interview, certainly the most consistently used, and arguably the most important hiring tool (Kogan, Wolff, & Russell, 1995). Questions persist, however, about whether the screening and interview processes used to select teachers produce the best candidate (Rutledge et al., 2008). Teacher attributes revealed during an interview vary in the degree to which they can predict a teacher's ultimate effectiveness (Cohen-Vogel, 2011), but are also subject to how highly these attributes are valued by the principal conducting the interview. Mason and Schroeder (2010) reviewed a number of key studies on principals' hiring practices and found that while principals claimed that their interview processes sought chiefly to determine a teacher's professional traits (e.g., pedagogy, professional knowledge), analysis revealed that in fact personal attributes, (such as willingness to learn, attitude, and confidence) factored more heavily in the decision ultimately to hire a particular teacher. This finding was consistent across variables such as the principal's gender, type of school, size of school, years in education, and experience as a principal. Such findings support the notion that teacher hiring, while critical, is a highly personal exercise, and as such, suggests that the "best

person for the job” is an equally subjective construct.

The final step in teacher hiring involves the deliberation by interview team members of the candidates interviewed. This team usually consists of the principal and other administrator colleagues. Depending on districts’ policies, teacher colleagues may also participate in these deliberations but their influence varies widely (Liu & Johnston, 2006). The school principal remains the chief gatekeeper for hiring decisions (Rutledge et al, 2008). Deliberations may also be affected by the sense of urgency in hiring, and are often based on intuitive rather than rational decision-making (Mertz, 2010). Once the decision is made, the job is offered to the preferred candidate.

Principals make decisions at various stages of the hiring process. These decisions will be associated with their views of how they want their schools to operate and the various accompanying values. This includes diversity. The way in which they perceive, value, and approach diversity will have an impact on the decisions they make in the hiring process. This process is captured in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Hiring based on principals’ perceptions, values, and approaches to diversity



METHODS

This study employs a mixed-method approach. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) contend that many research questions and combinations of questions are best and most fully answered through mixed research solutions. Creswell & Plano Clark (2007) maintain that such an approach can “offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research (p.9).” Drawing on two sources of data, this study embeds qualitative data from semi-structured interviews into the broader quantitative survey data in an effort to provide context and depth to the survey responses. In the first part of the study, principals in one school district completed a survey about their hiring practices. Interviews with ten principals in the same district were then carried out after the surveys were circulated and analyzed.

The district studied (District A) is a large, suburban, highly diverse community in Ontario, with approximately 150 000 students in 240 schools and a corresponding number of principals. Fifty-five percent of students in the district are visible minorities (StatsCan, 2011). Given the demographics of this district, very few schools were without diverse student populations (e.g., multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-faith, or combinations of these variables). More than this though, approximately 50 new schools had been opened over the past 10 years to accommodate the rapid population growth. As such, it was reasonable to expect that most principals had encountered, either at their current school or a previous one, the phenomenon of hiring teachers for a diverse student community. Moreover, since 2010, District A has hired 1265 teachers to permanent positions (Human Resources, District A), and several hundred teachers to the pool of occasional teachers. This makes this district an ideal one in which to explore diversity and principals’ hiring practices.

In District A, the steps taken by principals when hiring teachers must be in accordance with hiring processes negotiated between the school district, or province, and the organization representing teachers. These processes are described in collective agreements and must be followed in order to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all teachers applying for positions as they become available. Grievance procedures are also outlined in collective agreements in the event that the hiring process has been breached. The process outlines timelines (when jobs can be advertised, where, for how long, and when hiring decisions must be made); data collection (what data a principal can ask an applicant to submit and requisite credentials); screening criteria for obtaining an interview (ranges from no screening, i.e., all applicants are interviewed, to specific number of applicants to be interviewed), and grievance procedures. In addition to conditions outlined in collective agreements, the school district adheres to internal hiring policies in compliance with provincial and federal human rights and labour legislation. Such conditions are in place to ensure an equitable hiring process that identifies provisions for disability accommodation, constitution of hiring panel, language proficiency standards, and opportunities for feedback. Notwithstanding the hiring processes outlined in collective agreements, human resources policies and legislative regulations, principals in District A, as reported in other jurisdictions (Harris, Rutledge, Ingle & Thompson, 2010), are still able to exercise considerable discretion in hiring teachers.

The Survey

All elementary and secondary school principals in District A were invited to complete an online survey about teacher hiring. Items were largely close-ended, asking participants to express degrees of agreement or influence, or rank order pre-listed factors (professional conduct, pedagogical knowledge and skill, effective classroom management, educational background, additional qualifications, experience, ability to collaborate with others, ethno-racial identity, gender, languages spoken and accents used) that may have influenced them while hiring teachers in diverse school contexts. These factors are drawn in part from the work of Harris, Rutledge, Ingle & Thompson (2010), Kersten (2008), MacKenzie (2011), and Engel, Fitch & Huff (in press), and constitute the factors considered most important by principals when making hiring decisions. Additionally, most items allowed for supplementary, open-ended comments if respondents chose to add them. Participants were also asked to provide demographic data about themselves and their school populations.

Fifty-six of 240 principals completed the online survey. Four incomplete surveys were withdrawn from the data set leaving a usable response rate of 22%. The survey responses were analyzed using SPSS v16 to calculate basic frequencies and means for each survey item. Of particular interest were the frequencies for the overall rankings of the importance of teacher traits. Included in the list of teacher traits were dimensions of diversity, namely, race, gender and languages spoken. These frequencies were then cross-tabulated against 3 independent variables (principals' experience, the number of interviews conducted yearly, and the number of prominent ethno-racial groups within the school population) in order to examine the relationship, if any, with principals' rankings of desired teacher traits, particularly the ranking of dimensions of diversity. Principals were also asked to self-identify by gender and ethno-racial group in order to identify possible variation in item responses. Due to lack of variation in self-identification markers (85% female and white-European), no such analyses could be made.

Demographic data were captured on a 4-point scale allowing the lowest two and highest two responses to be clustered together for ease of analysis. Table 1 shows the demographic categories

used in analysis and the percentage (rounded) of respondents per category.

Table 1. Principal Experience and School Diversity

<i>Total Experience</i>	<i>Less (<6 years)</i> 53%	<i>More (6+years)</i> 47%
<i>Range of Experience</i>	1 school only 43%	>1 school 48%
<i>Interview Experience</i>	<30 per year 52%	30+ per year 48%
<i>School Diversity</i>	1 prominent group* 40%	>1 prominent group 59%

* a prominent group was defined as a group comprising at least 20% of the student population

Interviews

In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 respondents who agreed to discuss their experiences in hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds in a one-on-one interview setting. Preference was given to respondents with experience as a principal in more than one school, and with more than 3 years in the position. With the implementation of Ontario Regulation 274/12, and recent changes to district policy that now allow pre-screening of teacher applicants before interviewing, principals with fewer than 3 years in the role may have less hiring experience than colleagues who have been in the role longer. Furthermore, student enrolment growth in the district has plateaued in the past 3 years after a decade of significant increases. Slower enrolment growth has reduced teacher hiring, leaving principals with hiring experience in the “high growth” period (2000-2010) with more opportunity to reflect on the factors influencing their hiring decisions.

Each principal was interviewed using the same semi-structured questions, and their comments were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Employing a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), a number of themes were identified and subsequently coded. The emergent themes were: opportunity and availability, diversity as a stand-alone construct, dissonance, and obstacles to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey reports on a number of elements associated with principals’ hiring practices. These include principals’ hiring preferences, experience, student demographics, and hiring opportunity.

Table 2. Principals’ Hiring Preferences

<i>Teacher Competency</i>	<i>Mean Response /10</i>
<i>Professional Conduct</i>	6.3
<i>Classroom Management Skill</i>	6.2
<i>Pedagogy Knowledge</i>	6.0
<i>Perceived Fit with Staff</i>	5.7
<i>Additional Qualifications</i>	5.4
<i>Educational Background</i>	5.3
<i>Years of Experience</i>	5.2
<i>Ethno-racial Identity</i>	5.2
<i>Languages Spoken/Accents Used</i>	4.8
<i>Gender</i>	4.7

Table 2 indicates that principals consider diversity dimensions to be the least important considerations when hiring. Ethno-racial identity (5.2), languages spoken/accents used (4.8), and gender (4.7) displayed the lowest mean responses of any the characteristics that principals look for in potential teachers. Instead, they looked first and foremost for professional attitude (6.3), classroom management skills (6.2), pedagogical knowledge (6.0), fit with staff (5.7), additional qualifications (5.4), educational background (5.3), and years of experience (5.2).

Principals with more experience, that is, more than 6 years, ranked all three dimensions of diversity higher than their colleagues with less experience on the job. Ethno-racial identification (32% vs. 17%) and gender (32% vs. 13%) were ranked almost twice as high by principals with more experience, whereas languages spoken/accents used was ranked only slightly higher (32 % vs. 25%). These data suggest that dimensions of diversity are considered increasingly important as principals gain experience in the role. Conversely, teacher competencies such as classroom management, years of experience, professional conduct, pedagogical knowledge and educational background were all ranked more important (in many instances, twice as important) by less experienced principals when making hiring decisions.

The number of interviews principals conducted yearly seemed to have little impact on how principals ranked the importance of dimensions of diversity in their hiring decisions. Principals interviewing fewer than 30 teachers per year ranked ethno-racial identity and gender slightly (approximately 10%) higher than principals with more than 30 interviews per year. Conversely, principals conducting many (>30) interviews per year ranked languages spoken/accents used 10% higher than colleagues with fewer interviews annually. It is important to bear in mind that while there seems to be no significant difference in how principals with more or less opportunity to hire teachers rank the importance of diversity, even principals interviewing up to 30 teachers per year are presented with substantial opportunity to weigh the qualities they consider most important when hiring.

Almost half the principals surveyed (47%) who identified only 1 prominent ethno-racial group in their schools (prominent being at least 20% of the student population) ranked teachers’ ethno-racial identity as unimportant (bottom 3 rankings of 10), whereas only 21% of principals considered ethno-racial identity as important (top 3 rankings). The same pattern emerges when principals ranked the importance of languages spoken/accents used when making hiring decisions (42% unimportant; 21% important). In other words, with 20% of the school population representing

a single ethno-racial group, principals seemed uninfluenced by teachers' racial or linguistic diversity when making hiring decisions. It should be noted that forty percent of principals identified a single prominent ethno-racial student group in their school, 68% of which were identified as South Asian; 21% as European; 5% East Asian, and 5% Black African.

In schools with more than one prominent ethno-racial student group, rankings of the importance of teachers' ethno-racial identity were relatively evenly distributed in the top and bottom ranges. Approximately 25% of principals ranked teacher ethnicity as unimportant (bottom 3 rankings), and approximately 28% of principals ranked it as most important (top 3 rankings). In cases where there was 1 or more than one prominent group, principals still ranked teachers' ethno-racial identity as least important when hiring 25 – 47% of the time. Sixty percent of principals stated their student population contained more than 1 prominent ethno-racial student group (>20% of the student population), with South Asian students identified 93% of the time, Black/African students, 68% of the time, East and Southeast Asians 57%, White Europeans 50%, and Middle Eastern students 39% of the time. Whether a school population was described as having one group of diverse students, or several groups, the prominent groups were members of a visible, non-White racialized group. This phenomenon seemed to have had little influence on principals' ranking of the importance of teachers' ethno-racial identity when hiring.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

After the surveys were circulated, gathered and analyzed, 10 principals were interviewed. The interviews provided more depth and detail about the ways in which principals approach diversity in hiring processes. The interview data fell into four themes: opportunity and availability, diversity as a stand-alone construct, dissonance, and getting around obstacles. These data clarify how these principals understand diversity and how it intersects with their hiring decision-making.

Opportunity and Availability

Most of the principals interviewed made reference at some point to impact of the availability of teachers from diverse backgrounds on opportunities to hire them. As student enrolment declines in many Ontario districts (Ministry of Finance, 2013), opportunity to hire a more diverse staff becomes an increasing challenge. The district studied here, however, has experienced increases in student enrolment for many years. In the case of Doreen, she conducted approximately 600 interviews for 11 new positions when opening a new school. Ken's experience, on the other hand, is the opposite of Doreen's. Ken is principal of a small school that once served a largely rural population. Local residential development is causing an influx of South Asian students into a community with predominantly European roots. The overall student population, however, is declining, and Ken has had very little opportunity to recruit new teachers. He says that:

In the past year, we've lost 5 staff due to smaller numbers in classrooms but our current make up out of the 15 or so teachers we have – all but 1 are White women in their late 40s/early 50s, and 1 man. We did have some younger staff. Everybody's White but the ones we lost were the younger ones who had the lowest seniority. So in terms of the make-up of staff, I haven't had a lot of opportunity to increase or do anything in terms of diversity other than hire a teaching assistant.

Some principals perceived that Regulation 274/12 adversely affected the opportunity to

hire teachers from diverse backgrounds. Because the regulation requires that principals hire from only the 5 most senior occasional teacher applicants per position, there is no guarantee that teachers from diverse backgrounds would be included. In fact, most participants say that it is rare that they get the opportunity to increase their staff diversity in this way. As Leo put it, “I can’t hire [long-term occasional teachers] for the diversity of my school other than through luck” – luck that he has the opportunity to advertise teaching positions, and luck that teachers from diverse backgrounds apply for them.

Principals repeatedly expressed teacher availability as a concern in their experiences hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. Two principals in particular expressed frustration in the lack of teacher applicants. This happens in part due to the hiring processes used in the District where positions are advertised continuously to permanent teachers until filled. This creates a domino effect – new openings are created when first-advertised positions are filled. There is no obligation on the part of teachers to apply to one school over another, and principals are not permitted to recruit applicants overtly. This domino effect generally continues until mid-June, when remaining vacant positions are either advertised externally to teachers outside of the district, or are temporarily filled with long-term occasional positions. It is often not until mid-September when more accurate enrolment numbers are known, and staff numbers adjusted accordingly. Jules and Karl indicated that by mid-June of last year, they had several vacant positions with no teacher applicants for the past two successive postings. At this point, vacant positions are filled by long-term occasional teachers, a process now governed by Regulation 274/12, which requires applicant seniority with the District as the primary hiring criterion.

Diversity as a Stand-Alone Concept

Several principals expressed agreement with the need to hire teachers who represent and understand the community they serve. But while they may consider teacher diversity to be an asset, particularly if the teacher’s difference reflects the students’ difference (e.g., ethno-racial identify, or languages spoken), it is only considered an asset if the teacher’s traits and competencies are of high caliber and already worthy of hire. In this sense, diversity was described as an additional feature, and would only influence a hiring decision if other professional competencies were intact, but would not be considered if the teacher’s skills were considered substandard in any way. For instance, when asked how diversity factors into hiring decisions, Barb states, “When you’re weighing diversity versus competency and skill set, and trying to put the [teacher] team together, that becomes a pretty big question”. In this case, Barb clearly separates diversity from her conception of teacher quality.

Anna’s description further distances diversity traits and teacher competencies. Anna advocated for hiring processes that strip away any identifying information about candidates until the interview. She believes that screening tools should be “transparent, and criteria-based. . . . diversity does not, however, factor into these posted criteria. . . . If you have two people who are absolutely equal, and then the next step is that one of them can reflect the community as well, that’s value added. But if you’re hiring to reflect the community and they’re not the best teacher, then I think you’ve made a mistake, and I’ve seen that happen.” Here, Anna conceptualizes teacher quality as identity-free; an individual’s ethnicity, race, religion, gender, culture or sexual identity is not central to what a highly competent teacher is.

Two notions surface from participants’ views of where diversity fits. First, the definition of the best person for the job can clearly exist outside the traits that often describe diversity. Second,

dimensions of diversity can constitute reasons to exclude a teacher being hired. Dimensions such as gender or languages spoken would never override shortfalls in teacher quality and competence as determined through an interview and follow-up references. By comparison, majority teachers are judged only by the competencies they demonstrate during an interview, thereby setting up a type of double standard for evaluating teacher quality. When competing for jobs, teachers from diverse backgrounds must first reach the minimum threshold of “excellence” based on presumably identity-neutral traits such as professionalism and pedagogical knowledge, and then surpass that threshold by means of value-added traits such as ethno-racial or linguistic similarity to the student population, before being considered viable candidates.

Dissonance

Dissonance emerged as a theme in the data. While some principals were clear in their ‘quality first, diversity second’ stance on hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds, all principals believed in the advantages for students in seeing themselves represented by the adults in the school. They saw value in recruiting teachers who speak the native languages of students, and who provide gender and racial role models. Charles, for example, a secondary principal, noted that having teachers whose ethno-cultural background represents that of students helped students navigate social situations where one group’s ethno-cultural beliefs interface with traditional, Canadian school traditions, such as school dances. He says, “When you hired new teachers, you could immediately see that if someone wore a hijab, they [students] would migrate naturally to someone else [a teacher] wearing a hijab”.

A sense of dissonance emerges, however, as principals recount numerous experiences that acknowledge the importance of having a diverse teaching staff. When initially asked about the validity of claims that support hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds, principals readily agreed with one or more of such claims. Several principals who were interviewed, however, added reservations to their agreement. Deb, for example, says that:

I agree with the second language claim, but we also have interpreters so there are ways around that. I find it difficult that these claims are so strongly held when the mechanisms/processes to make it happen aren’t in place, and may never be. They’ll just remain claims.

While Deb agrees with the claims about the value of having second language speakers on staff, she also appears to doubt the claim that students will profit from their presence. Anna also appears to display a degree of skepticism about the value of a diverse staff. She says, “I agree with the claims as they support extra-curricular involvement at the school, but don’t think kids do any better academically with ‘value-added’ diversity”. She believes that having teachers who represent student identities may help with getting them involved in extracurricular activities, but she also feels that this diversity will not help students academically.

Getting Around Obstacles

Principals spoke of getting around some of the obstacles – timing issues, regulations, and resistance – they encountered in their attempts to hire a diverse staff. One principal’s one-word answer underscored the multi-faceted nature of diversifying teachers at his school: “strategically”. In this case, the principal faced covert resistance to previous efforts to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds. The resistance was largely community-based but quietly supported by teachers in a school with only very recent changes to student demographics after a long history of a white,

Anglo-Canadian, culture. Ken is sensitive to the risk of hiring a teacher into an unwelcoming staff and community, and has had to weigh the potential disadvantages for the teacher against his beliefs that students would benefit from such a change:

If I wanted to make a positive impact and have that person accepted on staff, I would probably target the intermediate [grades 7 and 8] area. I think there's a hierarchy in the school: the higher the grade level you teach, the more authority you have. I think that would lend authority to the person [new teacher] and give them opportunities to organize things like graduation that are community-wide, where parents have a lot of contact and can see them as a positive representative of the school.

One principal believed that “the only way is to blatantly discriminate in favour of diverse groups”. However, in order that teachers are hired to reflect students and the community, it is important to know more information about community identities. Similarly, knowing teacher identity/ies is critical, but difficult to ascertain under current hiring conditions. To compensate, Leo states, “I've become more curious about finding out about the cultural groups that I'm not part of. I ask lots of questions. I don't always get answers I understand, but at least I ask. Otherwise, I'm guessing most of the time”.

Several other principals relied on some type of unofficial applicant screening in an attempt to interview diverse applicants. In the absence of teacher self-identification, using applicants' names is one, albeit unreliable, strategy to screen for ethno-racial or even gender identity, in an attempt to diversify the list of applicants to be interviewed. Jacob stated:

It's hard. You can't really tell by a name, and that may be all you have to go on from paperwork. A name won't tell you who's going to cross the threshold. In the end, it's about trying to find the person on paper that you think you'd like to engage in conversation and see where it leads.

Others relied on scanning resumés for information teachers highlighted in their applications. Experience working with diverse student populations, and participation in groups and events that are identity-positive (e.g., gay-straight alliances, Asian Heritage, Black History, Franco-Ontarian celebrations) may indicate an accepting mindset and the capacity to appreciate difference. As Jacob said, “if you have those [qualities], it may not matter what a teacher's identity is anyway”. That said, Jules concluded that simply reviewing resumes for clues is:

... a start, but a poor start. It's a very tough thing to do without talking to the candidate. So you screen to interview 5 [applicants], but the screening tool is poor, then you may be interviewing folks that are not what you wanted, and missing folks that were victims of a poor tool. And to hire for diversity, you really have to be clear what you want, what the school needs, and why.

DISCUSSION

This study explored how principals' views about diversity shape their hiring practices. To accomplish this, principals identified the points at which the dimensions of a teacher's diversity, in this case, their race/ethnicity, gender, and linguistic diversity, became strong factors when considering whom to hire. Using Lumby's (2009) categories of understanding diversity, principals in this study would appear to fall somewhere between Entryist and Multicultural, middle ground

in the range of conceptual understandings of diversity. Diversity described as Entryist represents school contexts where diversity is used as a factor in analyzing student outcomes and efforts are made to compensate for diverse-group disadvantage. A Multicultural view of diversity reflects contexts where the reduction of diverse-group differences is central to school improvement efforts. Principals in this study sought to increase the representation of traditionally unrepresented groups in the teaching staff, saw differences among individuals as irrelevant, minimized individual differences, and varied in their attention to the effects of culture. In this study, principals generally believed that differences between teachers were irrelevant in determining teacher competence. In several instances, principals looked first for teacher qualities that they viewed as “diversity-neutral” (i.e., those traits that are unrelated to a teacher’s racial, gender, or linguistic identity) and the first priority when determining teacher’s overall competence. This notion was repeatedly expressed as “hiring the best person for the job”. Among candidates of equal caliber, principals then considered “value-added” differences such as race, gender, or the languages they spoke.

The consistency of principal responses in the survey reflected the homogeneity of principals’ values and practices. Regardless of their experience as a principal, the number of interviews they normally conduct, or even the diversity of their school community, principals consistently ranked diversity as less important than other teacher traits when making hiring decisions. While admitting their hiring decisions were largely unaffected by teacher diversity, principals strongly agreed, ironically, with the claims that a diverse teacher workforce is important – the potential advantage resting with diverse teachers who first meet the “quality” threshold principals use to judge the best person for the job. Principals also pay wide-ranging degrees of attention to culture and discourse (See also Lumby, 2009, p. 443). While one in five survey respondents disagreed with the intent of PPM 119/13 to increase workforce representation of diverse groups (presumably, believing little attention should be paid to the policy), most principals who were interviewed expressed intellectual dissonance among their desire to hire more teachers of difference, moral conflict in their obligation to do so, and frustration negotiating policies and procedures that mitigate against these aims.

This generalized understanding puts principals in this study on or near the crux between leading for diversity and leading with diversity where the key difference lies with the notion of expanding diversity that triggers a set of actions rather than inspiring a habit of mind (Lumby, 2006). In some sense, this understanding of diversity should be expected. Hoffman (1997), Blackmore (2006), Lumby (2006) and Jonsen, Maznevski and Schneider (2011) have criticized the diversity research in education for straying from “the possibilities of delivering its [diversity’s] promise of more inclusive and equitable schooling” (Blackmore, 2006, p.182) and diverting towards “a managerialist agenda which impels a focus on outputs similar to a commercial approach” (Simkins, 2000, in Lumby, 2006, p.151). It may not be surprising that when principals understood teacher diversity as a response to a political climate rather than a call for more equitable school outcomes for students, teacher diversity factored only modestly into their overall hiring schema. Moreover, when the political discourse, embodied in the *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009*, and PPM119/13, is itself limited to what Lumby would describe as narrower definitions that focus on those characteristics which are most likely to disadvantage an individual – ethnicity/race, gender, disability, and age (2006, p.152) – one can more readily see how principals’ conceptualization of diversity is consistently expressed using terms such as “value added”, “under-represented”, “diverse communities”, “reverse discrimination”, and “other languages”. Equally unsurprising is how principals have consistently ranked dimensions of teacher difference lower in importance than teacher qualities such as professional conduct, pedagogical knowledge, and even classroom

management skill. It follows, then, that several principals interviewed were uncertain about their personal, or the district's, vision for increasing teacher diversity.

The reasons that principals did not hire more diversified staffs went beyond their ambivalent, contradictory, and cautious approaches to hiring a diverse staff. Principals also faced a number of obstacles beyond their control. These included timing of the hiring process, teacher availability, policy restrictions, and lack of information.

The timing of teacher recruitment processes remains a persistent and significant hurdle for principals. Due to the cyclical nature of the academic year, principals aim to have all teachers in classrooms by the beginning of the cycle - usually September - but can only begin this process once other administrative decisions, often beyond their control, are made. In some schools final hiring does not occur until after the school year begins (Engel, 2009). In the case of District A, preliminary budget and staffing decisions begin in February but are not finalized until mid-September, increasing pressure on principals to fill remaining vacant positions quickly once the school year has begun. Under such pressures, it is possible that principals are inclined to rely on the outcomes of an intuitive decision-making process rather than those resulting from the more time-intensive analytical approach to hiring that includes the use of standard interview questions, scoring rubrics, multiple reference calls, etc. Intuitive decision-making can lead principals to favour applicants who share similarities, including perspectives and values borne of cultural, racial, linguistic, religious, and other identity markers (Mertz, 2010).

Lastly, policies at various levels influence who gets hired. In Ontario, Regulation 274/12, for example, specifically requires that some groups be considered first for certain jobs. While the discriminating criterion in Reg. 274/12 is seniority (Sec. 6.3), and not race, gender or religion, its intent is to correct hiring practices claimed to be relationship-based (Regulation 274/12: Final Report, 2014, p.12) that over time left many occasional teachers, often foreign-trained and from diverse backgrounds, unable to access full-time employment despite their years of experience, even during a years-long period of employment growth from 2000 – 2010 (OCT, 2010, p. 37). This policy, too, drew considerable criticism by principals in the present study and has been the subject of concern by a variety of stakeholders (Ontario Principals' Council, People for Merit-based Teacher Hiring, student teacher unions, members of the provincial legislature, and others) so much so that the current Minister of Education undertook a review of the impact of the regulation (letter from the Minister to Council of Directors of Education, October 2013).

Made public in November 2014, the review (Ungerleider & Baumann, 2014) included a number of references to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. For example, it indicated that many school districts voiced strong concern about their loss of autonomy in determining hiring practices; administrators were reluctant to hire teachers who had worked as occasional teachers for many years; some districts discovered means to bypass stipulations of the Regulation; and many boards had not previously used a step-wise approach to teacher hiring that included occasional teaching as the default first step. In short, many districts questioned the relevance of the changes brought about through the Regulation, which suggests that they preferred the current status quo processes, and by extension, endorsed the slow progress towards teacher diversification. Ultimately, the impact of various policy directives influencing hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds will be borne out over time, but complicated by the current lack of demographic data about the teacher diversity that would facilitate monitoring such changes.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this present study shed light on the seeming inability to diversify the teacher workforce. It illustrates that there are a number of issues in the hiring process itself. Among other issues, principals value diversity attributes less than other attributes; they tend to separate teacher diversity traits from what they see as ideal traits; they are skeptical about the value of a diverse workforce; and recent policies and issues with the hiring process deplete the potential hiring pools. One of the things that needs to happen if things are to change is for those concerned to initiate a more meaningful dialogue on these diversification issues. As one of the principals, Leo, remarked during his interview, “This conversation about hiring for diversity needs to come out of the closet”. His comments reflect the range of opinions prompted by the idea of teacher diversity, and of the anticipated discomfort those conversations, like others in the past about various dimensions of diversity, may engender. While this study elicited a similar range of opinions and perspectives among participant principals, their voices largely represent those of the white, Anglo-Canadian majority, and not those of their racialized colleagues. Further efforts to surface those voices will add to the ongoing debate of the need to diversify the teacher workforce. However, if principals’ tendency is to hire teachers who share their values and beliefs about teaching, and the principal workforce itself lacks diversity, then a strategy to consider is the diversification of those in leadership roles in education. This, too, may require further political persuasion, but more importantly, ongoing, meaningful dialogue about the inherent relationship between diversity and power.

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CHAPTER 5

Teacher Candidates' Experiences In Non-Traditional Practicum Placements: Developing Dimensions For Innovative Work-Integrated Learning Models

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the findings of inter-related studies assessing the benefits and challenges of innovative practicum models offered by a concurrent education program of a small Ontario university. Implications of non-traditional experiences such as service learning, international, and mentorship placements for teacher development are explored. The perceptions of participating teacher candidates indicate positive attitudes and appreciation for these opportunities in spite of some challenges. The resulting findings are aligned with a framework for developing effective work-integrated learning placements. It is recommended that future teacher education programs include diverse practicum experiences, addressing relevant dimensions, in order that graduates will have the skills and attitudes expected of a range of employers, and that they will be prepared to address the complexities of a changing society.

Keywords: non-traditional practicum experiences, transfer of teaching skills, international practicum, mentoring, community service placements, work-integrated learning framework

INTRODUCTION

In the future, candidates for employment positions related to teaching and learning may be expected to describe knowledge and skills attained through practicum experiences in diverse non-traditional placements. Research has shown that transferability of teaching skills into environments outside of the traditional school classroom setting are important for application and consolidation of effective pedagogical approaches (Falkenberg & Smits, 2010). In the new enhanced teacher education program of Ontario, to fulfill the requirements of Regulation 347/02 and Regulation 184/97 (Ontario College of Teachers, 1996, 2014), teacher candidates are required to complete a minimum of eighty days in practicum placements utilizing the Ontario Curriculum with a certified, experienced teacher, in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). In addition to these traditional placements, it would be beneficial for teacher candidates to demonstrate learning outcomes and transfer their teaching skills successfully in non-traditional education-related work settings. A summary of three studies, related to alternative/community service, international practicum, and mentorship experiences, yields compelling evidence that teacher candidates in pre-service teacher education programs appreciate opportunities for innovative placements in diverse

learning environments (Cantalini-Williams, Cooper, Grierson, Maynes, Rich, Tessaro, Brewer, Tedesco, Wideman-Johnston, 2014). These non-traditional experiences, if structured to address essential dimensions of work-integrated learning, can become recognized as valid, both in meeting graduate outcomes for teacher education programs (Ontario Association of Deans of Education, 2013) and in facilitating employment opportunities for a range of education-related positions.

This chapter will describe the results of inter-related studies, funded by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), conducted with teacher candidates participating in a concurrent education program, in a small Ontario university, providing diverse and innovative models of practicum. The specific models to be studied include alternative/service learning placements and placements in international schools. In addition, the findings of an analysis of a peer mentorship model will be reported as another non-traditional practicum experience. In the summary report of these studies (Cantalini-Williams et al. 2014), the benefits and challenges of the various models were compared to an established work-integrated framework (Cooper, Orrell & Bowden, 2010). The work-integrated framework by Cooper et al. (2010) formed the basis of a new framework for work-integrated learning experiences, including the dimensions of Curriculum, Assessment, Networking, Workplace, Integration, Learning, and Logistics (CANWILL). This CANWILL Framework will be described and postulated for further study and exploration. The dimensions of the new framework could be used as a basis for policy-makers and practitioners to ensure that work-integrated experiences in various professional programs meet pertinent specific criteria in their development and implementation. These same dimensions could be foundational for host agencies and future employers as they discern applicant suitability and teacher candidates' learning resulting from immersion in non-traditional work-place settings.

The first innovative placement that was assessed in the HEQCO-funded research project was the implementation of an alternative/service learning placement. This type of practicum was intended to supplement the traditional classroom setting placements and provide an opportunity to increase teacher candidates' awareness of community agencies and enhance the transferability of teaching skills (Maynes, Cantalini-Williams, & Tedesco, 2014). The alternative/service learning placement was offered in slightly different formats at two campuses of the same university and was based on initial positive results of the first phase of implementation (Maynes, Hatt & Wideman, 2013). The placements were self-selected by the teacher candidate using a set of criteria provided by the university such as applicability of teaching skills, safety of site, availability of supervisor, and facilitation of related learning outcomes. Each proposed placement was initially approved by staff at the university, with limited contact after approval was granted. In this model, the partnering host agency designated a supervisor of the teacher candidate; the supervisor provided a comprehensive assessment at the end of the 120-hour placement. On one campus, there was flexibility in completing the placement over a period of time allowing for greater choices of placements in agencies such as libraries, hospitals, museums, camps and recreational facilities. It was not necessary that the supervisor was a teacher, but it was expected that the teacher candidate had extensive opportunities to apply pedagogical theory and curriculum knowledge into their practice in the alternative setting.

This study collected the perceptions of teacher candidates through an online survey completing both rating scales and open-ended questions. The resulting findings and themes indicated that teacher candidates significantly valued the non-traditional placement outside of the school setting increasing opportunities to: understand agency functions; be aware of employment options; connect theory to practice; improve critical thinking and problem-solving abilities; develop in-depth exposure to resources available in the community; engage with diverse community agencies; develop social values; and prepare for various life challenges within the community. Results

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supported previous studies (Woloshyn, Chalmers & Bosacki, 2005) indicating that alternative/service learning placements that allowed for direct usage and transferability of teaching skills were perceived by teacher candidates to promote professional growth and development optimally. Quotes such as those included below from alternative/service learning participants are a sample of the findings from the study by Maynes et al. (2014).

I became aware of all of the services that child/family services offer for individuals under the age of 18. As a practicing teacher this is imperative knowledge that I will now be aware of and know of these programs that are out there in the community. Prior to this placement I had no idea.

It allows you to experience other job opportunities that you can do when we have graduated; seeing how you can work somewhere else other than in a classroom with a teaching degree.

This program enabled me to develop new skills and enhance the ones I already had... to apply in-class knowledge in real life situations, which resulted in me gaining a better understanding of the taught materials. We have the skill set that many organizations require (planning, organization, responsibility, public speaking skills, collaboration, and the like) and it is nice to feel like we are providing these services to an organization that really needs it... [this] will allow them [new concurrent students] to continue with studies in the program, rather than quitting or switching programs.

I would never have had the opportunity to experience this role if I had not had this placement. It has changed my career scope and direction.

Participants reported that there were some challenges related to service learning such as the paradigm shift needed to understand the value of an alternative practicum in non-teaching contexts and the timing/structure of the practicum within a concurrent education program (Maynes et al., 2014). Possibly, if a specific course was offered in the teacher education program related to alternative/service learning placements, there may have been greater understanding of roles and expectations. The dimensions of the alternative service/learning placement that were most evident were curriculum of the workplace and learning of diverse viewpoints. Assessment by the supervisor and self-reflection tools were appreciated by the teacher candidates. The logistics and integration of theory and practice were dimensions that required further enhancement. Overall, there is ample evidence that participants perceived that the alternative/ service learning placements fostered their development as professionals, enhanced their teaching skills, and provided an awareness of community agencies related to education. These findings support the provision of an alternative practicum in teacher education programs, if participants are fully cognizant of the purpose, learning, and logistics involved in such a non-traditional placement.

A second study funded by HEQCO, conducted on the same concurrent education program, of the regional campus, explored the benefits and challenges of international placements that allowed for three weeks of teaching abroad in either Kenya or Italy (Tessaro, Brewer, & Cantalini-Williams, 2014). This model of international teaching in a pre-service program was facilitated by faculty members accompanying the groups of teacher candidates in classrooms, teaching English to students in either Kenyan or Italian schools. In the concurrent education program studied, teacher candidates apply for the opportunity to engage in this work-integrated learning experience and fully fund their expenses. It is interesting to note that annually, for over ten years, 30-35 percent of eligible teacher candidates on the regional campus apply to participate in this international practicum. In an initial study conducted with the first cohorts of teacher candidates travelling to

Italy (Cantalini-Williams & Tessaro, 2011), participants reported that they had experienced benefits such as: **Resilience** and resourcefulness, **Employment options**, **Awareness of differing school systems** and **Linguistic challenges**. The results can be described as REAL benefits, thus supporting the value of the international practicum experience for aspiring teachers. Findings were based on an analysis of participant responses and journal entries. The initial study of teacher candidates travelling to Italy (Cantalini-Williams & Tessaro, 2011) revealed the following quotes:

It was a once in a lifetime experience getting to see what life is like in another culture and getting to see how the school system was similar and different to what we are entering as teachers.

Some of the benefits were seeing the different aspects and viewpoints of another culture's education system. Being exposed to these differences has expanded my own understanding of the world that we live in. Experiencing the Italian culture will also make me a more well-rounded, tolerant and worldly individual, both in everyday life and in the classroom.

I think my new learning in the international experience was rapid but long-lasting. We needed to retain every new word and piece of information, but it was a wonderful experience to stress the importance of flexibility and openness in the classroom. I think that I learned just as much (if not more!) from my students than the information I taught them.

I decided to participate in an international placement so that I would have first-hand experience in education systems other than Ontario. I am considering teaching abroad, and this was an excellent opportunity to try teaching in a different environment. I feel that I now can picture myself teaching abroad. This experience has left me wanting more...

I would definitely now want to teach internationally after this experience.

In the future I fully anticipate participating in some sort of international employment opportunity. As a result this placement was an excellent opportunity and learning experience.

In the follow-up study (Tessaro et al., 2014), participants of the international experience in either Italy or Kenya were asked to complete three different components: a summary of their reflection journal; participation in a focus group; and completion of an individual interview. The results of the analysis of data collected yielded strong overarching themes of: professional growth, cultural and community connectedness, awareness of opportunities, and practical considerations. The experiences enhanced candidates' awareness of non-traditional employment opportunities related to teaching abroad and they reported the following:

I wanted to see the education – how theirs was compared to ours – just because maybe that would be an opportunity for me once I graduate, to go overseas. To see what it was like, it was a lot different than our education system, that's for sure.

Also, participating teacher candidates described an awareness of the teaching and learning strategies used in other cultures.

I think when you go into another culture you can't impose your own cultural standards into their structures; you just kind of have to be flexible and learn and adopt their ways.

Challenges reported with the international practicum placement model included pre-trip misconceptions regarding the actual experience, as well as the timing and costs involved for travel abroad. Ideally, a related course, embedded in the teacher education program, would have addressed

expectations and teaching strategies for international teaching. Overall, participants perceived the international experiences to be life changing, providing valuable skills and renewed awareness of global perspectives. Long-term studies of persisting effects of the international practicum and its impact on employability have indicated that even short practicum experiences abroad have lasting effects on participants (Bryan & Sprague, 1997; Clement & Otlaw, 2002; Cushner, 2007; Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007). Given the interest of graduates to teach abroad before entering the ethnically diverse schools of Canada and the benefits of learning about differing educational systems, it seems important that international teaching experiences and related coursework be provided as options in pre-service teacher education programs to heighten cultural sensitivities and understanding, in addition to providing teaching opportunities abroad. In relation to dimensions of work-integrated learning, it appears that the benefits of the international experience were directly related to the context and the support/assessment feedback offered by faculty facilitators. The challenges were due to the lack of a related curriculum course in pre-service, the timing of the experience offering little opportunity for integration, and the logistics of costs associated with the experience.

In addition to the alternative/service learning and international practicum placements, the same concurrent education program introduced another innovation termed the 'peer mentorship practicum model'. This model was implemented within traditional public school classroom settings. Previous research had attested to the value of cooperation within a traditional practicum, but had not explored the concept of novice and mentor roles (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Gardiner & Robinson, 2009). The peer mentorship model entailed a novice first year teacher candidate being paired with a more experienced second/third year teacher candidate in a practicum with an associate teacher supervising the mentorship pair. This model allowed for transfer of knowledge and collaborative inquiry between the mentor and novice. The mentorship model was studied by a group of faculty members in both the pilot study phase (Grierson, Cantalini-Williams, Wideman-Johnston, & Tedesco, 2011) and in the subsequent three-year implementation stage (Grierson, Wideman-Johnston, Tedesco, Brewer, & Cantalini-Williams, 2014). Both studies indicated that teacher candidate participants initially were ambivalent about the model, especially mentors, but with increased involvement and experience in cycling through roles over two years, the teacher candidates came to appreciate the opportunities to utilize and consolidate their knowledge and skills in a 'team teaching' situation. The second study by Grierson et al. (2014), funded by HEQCO, included a long-term analysis of teacher candidates' perceptions in both the novice and mentor roles. The pre-survey and post-survey results showed increases in perceptions towards mentorship after positive experiences in the classroom. Collaboration in lesson planning, assessment, team teaching, education-related inquiries, and professional development was perceived to provide beneficial support to both novices and mentors.

In open-ended post-survey responses in the Grierson et al. study (2014), novice teacher candidates participating in the mentorship model described their experiences very positively as they appreciated the support of the mentor, opportunities for growth, and collaboration. Novice teacher candidates especially liked the chance to observe their mentor plan and teach lessons effectively. They felt less inhibited to ask questions of their mentors than they might have if they only had associate teachers as resources. The mentors also derived benefits from the mentorship model as they responded favourably to the survey questions, commenting on the consolidation that took place when they had to explain teaching strategies to their novice partners. They felt that mentors were given the opportunity to engage in teaching leadership roles and also to also learn from their novice partners. Overall, in the study by Grierson et al. (2014), mentorship pairings in

the same classroom believed that their partnerships encouraged cooperation and teamwork.

Participants reported some challenges with the mentorship model such as the need for: peer compatibility; clarity of roles; and sharing of teaching time. Perhaps if coursework and processes had more closely addressed these issues, even greater benefits would have been derived for all stakeholders. In summary, the peer mentorship model is a very suitable practicum innovation for teacher education programs that extend for at least two years to afford the opportunity for increased inquiry, encouragement, support, and consolidation of pedagogical skills among teacher candidates. The traditional paradigm of a single teacher in a classroom is shifted and future teachers begin to see the benefits of working collaboratively with colleagues both in planning and implementing learning activities. These are skills that employers are known to seek in Bachelor of Education graduates; thus, teacher candidates should be provided with these co-teaching opportunities in both traditional and non-traditional settings.

A Framework for Work-Integrated Learning in Teacher Education

In order to analyze the findings of benefits and challenges across the three studies of innovative practicum models described in this chapter, the related summary report (Cantalini-Williams et al., 2014) used the Cooper et al. (2010) framework for work-integrated learning experiences including the seven dimensions of: Purpose, Context, Curriculum, Integration, Partnerships, Support and Learning. These seven dimensions were very useful to compare and contrast findings among the three studies, yet, some limitations to the framework have now become evident. From the present analysis of the innovative teacher education practicum models, it has been deduced that work-integrated learning experiences should address some of the same dimensions as outlined by Cooper et al (2010), yet there are some dimensions that could be clustered and others that should be added for greater clarity.

Of the Cooper et al. (2010) framework, the dimensions of Curriculum, Integration, and Learning should be retained as these dimensions were commented on by participating teacher candidates. It is suggested that the term ‘Workplace’ replace the term ‘Context’ since it is more specific and that the new term ‘Networking’ can encompass both the Cooper et al. (2010) dimensions of Partnerships and Support. From the findings of numerous studies related to non-traditional practicum placements, it can be concluded that two new dimensions should be included in a work-integrated framework, namely, Assessment and Logistics. Teacher candidates often reported the importance of assessing their practice in self and peer reflections. The more formal forms of feedback received from the associate teacher, site supervisor, or faculty advisor were critical to enhanced accountability and increased learning. The second new dimension of ‘Logistics’ is being added since many teacher candidates reported issues with timing, structure, location, and cost of the placements. When non-traditional placements are offered to teacher candidates, these logistical considerations should be included in the development and implementation phases.

CANWILL Work-Integrated Framework

Therefore, in the present chapter, the new dimensions postulated for Work-Integrated Learning include: Curriculum, Assessment, Networking, Workplace, Integration, Learning and Logistics, forming the acronym CANWILL.

The following table (Table 1) outlines each of these dimensions and provides descriptors for the guiding criteria.

Table 1. The CANWILL framework

Dimension	Description
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit functional and theoretical knowledge in coursework • Alignment of learning outcomes with assessment • Inclusion of workplace curriculum • Intended outcomes for all stakeholder groups • Clearly articulated expectations of roles • Coursework curriculum aligned with workplace curriculum
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal and formal assessments • Alignment with learning outcomes • Ongoing and authentic means of assessment • Self, peer and supervisor assessments • Varied opportunities for reflection and next steps
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicum designed with multiple partners • Understanding the culture of the workplace • Building relationships and collaborations • Forming bridges between the institution and the workplace • Professional networks and informal mentorships • Specific support for partnerships on an institutional level • Multimodal communications while in workplace
Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of settings • Potential employment options • Represents a community of practice • Procured by student application process or by institution • Range from paid positions, internships to volunteer • Safe, appropriate working conditions • Clear roles and job descriptions
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic work experiences for learning • Coursework related to the content/curriculum of the work place • A two-way application of theory and practice • Opportunity for dialogue, reflection, and tutorials • An inquiry stance for all participants
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and assessed learning outcomes • Experiential and situated learning outcomes • Transformative process that leads to growth • Understanding of theory and personal/professional identity • Opportunities for observation, review, and reflection • Demonstrated learning through workplace activities • Coursework enhances workplace learning
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing, structure, and cost considerations • Training for the host agency and 'supervisors' • Transportation and accessibility of workplace • Support of stakeholders in varied contexts • Clear and purposful communications with participants • Practical support for guidelines, forms, remuneration

CONCLUSIONS

By following the CANWILL framework in developing future practicum models, teacher education, and other professional preparation programs may address the criteria found to be necessary for successful implementation as reported by participating teacher candidates in three different practicum models. The dimensions of Curriculum, Assessment, Networking, Work-Place, Integration, Learning, and Logistics are not hierarchical, have some overlap and are equally important. Policies, procedures, and processes are to be crafted carefully to reflect the CANWILL dimensions, as deemed appropriate to the context. It is especially necessary that coursework and learning outcomes be embedded in the teacher education program to address the non-traditional practicum placements. With attention to the seven dimensions, there will be greater probability of success and benefits not only for teacher candidates, but also for other stakeholders such as participating faculty members, community partners/supervisors, associate teachers and ultimately, the learners that are served.

Limitations of the studies described in the summary report (Cantalini-Williams et al., 2014) include the sampling of only a specific population of teacher candidates. It would be interesting to examine if other stakeholder groups such as associate teachers, site supervisors, and administrators also perceive the same benefits and challenges of alternative and innovative practicum placements. In addition, long-term results were studied in the mentorship model, but were not examined in the other practicum models. Effects over time might be found to be attenuated or perhaps sustained for participating teacher candidates.

Research findings from the aforementioned studies indicate that teacher candidates perceive value in peer mentorship, alternative/service learning, and international teaching experiences (Cantalini-Williams et al, 2014). It is widely accepted that work-integrated learning experiences enhance: communication skills; cultural and global literacy, and professional/workplace literacy (Cooper et al., 2010). In addition, learning outcomes for teacher education programs in Ontario include such outcomes as: “participates effectively in a variety of educational settings (e.g., school, university, community, formal/informal, traditional/non-traditional, local/global” (Ontario Association of Deans of Education, 2013). Lastly, employers are known to seek such competencies, skills and attitudes as: teambuilding, flexibility, cultural sensitivity, resilience, and problem-solving (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). The cumulative evidence strongly suggests that teacher education programs would ideally include innovative practicum placements, both within and outside public school systems, to meet the demands, challenges, and opportunities of the teaching profession, in its broadest form. With immersion in these diverse work-integrated field experiences, supported by related coursework, teacher candidates will be prepared to use their pedagogical skills to promote learning, locally and abroad, both in schools and communities. If teacher education programs systematically implement a diverse range of practicum experiences, attending to the seven CANWILL dimensions of work-integrated learning, teacher candidates will derive such benefits as transferability of skills, awareness of employability options, and greater sensitivity to a range of learners. It is timely with the onset of a two-year teacher education program in Ontario, to expand the notion of the traditional practicum model in schools to prepare our future teachers for the changing contexts of our contemporary society. Graduates will ideally bring enhanced understandings into their places of employment, thus becoming more collaborative, resilient and culturally-aware teachers, serving a diverse range of learners, in a variety of educational settings.

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CHAPTER 6

The New “New Teacher”

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the notion of “new teacher”, and hiring practices associated with being a new teacher in Ontario. I consider growing teaching arrangements, such as non-permanent positions like substitute teachers, to be a form of contingent work in education. In particular, I examine the nature of this non-standard work arrangement in relation to the teaching practices utilized and experiences encountered within an inconsistent work context. Data presented in this article originated from a qualitative study of Ontario, Canada substitute teachers. Findings demonstrated that several elements of substitutes’ teaching were characteristically different from permanent teaching, including: 1) daily preparation, 2) rapport with students, 3) classroom management, 4) lesson content, and (5) teaching strategy implementation. The contingent quality of non-permanent teaching has implications for how we might better develop and deliver professional learning for newly hired teachers. The chapter ends with suggestions for how to provide more appropriate professional learning and supports for new teachers.

Keywords: substitute teaching, occasional teachers, contingent work, non-standard work arrangement, education, hiring practices, professional learning opportunities and supports

THE NEW “NEW TEACHER”

This chapter problematizes the notion of “new teacher”, and the hiring practices associated with being a new teacher in Ontario. It acknowledges new teacher practices currently undervalued in the education sector, and considers ways to support teachers who find themselves experiencing this phenomenon. I begin by proposing a change to the way in which we currently conceptualise “new teachers” and examine how we might understand the process “new teachers” go through in order to gain entry into the teaching profession. Next, I argue that because of specific work arrangements, new teachers experience work differently than teachers working in full-time teaching employment. In an effort to make a case for particular kinds of supports after hiring, I next examine the manner in which teachers who substitute on a day-to-day basis in the English-speaking public school systems in Ontario, Canada prepare for their teaching day, the teaching strategies they use in the classroom, how they build rapport with students, and the classroom management practices that they employ. Lastly, I illustrate how teachers working contingently require different kinds of supports for success than permanent, full-time teachers.

New Teacher

For many people, the phrase “new teacher” conjures up images of someone who recently completed a recognized teacher education program and is entering a public education system via a full-time teaching position. This however is not the case for a growing number of teachers. For example, in Ontario, there is an over-supply of certified teachers looking for employment (Ontario College of Teachers, 2014, 2013, 2012). For this reason, teachers entering the workforce generally find it difficult to secure full-time teaching positions after completing their initial teacher education (Pollock, 2008). Instead, new teachers are increasingly entering the workforce through non-permanent teaching arrangements more commonly known as “daily substitute teaching” or “occasional teaching” (Ontario College of Teachers, 2014), and are part of an emerging contingent teacher workforce (Pollock, 2008). In Canada, for example, one-fifth of the teacher workforce in the public education system works in non-permanent teaching positions (Work and Life-long Learning [WALL], 2005).

A second common assumption is that new teachers are new to the education profession, when that is not necessarily the case; some teachers new to a particular education system may have prior work experience as teachers in other systems. In this context, new teachers to Ontario may have been educated in other provinces or internationally, meaning they completed their teacher education programs outside of Ontario, and have had substantial teaching and administration careers in education systems outside of Ontario (Pollock, 2009, 2012).

For this chapter, “new teachers” are teachers new to a particular education system, meaning they have never worked in that system before as a teacher; some may be entirely new to the teaching profession, while others may have had teaching experience elsewhere. The study reported in this chapter is situated in the Ontario context, so in this case I am referring specifically to teachers new to Ontario’s English-speaking public school systems.

As I write elsewhere (Pollock, 2008), teachers who work in non-permanent teaching positions are employed through a number of different contractual arrangements (Abdal-Haqq, 1997; Barlin & Hallgarten, 2001; Bontempo & Deay, 1986; Collins, 1982; Cornwall, 2004; Grimshaw, Earnshaw & Hebson, 2003; Johnson-Carpenter, 2001; Jones, 1999). Teachers working in these various non-permanent arrangements are identified through a number of different labels that can be used interchangeably such as daily occasional teacher, supply teacher, substitute teacher, or teacher-on-call, to name a few (Pollock, 2008). For the purposes of this book chapter and the study context, teachers working in non-permanent teaching employment are referred to here as occasional teachers and contingent teachers.

Hiring Practices for New Teachers

How do teachers new to a public education system gain access to employment? Traditionally there are a number of ways teachers have gained employment, from merely walking into a school during times of teacher shortage and being hired on the spot, to applying for a full-time teaching position through some sort of advertisement and proceeding through an interview process. Today, in some jurisdictions, the hiring process is no longer clear-cut. Currently, Ontario teachers new to the public education systems are subject to Ontario Regulation 274/12, Hiring Practices. This regulation can set up a multi-step process where teachers seeking employment in

the English-speaking public education sector¹ must first secure a spot on a board's "occasional teacher list," and next a spot on the "long-term occasional teacher list". How teachers are hired to the occasional list is board-specific, but typically boards hold general hiring sessions for teachers to submit applications a few times a year. These hiring sessions are not necessarily a predictable occurrence either. The supply list in many boards only 'opens' when unions agree that their current members on the list are receiving enough supply teaching work. From there, teachers are short-listed for interviews. Once on the occasional list, teachers are called upon to work as replacements (Canadian Centre for Learning, 2007) to cover the absences of teachers working in more standard work arrangements. In order for an occasional teacher to gain full-time employment in an English-speaking public system, they must next secure a spot on the long-term occasional list.

In order for daily occasional teachers to secure their name on the long-term occasional list, they must apply to the board for another interview (Regulation 274/12). Before teachers working on a daily occasional basis can apply for an interview for access to the long-term occasional teacher list, they must fulfill two obligations:

1. the teacher has been on the board's roster of occasional teachers for at least 10 months; and
2. the teacher has taught as an occasional teacher in one or more schools of the board for at least 20 full days during a 10-month period that is within the five years immediately preceding the day the application is submitted. (O. Reg. 274/12, s. 4 (2); O. Reg. 148/13, s. 1)

According to Regulation 274/12, once on the long-term occasional teaching list, teachers can be considered for interviews for full-time teaching positions. However, even for long-term occasional teachers, roadblocks remain before they can be hired for a permanent position. Teachers working in long-term occasional teaching arrangements are not considered for vacant full-time positions immediately; these positions must first be offered to supernumerary teachers or teachers whose positions have been deemed redundant. If the position is not filled, then five teachers from the long-term occasional teaching list can be interviewed. Who the five teachers are is regulated based on the several aspects of the regulation. These teachers must have:

- a) completed a long-term assignment in a school of the board that was at least four months long and in respect of which the teacher has not received an unsatisfactory evaluation;
- b) the required qualifications for the position;
- c) the highest ranking under section 2; and
- d) agreed to be interviewed. (O. Reg. 274/12, s. 7 (3))

Essentially, in a best-case scenario, a teacher new to the Ontario English-speaking public education systems will have to participate in at least three different interviews and teach within two different work arrangements (daily occasional and long-term occasional arrangements) before securing a full-time teaching position. Again in a best-case scenario, the process from entering the

¹ Even though this policy applies to both the English and French public school systems in Ontario, the practice in English and French public school systems play out differently. In French Catholic particularly there is next to no supply teacher pool. Many teachers in the French system do not go through the multi-step hiring process because the demand is still very high for teachers. Teachers seeking employment in the French systems tend to find work in a full-time permanent position more prevalently as their first employment arrangement.

workforce as a daily occasional teacher to securing a full-time teaching position will take at least 1.5 years. In reality, the Ontario College of Teachers (2014) forecast that it would take teachers 5 years or more to secure a full-time teaching position.

For the purposes of this book chapter, I focus on the supports we can provide new teachers *after their successful interview for accessing the daily occasional teacher list*. I do so because as Chalikakis's (2012) study indicated, the work of long-term occasional teachers is more similar to that of full-time permanent teachers than daily occasional teachers. One can deduce that this means any professional learning opportunities available for full-time permanent teachers will also support teachers in long-term occasional positions. However, that is not the case for teachers working in daily occasional teaching. As I will demonstrate later in the chapter, the work of daily occasional teachers is less similar to that of full-time permanent teachers, and therefore requires other kinds of professional learning as teachers travel through the workforce hierarchy (Johnson, Myers, Pollock, & Zoet, 2008; Pollock, 2008).

What we Know about Non-Permanent Teaching

Despite the prevalence of non-permanent teaching, we know very little about this kind of employment and work (Pollock, 2009; 2012). The limited research that has been done in the area indicates that non-permanent teachers' work, like that of contingent workers generally (Chalikakis, 2012), is unique. Among other things, daily occasional teachers teach and manage classrooms in different ways than their full-time permanent counterparts (Jennings, 2001; Pollock, 2008). Ultimately, these differences have important consequences for student learning (Miller, Murnane, & Willett, 2008; Stevens, 2008) and how schools and school systems support occasional teachers in their continued professional learning. The challenges that non-permanent teachers experience in their work will have an impact on the way they teach, the way students with whom they interact learn, and on the kinds of supports they require after being hired to the occasional teacher list.

Contingent Work

The trend toward non-permanent teaching in education is not an isolated phenomenon. The growing number of occasional teachers reflects general contemporary employment trends around the world; more and more people are now working in non-standard arrangements in many different types of jobs (Quinlan & Bohle, 2004). Unfortunately, the frameworks available to help us understand contingent work are generally inadequate; most are not equipped to name the phenomenon or identify the underlying assumptions about this type of work. Indeed, the majority of existing research, theories, and frameworks for the study of work and employment relations are implicitly grounded in a standard work paradigm (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Pfeffer & Baron, 1988). Those who seek to understand contingent work are often saddled with a view that sees all work as something that is full-time, performed on a fixed schedule, at the employer's place of business or worksite, under the employer's supervision, and with an expectation that the work will continue indefinitely (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Davis-Blake, Broschak, & George, 2003; Kalleberg, Reskin, & Hudson, 2000). This view of work, however, is unsuitable for providing a useful understanding of contingent work – work that can be precarious, temporary, contractual, and flexible (Cranford, Vosko, & Zukewich, 2003).

What we know about the emerging contingent workforce tends to come from extensions of topical themes explored in the field of standard work (Feldman, 1990). Researchers have re-tested well-established and popular research topics that had previously been examined in the

context of “standard” employment contracts and in the context of “non-standard” work (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004, p. 962). With the exception of studies of performance, however, none of this research challenges the assumption that the work contingent workers do or the way in which they do their work may be different than that of their permanent counterparts. This is somewhat surprising, given that research indicates that when contingent workers are hired their work is sometimes modified. For example, a supervisor might not assign interdependent tasks to employees hired contingently (Pearce, 1993), but rather narrow the scope of the tasks they are required to do (Ang & Slaughter, 2001). According to Uzzi and Barsness (1998) this sort of allocation is common.

Contingent and full-time permanent employees can be hired under the same job description when workload increases, or for specific short-term projects, or to fill in for employees who are sick or on leave (Allan & Sienko, 1998). They can be hired to handle work that permanent employees are unable to do “because they lack the requisite skills or knowledge [or] to do work that is so boring and repetitive that no one wants to do it for long” (Allan & Sienko, 1998, p. 28). Some researchers argue that both contingent and full-time permanent employees do the same tasks when hired under the same job description (Davis-Blake, Broschak, & George, 2003; Smith, 2001). Most research in the area, however, does not actually investigate potential similarities and differences in assigned tasks. There are some exceptions. For example, using a cross-industry survey, Masters and Miles (2002) explored the nature of contingent work. They concluded that work assignments differed between contingent and permanent workers. Most obviously, contingent workers were less likely to work in positions that were long lasting, difficult to monitor, and/or required extensive training. Masters and Miles’s study, however, was about work assignment only; they did not consider how the same tasks were accomplished by different groups. Bidwell’s (2009) research also explored work assignment. He found that information technology (IT) contract workers in financial institutions were less likely to be used in roles that were critical to the firm, and were less likely to be given positions that required knowledge of the business (p. 200). Like Masters and Miles (2002), however, Bidwell (2009) did not look at how the work arrangement influenced the nature of the work.

Contingent Work in Education

Many teachers work in contingent arrangements in contemporary schools. In Ontario in 2011, 11 650 teachers entered the English-speaking teacher workforce (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013). Many of these teachers were able to secure full-time permanent teaching positions, but many more were unsuccessful in their quests. Of the new 2012 graduates, more than one in three were unemployed, and just one in three were able to secure as much teaching work as they wanted (OCT, 2013). Most graduating teachers now spend years working contingently before securing full-time permanent contracts. This means the occasional teacher pool will likely continue to grow at a rapid rate. It should also be noted that these statistics do not take into account teachers who are not newly graduated and may have received their education and certification elsewhere, have teaching experience, and are new to the Ontario system.

Occasional teachers’ work is a type of contingent work. It involves short-term employment arrangements, “in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a non-systematic manner” (Polivka & Nardone, 1989, p. 11). Occasional teachers also find work when there is a need to replace another (usually full-time) teacher. To get work, teachers need to make themselves available, but must also be aware that there is never any guarantee that they will be called upon. When they are notified for work, they are employed only as long as needed to cover for an absent permanent teacher.

Occasional teachers' work might conclude at the end of the day, within a few days, or even a few months, but it will never extend more than an academic school year. For the most part, occasional teachers do not have a fixed schedule. In Ontario, however, they are expected to follow the teaching schedule of the teacher whom they are replacing. Occasional teachers can work any combination of days per week, month(s), an entire year, or not at all. The employer, which in most cases is the school district, generally does not guarantee any employment within or beyond an academic school year. Depending on the geographical region, the work "site" can be only one school, or it can be any number of schools. Within the work site, occasional teachers may be required to work in different classrooms, grade levels, and subject areas, on different days or within the same day. Occasional teachers can also work for more than one school district, and it is therefore possible that they may technically have more than one employer within an academic school year.

Although in its early stages, research on contingency work in education provides a glimpse into the work lives of occasional teachers. At the systems level, the limited literature around substitute teaching addresses how to "manage" and "train" substitute teachers better (Jones, 1999; McIntire & Hughes, 1982; Tomlinson, 1997; Wheeler-Ayres, 2006). Much of literature on, and resources for, occasional teachers views them as deficient, as needing assistance in creating lesson plans and maintaining classroom discipline (Ediger, 2002a; 2002b; National Council of Teachers of English, 2002). Much of the material focuses on how to be better occasional teachers by acquiring missing skills or resources (Abdal-Haqq, 1997; Arnold, 2006; Collins, 1982; Collins & Wilde-Oswalt, 1989; Dellinger, 2005; 2006; Drury, 1988; Kronowitz, 2011; Pressman, 2008; Pronin, 1983; Sigel, 1997; St. Michel, 1995). The strategies suggested in the literature are generated by researchers who have never participated in occasional teaching, and as study participants described below have indicated, some of the advice and proposed tactics are not practical for the teaching and learning environment in which occasional teachers find themselves.

Surprisingly, there has been a surge of graduate research in the area of occasional teaching, with many researchers having been occasional teachers at some point in their lives (Bendheim, 2011; Betts, 2006; Bowles, 2004; Chalikakis, 2012; Damianos, 1998; Dillon, 2008; Duggleby, 2003; Gonzales, 2002; Johnson-Carpenter, 2001; Pearce, 2012; Pollock, 2008; Schotte, 1973; Stevens, 2008; VanGunten, 1999; Vorell, 2007). Most of the graduate research demonstrates the importance of occasional teachers in the education system while simultaneously showing how occasional teachers are disadvantaged. Occasional teachers are often unrecognized, misrepresented, or misunderstood (Betts, 2006; Damianos, 1998). Few studies, however, (with the exception of Chalikakis [2012] and Pearce [2012]) specifically examine occasional teachers' work; therefore, before we can draw any conclusions about differences in the nature of work for contingent and full-time teachers, and how best to support them once they begin working contingently, we need to know what they actually do.

METHODOLOGY

The study reported in this chapter employed qualitative research methods. Qualitative methods are most useful when researchers seek to explore a complex topic about which not much is known (Merriam, 2009), as is the case with occasional teaching. The best way to understand these teachers' work, then, was simply to ask them. As such, interviews were employed as the primary method of data collection.

A number of approaches were taken to access participants. Employing convenience and

snowball sampling (Glesne, 1999), a total of thirteen contingent teachers were recruited for the study. Individuals were chosen from a local context with which I was familiar. I used the relationships forged through my work at a local university and with teacher federations in the area to locate and approach potential participants. I also employed a snowball sampling technique (Merriam, 2009): when I completed an interview, I would ask the participant if she or he knew of other teachers working contingently, and if they did I asked them to pass along information about the study and how to contact me.

Of the thirteen people interviewed, three were male and ten were female. Five had held previous full-time teaching contracts ranging from 5 to 32 years; two were retired teachers with long full-time teaching careers; two were internationally educated teachers who worked full-time outside of Canada (5 to 29 years); and one received her teacher education in Canada and then went overseas to teach for 5 years. All 13 of the study participants are currently teaching contingently; they have from one to 20 years of contingent teaching experience. Six teachers were certified to teach at the secondary level, while the other seven were certified to teach in elementary education.

The semi-structured interviews were between 25 and 60 minutes in length. Participants in the study were specifically asked to describe in detail the actual work they did in the classroom and were probed regarding how they prepared for the day, how they went about building rapport with students and staff, and what classroom management strategies and teaching and learning strategies they used in their contingent work. Broad themes around work preparation, rapport building, classroom management, and teaching and learning strategies were used to categorize and organize the information and yet also allow new, unexpected themes to develop. Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) coding and analysis process was slightly modified and used with the qualitative software program N6. Each interview transcript was read from hardcopy approximately seven times with notes written in the margins indicating repeated statements (e.g., bag of tricks, first thing teachers did when they arrived at a school) and ideas about larger constructs emerging from the text (e.g., preparation, rapport). The repeated themes found in the interviews were recorded as "free nodes" in the software program, and as the repeated themes accumulated into related groups, free nodes were grouped into tree nodes representing larger common themes. Common themes were then grouped together into more abstract ideas known as "theoretical constructs" which were represented by trees with extensive branches within the N6 program project file (e.g., classroom management).

FINDINGS

The study findings reveal that substitute teachers' work practices are different than those of permanent teachers. For example, consider the case of Kerry. Kerry had been a full-time classroom teacher who decided to engage in occasional teaching so that she could spend more time with her child, who suffered from health issues. When asked if occasional teaching was the same as full-time teaching, Kerry emphatically responded, "I would disagree!" Ryan, another participant, supported this belief when he stated that the "pedagogical implications for occasional teachers are different than for full-time teachers". The differences between the work of occasional and permanent teachers can be broadly grouped into four general categories: preparation, rapport building, classroom management, and teaching.

Preparation. Both full-time teachers and occasional teachers engage in some form of teaching preparation, but they prepare in different ways. While neither group of teachers can know exactly how the teaching day will unfold, an occasional teacher can generally count on a greater

degree of unpredictability than a permanent teacher. Yanchun, an occasional teacher, pointed out that one of the major differences between occasional teaching and permanent teaching was that “you don’t know the kids... you’re parachuted in, you’re there for the seven hours and then you’re gone”. Most full-time teachers are familiar with the local school culture, know the students, and have a better idea of which methods of curriculum delivery will suit specific groups of students. As Paul pointed out, occasional teachers, on the other hand, will not necessarily be able to predict how each child will behave at any moment or what each child will or will not learn.

You know prep matters, you’re a pedagogical interloper, or you don’t know the material, you need time to refresh it, you know you don’t know the kids in the class, you don’t know who’s on IEPs [individualized education programs], you don’t know who has special needs, you don’t know who you could set off with the wrong word... you might not know the material, you certainly don’t know all the pedagogical content knowledge for teaching all the material so you really have to be on your toes, and that time is really valuable.

All occasional teachers in this study reported engaging in some type of preparation for a day of teaching, which entailed taking unpredictability into account. Teacher preparation was based on being prepared for “everything and anything,” rather than for a specific subject that was to be taught to specific groups of students whom they knew. Heather told a story about how she showed up to a class wearing stockings, only to find out that she was going to be supervising skating in an arena. She stated:

That’s when you learn to carry a change of clothing in the trunk of your car and in your personal baggage. You have everything from a hat to sunscreen, a whistle, a mug, a pair of jogging pants, running shoes, to God knows what else, because you never know what is going to happen.

While a full-time teacher may prepare specific subject lessons for a particular group of students, occasional teachers prepare generally for different grade levels with lesson plans that can be modified for a wide range of student abilities. For example, Melissa, who teaches in the elementary panel, has bags packed with lesson plans for the various grades. If she is going to grade 5 or 6, she has a bag for that area. She also has a bag for primary. For occasional teachers, unpredictability means that preparation will take on a more general character than it would for permanent teachers. Occasional teachers in this study often reported preparing lesson plans and activities that could be modified to include a number of different content areas for different grade levels. They generally did not design detailed lesson plans that focused on specific targeted learning outcomes for one particular subject and grade.

Just as much of permanent teachers’ work is organized around routines, so too is the work of occasional teachers. However, occasional teachers’ routines tend to have a different focus. When they arrive at school, many full-time teachers tend to engage in a set of practices that can be repetitive and often taken-for-granted, such as checking email messages and mail, and photocopying, to name a few. Occasional teachers in the study also engaged in a particular set of practices when they entered a school. For example, Andrea noted she would “pick up a school schedule from the secretary and attendance and find out a little bit about the school, like where everything is – washroom, photocopier, supplies, password to smartboard – if I haven’t been there before”. Melissa added, “The first thing I ask is have I parked my car in the correct place,” while Kerry, “...asks the secretary if there are any security issues in the school, any back yard duty, and if the school is celebrating any special day, and get the keys for the classroom”.

Unlike those of permanent teachers, occasional teachers' practices were rarely taken-for-granted. Occasional teachers deliberately reflected on what they had to do, because such a practice allowed them to gather the necessary information to teach for the day. Occasional teachers reported that they had to make many decisions before they actually began teaching. These decisions included: where to put personal belongings, what to do if there are no plans available, finding seating plans, deciding on the day's agenda, gathering materials for the intended lessons, and choosing activities to start the day. For example, Emily stated one of her priorities is to read any lesson plans left for her, and decide how to prepare to teach them.

If it's a subject I'm somewhat familiar with, like... any of the subjects that I've done in the past, so math or science or English or history, anything that requires sort of a book to learn is usually really easier for me to figure out, because there is usually some kind of book work that I can read over, jog my memory as to what it was and then I'll be in a place where I can support kids who are learning. But sometimes I've taught things like autoshop and... I rarely get called for my teachables. Boys' phys. ed. was really common...

The routines in which occasional teachers engage are different than those of full-time teachers. Full-time teachers, because of their continuous daily employment, will establish, at the beginning of the year, where to park their vehicle; they will know the physical layout of the building including the location of the washroom, staff room, photocopier, and have their own necessary pass code for any electronics and keys to classrooms. Full-time teachers will also know the school schedule such as the bell system, cycles, and special events. The immediacy and lack of familiarity faced by occasional teachers not only influences their preparation practices, but it also influences how they interact with people at the school sites. This is the case when occasional teachers attempt to build rapport with students.

Rapport. Many full-time teachers and occasional teachers seek to build rapport with students. Full-time teachers set the tone at the very beginning of the school year and then use strategies that continue throughout the year (Leinhardt, Weidman, & Hammond, 1987). Occasional teachers, on the other hand, do not face the same students every day, and so for them every day is a first day. Stephanie, for example, pointed out, "You have to re-invent yourself every single time you teach". Full-time teachers are in positions to establish enduring relationships with students. Occasional teachers, on the other hand, cannot establish these sorts of relationships because of the limited time – sometimes as little as 30 minutes – they spend with particular groups of students. Occasional teachers who work in different schools on a daily basis do not have the time necessary to build an enduring rapport with specific groups of students. Yanchun pointed out: "You're into instant rapport with these kids. You've got to make a connection in 90 seconds and build from here".

The limited authority and time they spend with particular students shapes the way that occasional teachers build rapport. Occasional teachers have the least positional authority within the education system (Clifton & Rambaran, 1987; Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Pollock, 2008). They also spend comparatively little time with particular groups of students; often they will be meeting the students they teach on a particular day, and will not see them again. This means that they will not have the benefits that come with knowing individual students or the power that accompanies a permanent institutional position. Unlike full-time teachers, they do not have a type of positional authority that allows them to execute stricter discipline if necessary, or implement discipline strategies such as behavioral contracts that require a segment of time usually longer than one day. Occasional teachers have to balance their need to exert authority with their need to

develop rapport with students. Andrea discussed this balancing act when she described the first few minutes of interaction with a new class: “You have to read the class, but you set the tone right away, and a lot of people make the mistake of going in and being really hard and heavy handed. You’ll only get instant rebellion”.

Most participants reported being able to “read a room”. They also referenced needing the skills to negotiate respect, especially with more senior students. These students do not see occasional teachers as teachers with the power to assess them, but as adults with a different kind of authority. Heather stated, “I would have a relationship with them that would be a bit of an outsider... just another adult there... rather than somebody who is grading [them], or somebody who has some kind of long term relationship with [them]”.

Aside from having to be prepared for unpredictable work and the immediacy of rapport building, occasional teachers also need to approach classroom management in unique ways.

Classroom management. The top priority for the occasional teachers in the study was to maintain some sense of order in the classroom. Teachers reported needing to do this in order to teach. Participants said that because they had limited positional power, the first few minutes of class were crucial; until some sense of order is achieved, little learning can occur. Fabricio explained that when the students enter the classroom he has to “...do a very quick assessment and nip anything in the bud, right then and there. [For example,] if kids are jumping out of their seats or trying to trade seats or what not...”. However, the reality is that no matter how well they are prepared or what strategies they employ, some students will still choose to challenge the occasional teacher’s authority. According to Emily, some of the behaviors students use to challenge the occasional teacher’s authority include “changing the time on the clocks, ...changing their name, or sitting in other peoples’ desks, or their favourite thing was everyone goes into fits of coughing”.

Classroom management strategies used by occasional teachers were often modifications of strategies employed by full-time teachers. Occasional teachers in this study generally did not use the exact strategies that worked best in classrooms where the teacher is continually present on a full-time basis, because they were not useful in the work arrangement. Hanna, for example, related how one method that she learned in her teacher education program would not work. Hanna had been taught that when faced with student(s) who were chatting and not paying attention, she was to walk closer to the student without stopping the lesson. This tactic was designed to encourage the student(s) to refocus. If the student(s) persisted, Hanna was supposed to say the student(s) name(s), and continue with the lesson. Hanna pointed out, though:

...that doesn’t work as a occasional teacher. You could say 28 names and they would still be talking... many of the classroom management strategies that I learned in teachers’ college work if you’re the classroom teacher and if you have authority in the room. But, I don’t think they really work if you’re just walking in [as an occasional teacher].

Occasional teachers described in great detail some of the proactive classroom management strategies they used at the beginning of a class/day. Some of these successful strategies included presenting the day’s agenda, carrying out particular activities to start the day, presenting reminders to students before they enter the classroom, greeting students at the door, making introductions, and taking attendance. For example, Ryan explained, “You have to read your audience, it’s a skill like no other, and you’ll be in trouble if you can’t do that”, while Emily explained:

I often put a note on the board, you know, something like, “Good morning,” introduce

myself, this is what they're going to be doing, this is what I expect them to be doing. I found that that helps a little bit for when they're coming into the classroom later on, I'll say, "Make sure you read the note that's on the board." You know, this is me being the boss.

All participants commented that occasional teachers must expect to be tested and therefore have to engage in proactive practices so that they do not find themselves in situations that can spiral out of control. Most participants noted the importance of strategies that focused on transitioning – after announcements, changing subjects, or moving a class from one location to another. Teachers observed that transitions are times when students often act out, taking advantage of the fact that the occasional teacher does not know the routines, confident that a lot of time can be wasted before getting back on task. Participants suggested a number of strategies for bringing and keeping classes on track. For example, Paula learned from past experience teaching a higher grade of elementary school that she should ensure that not only was the day's agenda visible to students on the chalkboard/whiteboard/smartboard, but that the class time periods were also included. She stated that this was one way of dealing with students who tested her with statements such as "Oh, we have to go to the assembly now". Using this strategy, Paula could respond that, "No, the assembly's not for another 20 minutes; it's on the board". Classroom management strategies are intricately connected to occasional teachers' teaching strategies.

Lesson content and teaching strategies. The lesson content and teaching strategies adopted by occasional teachers in the classroom are not always the same as those of full-time teachers. There are times, however, when occasional teachers do follow permanent teachers' strategies and content. Fabrizio pointed out, "I'll try to continue with what their classroom teacher was doing ... I mean continuity for kids is huge". But more often than not, the participants of this study maintained that it was difficult to follow existing lesson plans exactly, as Kerry indicated when she said:

...the little kids, they'll have this whole big routine and they'll get really upset if you don't know the good morning song and how to count the numbers and the alphabet and the calendar routine and stuff. So, to a certain point I try to follow the same rules and stuff, but I know it's going to be impossible...

Occasional teachers generally resorted to other strategies when no lesson plans were left, when the plans were inappropriate (for example, if safety is an issue), or when they did not feel confident teaching the subject. Occasional teachers in this study indicated that lesson plans are often left for them, and they attempt to follow the lesson plans provided. Ryan's comment echoed other participants' responses when he stated that he tries, "...to follow exactly what the classroom teacher has included in the lesson plans". While full-time teachers create and deliver learning opportunities to students, occasional teachers tend to follow what is provided, or, in less than ideal situations, fall back on the resources they brought with them to work, and use their skills and knowledge to modify or construct a new lesson in a very limited timeframe. Yanchun remarked that if the lesson plans were inappropriate or if "...the kids are very hyper and [the teacher] has left a play rehearsal, I probably won't do it because I know that it will just create a big chaos and it's just not the right thing to be doing".

The work practices in which the occasional teachers in this study engaged were at times similar to those of full-time teachers. However, because of the contingency of their work situations, occasional teachers also had to approach their teaching work differently. As demonstrated in the findings, these differences revolved around preparation, rapport building, classroom management,

and lesson content and teaching strategies.

THE IMPACT OF CONTINGENT WORK ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

The participants' responses reflected the nature of contingent work: the uncertainty of the work, the short periods of time in a particular school setting, and the powerlessness associated with the specific contingent work arrangement. These components of contingent work shaped teacher's preparation, rapport, classroom management, and lesson content and teaching approach.

Contingent work has a high degree of uncertainty – “uncertainty regarding continued employment, job location, job requirements, and what types of superiors and coworkers there will be from one assignment to the next” (Boyce, Ryan, Imus, & Morgeson, 2007, p. 6). This is not surprising since the very nature of contingent work is short-term and unstable (Kalleberg, 2000), dependent on the employer's need, and thus lacks any attachment between employer and worker (Freedman, 1985). This is also true for teachers working contingently on a day-to-day basis. When teaching on a day-to-day basis there is no guarantee that employment for one day at one school or school board will guarantee any employment in the future with that particular school or school board (Pollock, 2008).

The uncertainty around job location emerges in contingent teaching in two ways. First, teachers can work at a number of school sites and do so at the last minute without any guarantee that they will ever return to that specific school in the future (Pollock, 2008). Second, teachers rarely return to the same classroom, even if they are returning to the same school site, and therefore almost exclusively work at a different work location (i.e., classroom) every day that they are called upon. Job requirements will also vary from day-to-day as teachers are hired to teach different grade levels and subjects. In Ontario, teachers are initially certified in two of four consecutive divisions: primary (kindergarten to grade 3) and junior (grades 4 to 6), junior and intermediate (grades 7 to 10), and intermediate and senior (grades 7 to 12) divisions. Because the certification process allows teachers to teach a number of grades and subject areas, those teaching contingently have to prepare for a large number of teaching possibilities, in contrast to full-time teachers who are hired for a specific grade level or subject area. The uncertainty of work location and job requirement means that occasional teachers have to prepare for their work in a very different manner than permanent teachers. Inevitably, occasional teachers' preparation will be geared to accommodate multiple teaching possibilities both in the curriculum and pedagogy bequeathed to them at the last minute. This real-time deployment was reflected by Yanchun, who described contingent teaching as being parachuted into a teaching situation for several hours and then abruptly removed. Heather's comment about having to be prepared for everything and anything is indicative of the uncertainty faced by occasional teachers when they work contingently from day-to-day.

Teaching contingently on a day-to-day basis also means that each time a teacher goes to work it will be to a different school site with a different principal, teaching staff, and students. The uncertainty associated with the ever-changing people at the work site translates into a constant need for immediate, real-time rapport building, as pointed out by both Stephanie and Yanchun. Part of this rapport building includes demonstrating to students that occasional teachers know how to manage classrooms and engage in current pedagogical practices. Fielder (1991), in his examination of occasional teacher effectiveness, discovered that successful occasional teachers “impress upon students, at the very beginning of the class period or day, that the occasional teacher

possess teacher-like characteristics” (p. 376).

Occasional teachers who work on a daily basis do not work for more than 10 consecutive days at one site of employment. The short employment terms mean that teachers may interact with students for as little as thirty minutes per day. These limited time periods challenge teachers in their preparation; they need to deliver lessons that are designed to fit the short timeframe, do not extend into the next school day, and do not require homework. Short work periods also influence classroom teaching since most teachers working contingently do not have access to information about student needs and are not able to provide differentiated instruction. As Paul pointed out, teachers working on a day-to-day basis generally do not know which students may be on individualized education plans. Relationships with students and staff can be fleeting, and as Stephanie indicated, occasional teachers find themselves having to re-invent themselves every day that they work. The short periods of teaching also influence how occasional teachers manage discipline in the classroom. Hanna, for example, pointed to a number of practices that might work in a full-time teaching arrangement but do not in daily occasional work.

Contingent workers may also experience a sense of powerlessness. Kalleberg (2000) argues that there are conflicting findings around whether or not contingent workers are disadvantaged; it appears to depend on the kind of contingent work in which they engage. For example, some professionals such as engineers and technicians working contingently can often receive wages equal to or higher than colleagues hired for standard employment positions. According to most research, teachers who work contingently appear to fall into the group of contingent workers who are largely disadvantaged. Most research on occasional teaching reports that occasional teachers overall feel a sense of powerlessness (Chalikakis, 2012) and marginalization (Bowles, 2004; Clifton & Rambaran, 1987; Cornwall, 2004; Damianos, 1998; Duggleby, 2003; Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Feola, 1999; Fielder, 1991; Lindley, 1994; Pollock, 2008; 2010a; Rogers, 2001; Vorell, 2007; Weems, 2000; 2003) associated with their work arrangement. Non-permanent teachers working contingently experience a lack of respect as well (Chalikakis, 2012; Pollock, 2008).

Teachers who work contingently have very little control over their work. In some cases, many occasional teachers have to accept whatever teaching assignments are offered. Emily, for example, stated that she was rarely called for her “teachable” subjects. This also means that in many cases contingent teachers teach at grade levels and in areas for which they are not certified to teach (Pollock, 2010b). For work situations in which occasional teachers are called upon at the last minute, teachers may have to rely on their own resources and deliver their own lesson plans. It is therefore helpful to have a collection of generic lesson plans prepared ahead of time. Teaching outside of grade level or area of expertise or covering for an unexpected absenteeism requires occasional teachers to be prepared for a wide range of possibilities, as Heather pointed out earlier when she listed some of the items one should consider taking to work.

The lack of respect towards teachers working contingently also influences how occasional teachers build rapport and manage classrooms. As Emily commented earlier, no matter how prepared a teacher is for daily occasional work, some students will choose not to engage in the expected learning, but rather to misbehave. The lack of respect means that contingent teachers need to negotiate their classroom presence from a place of compromised positional authority (Clifton & Rambaran, 1987) in situations where students and some teachers treat them poorly.

SUPPORTS FOR NEW TEACHERS

What do this study's findings mean in terms of providing professional support for new teachers who enter the profession through contingent work arrangements as described earlier? And why is this issue important? From a student education perspective, by the time a student graduates from high school, elementary and secondary students will have spent on average one full school year with an occasional teacher (Denley, 2007; Friedman, 1983; Long, 1996; McIntire & Hughes, 1982). What teachers do on a daily basis matters for students and for the teacher's own professional record. From a teacher attrition perspective, the teacher workforce may be losing talented perspective teachers because the initial teacher education program prepared them for teaching within a full-time teaching arrangement, and not for daily occasional teaching. However, the majority of teachers entering the English-speaking public school systems in Ontario will need to engage in some daily occasional teaching to obtain a full-time teaching position eventually. By being more successful in their contingent teaching, these teachers are more likely to secure long-term occasional positions more quickly, which is one step closer to securing a full-time teaching position. Until there is an acceptable level of awareness that the work of non-permanent teachers is different from that of full-time permanent teachers, teachers working on a daily basis will likely not receive appropriate supports.

A common view of teaching as a profession is that it requires expert knowledge (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Furlong, Barton, & Whitty, 2000). It also involves application of this expert knowledge, and continual learning, often referred to as "continuing professional development" (CPD). Day and Sachs (2004) describe the term broadly as "all the activities in which teachers engage during the course of a career which are designed to enhance their work" (p. 3). Competing (and complementary) models of CPD have attempted to capture the complex phenomenon that is on-going professional learning by teachers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994; Lieberman, 1996), but none of these models seems to be appropriate for occasional teachers, because of their unique work arrangement. Occasional teachers have limited access to formal professional development, and when they do, it is often not applicable for their specific work arrangement. It is more difficult for occasional teachers to be a part of a professional learning community that is school site specific for a number of reasons. First, occasional teachers' work sites can literally change on a daily basis, and second, daily occasional teachers are often filling in for full-time teachers who are attending the professional learning opportunities. By default, occasional teachers tend to rely more on informal professional learning that often occurs online, and their practices align more with workplace learning literature that predominantly views formal learning as insufficient (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and focuses more on the "ways in which workers learn through informal processes" (Hodkinson, 2009, p. 159). Hodkinson (2009) points out two key ideas about the processes of learning workplaces that are under-used in teacher development but essential for occasional teachers' continued professional learning: 1) learning is an integral part of everyday workplace practice; and, 2) workplace learning is predominantly a social and cultural process. For occasional teachers to continue learning they require a learning community focusing particularly on the work that they do on a daily basis.

The work practices in which the occasional teachers who participated in this study engaged were at times similar to those of full-time teachers. However, due to the contingency of their work situations, these teachers also had to approach their work differently. As demonstrated in the study findings, these differences revolved around preparation, rapport building, classroom management, and teaching. Meaningful professional supports such as professional development for occasional

teachers need to acknowledge the differences between occasional and permanent teachers' work. In terms of preparation, occasional teachers require professional development that allows them to consider what it is they are preparing for, what to include in lesson plans, and that provides an opportunity for them to discover an organizational method that best suits them. For example, an occasional teacher who teaches at the elementary level might want to consider that they will probably have some form of duty (yard duty, lunch duty, bus duty, or hall duty), and be with a particular group of students all day, and that this will likely include activities such as art, gym, math, reading, and geography, and should therefore plan accordingly.

There are a number of things to consider when preparing for work at the elementary level: what to wear, what teaching aids might be useful to include, what types of activities can be generalized over a broad range of grades, and lesson plans that can be adapted to a number of abilities. Perhaps providing a checklist that occasional teachers could use when arriving at a new school that includes such items as acquired lesson plans, class lists, seating plans, fire procedures, special events for that specific day, classroom rules, lock-down procedures, and directions to washrooms (student and teacher) would be helpful.

In terms of rapport building, successful professional development for occasional teachers should take into consideration that occasional teachers do not have the luxury of time to develop deep, meaningful relationships with students. Doing so would entail eliminating activities that require long time periods to execute, or would necessitate deep trust, which may not yet be established. Professional development should include activities that centre on techniques like quick name memorization, and activities (such as ice-breakers) that generate information about students that can be used later to make connections with them.

Professional development that focuses on classroom management should explicitly address occasional teachers' limited positional authority in the classroom and how this will influence how students respond to them. For example, as Hanna stated earlier, using a very strict approach to discipline will most likely backfire for an occasional teacher. Success can be achieved when occasional teachers take the time to assess the classroom environment to ascertain the existing student expectations set up by the absent teacher, and then work within these boundaries. Information about various short-term reward systems could be included in professional development for occasional teachers as well.

In Ontario, all occasional teachers (with the exception of the rare emergency teacher) are certified. They have attended a teacher education program, hold an undergraduate degree, and have completed a designated number of supervised hours teaching in a classroom. In general these teachers do not need to learn how to create lesson plans or deliver curriculum per se. Professional development for occasional teachers that focuses on teaching and learning strategies should include strategies for choosing general curriculum areas and designing lesson plans that can be easily modified to meet the expected learning outcomes for a number of grade levels. It should also provide an opportunity for occasional teachers to explore age appropriate ways to deliver modified lessons in the time constraints characteristic of occasional teaching.

CONCLUSION

Teaching, as a profession, has always required a pool of teachers-on-call (Pollock, 2009). What has changed is the degree to which contingency work has come to play a central role in how teachers new to the local system gain access to full-time teaching arrangements. The new

extended hiring process has been recently recognized in provincial policy such as Regulation 274/12, Hiring Practices. It is time the teaching profession began to support this entrance process intentionally, as currently there are many issues with gaining access to employment as a full-time teacher (Pollock, 2006, 2007, 2010). One first step in supporting the new entrance process would be to recognize and understand how the work of non-permanent teachers is different from that of full-time, permanent teachers, in terms of preparation, rapport building, teaching strategies, and classroom management. However, awareness and understanding are not enough; meaningful supports for occasional teachers need to be developed and delivered in an effort to assist teachers seeking full-time work as they progress through the elaborate employment process.

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CHAPTER 7

The Potential of Simulation for Teacher Assessment

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ABSTRACT

A teacher's classroom skills, attitudes, and behaviours are fundamental to excellent teaching. Assessing these qualities is a logistically difficult, costly, and at times, controversial task for teacher educators and school administrators. As a result, teacher hiring and subsequent professional development rely on indirect indicators that provide only limited evidence of a teacher's potential, strengths, and areas for improvement. Simulation techniques have been used as training and feedback tools for many years in occupations where live practice is dangerous, costly, or difficult to organize. Today's technologies are making simulations practical in new domains. In teaching they can provide practice settings, performance data, and feedback aimed at evaluating and improving a wide range of skills. Drawing from experience in medical and health education, this chapter outlines the potential for simulations to support both teacher hiring and in-service skills development, in order to support teaching excellence with new tools in the future.

Keywords: teacher hiring, hiring simulations, in-service skill development using simulations

TEACHER HIRING PRACTICES IN CANADA

Schools are institutions dedicated to effective learning. A good teacher is the single most important factor in student learning, and hiring effective teachers is an essential responsibility for school leaders. When hiring, however, Canadian school administrators have little direct indication of teaching candidates' current skills or future potential for promoting student learning. Although Canada does not face US-style pressures for evidence-based educational practice, our schools could benefit from new tools for assessing and providing evidence of individual teaching abilities. If reliable, valid, and practical, these have the potential to improve both our hiring practices and our methods of evaluating teachers' abilities.

There has been little research on teacher hiring in Canada, but what does exist questions whether hiring practices lead to student learning success (Cranston, 2012b). Hiring is the responsibility of individual school districts, guided by policies and standards set by provincial governments (e.g., see Alberta Education, 1997; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012a; Make a Future, 2011). Each candidate must be provincially certified, either as a graduate of an accredited Canadian teacher education program or through an accepted application documenting international qualifications and experience. Certification establishes that the candidate is qualified for a teaching position. British Columbia, for example, promises that certified candidates "have

the necessary academic qualifications, teaching experience, and personal characteristics required to work with children” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012b, par. 2).

A new teacher’s application includes transcripts, recommendations, and practice teaching reports that give school administrators some indication of teaching experience and abilities. Aside from these documents, however, hiring appears to be largely based on interviews with individuals or teams of school administrators (Cranston, 2012b; Jang, 2011). If candidates have done their practicum at the school, administrators have some knowledge of their classroom performance; otherwise, direct assessments of classroom teaching skills are not used in the hiring process. At a time when there are so many more candidates than available positions, those who are hiring lack critical data that would help them to identify the most skilled new teachers.

Administrators’ subjective judgments play a large part in hiring decisions; in studies of teacher hiring in Manitoba, eight school principals identified “fit” to the profession, school organization, culture, and existing staff as critical in new-teacher hiring (Cranston, 2012a), and interviews were seen as the most important information source (Cranston, 2012b). Issues with interviews are well-known (Cranston, 2012b; Judge, Cable, & Higgins, 2000), and “fit” can be a highly personal judgment. Cranston (2012a) questions whether hiring can be effective when it relies on criteria that may emphasize, even if subconsciously, administrators’ biases and preferences rather than valid and reliable performance metrics. Other research has documented and questioned the lack of direct evidence in hiring of teaching skills and learning impact (Engel, 2013; Gargani & Strong, 2014; Maynes & Hatt, 2013; Metzger & Wu, 2008), since poor hiring diminishes schools’ effectiveness. From a practitioner’s perspective, Stewart (2012) agrees, arguing that a criteria-driven hiring process would help to ensure that new teachers are effective in supporting schools’ future-oriented learning initiatives, such as personalized learning and new-technology integration.

A successful teacher has a combination of knowledge, attitudes, and skills including subject matter and pedagogical knowledge, supportive and caring attitudes, and skills in planning and managing classes with diverse student populations. These are often articulated as lists of specific competencies to be exhibited in planning, classroom teaching, student assessment, and relating to students. Since a teacher’s classroom and relationship skills have been found to be keys to student achievement (Kane, Kerr, & Pianta, 2014; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011), a process for directly evaluating these skills, rather than relying on second-hand evaluations, could provide valuable data for effective teacher hiring.

Classroom observation is the typical way to evaluate teaching skills. However, direct teaching observation poses significant obstacles as an assessment technique for teacher hiring. A class must be found for the teaching observation, and a candidate’s teaching with an unfamiliar class is not likely to duplicate performance over time. More generally, for validity and reliability, clear and valid criteria must be set, raters must be trained to produce consistent results when observing the same class situation, and ratings must be controlled for the effects of differences in student characteristics and abilities (Whitehurst, Chingos, & Lindquist, 2015). To avoid bias from an individual rater and case, more than one rater should be used (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). Taking into consideration the design and validation of rating instruments, rater training, and observation and analytical logistics, putting into place an effective system for direct observation, while desirable, is daunting in a high-stakes situation such as hiring.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

After hiring, classroom skills assessment can provide important ongoing feedback for teachers, both in their probationary periods (before tenure is granted) and throughout their careers for professional development. The Gates Foundation MET study (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013) found that well-implemented classroom observation contributed significantly, and equally with student perception surveys and student achievement gains, to identifying effective teachers fairly and reliably. Further, Whitehurst et al. (2015), when considering teacher evaluation in the context of US federal education policy, recommend systematic classroom observation as part of a multiple-source rating system for teacher evaluation. Driven by research and education reform legislation, regular teacher performance assessment with classroom observation is increasingly common in the US. For example, the state of Pennsylvania requires yearly evaluation of all permanent teaching professionals, with 50% of ratings from classroom observation and practice models (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2014).

In Canada, performance assessment for working teachers, as for new teacher hiring, is the responsibility of local school boards and governed by provincial legislation and collective agreements. At least one assessment is typically done for a probationary teacher before tenure is granted, but the practice is varied for tenured teachers, ranging from discretionary reviews on the request of an employee or administrator (e.g., Regina Public Schools, 2012; Vancouver School Board, 2006, p. 57), to a regularly scheduled, provincially-mandated process with implementation issues that have led to stress and resistance among teachers (Larsen, 2009). In addition to logistical and cost obstacles, then, classroom skills assessment for employed teachers in Canada faces organizational and political complications including resistance from teachers' unions and the need to comply with established collective-agreement practices.

Simulation-based assessment for hiring or professional development would face the same challenges. While addressing these issues is beyond the scope of this paper, the following discussion outlines ways in which simulations could, in the future, reduce practical and cost challenges associated with teacher assessment in Canada, making them practical and effective tools to improve our practices in both hiring and ongoing professional development.

SIMULATIONS FOR PRACTICE, FEEDBACK, AND ASSESSMENT

Simulations have been widely used for many years for both training and assessment purposes in high-stakes situations such as medicine, aviation, military training, business management, and large-scale investing, where skill practice in real-world situations is dangerous, costly, or logistically difficult (e.g., see Drews & Backdash, 2013; Gaba, 2007; Lu, Hallinger, & Showanasai, 2014). Rather than having the goal of winning, as in a game, simulation participants take on roles, make decisions, take action, and experience the consequences of their acts without crashing a plane, killing a patient, decimating a client's investment portfolio, or traumatizing a vulnerable student.

A simulation is a simplified but accurate, valid, and dynamic model of reality implemented as a system (Sauvé, Renaud, Kaufman, & Marquis, 2007). A simulation allows users to encounter problem situations, experience the results of their decisions and actions, and repeatedly practice and modify their decisions without risking harm from bad decisions or ineffective actions. Simulations have numerous advantages as learning and training tools, including the ability to practice repeatedly,

practice in rare or risky situations, replicate scenarios with specific learning objectives, practice for longer periods than are available in real life, and clearly measure outcomes with validated scoring systems. For skills development, a simulation's outcome measures, combined with debriefing and reflection (Crookall, 2010), serve as feedback for a formative assessment cycle of repeated performance practice and improvement (Ferry et al., 2005, Girod & Girod, 2008).

In a summative assessment situation, the simulation must provide defensible evidence that desired learning objectives have been achieved and that assessment results predict performance in the applied environment (Andreatta & Gruppen, 2009; Mislevy, 2011; Salas, Rosen, Held, & Weismuller, 2009). If the summative assessment has a high-stakes outcome, such as professional certification or competitive hiring, it is important that the simulation has rigorous validity in the sense that it accurately measures what it is intended to measure in the context of the assessment objectives (Andreatta & Gruppen, 2009). It must also be reliable (produce consistent results) and practical in terms of cost and logistics.

There is a growing body of literature on simulations in preservice teacher education, citing their advantages for practicing skills in managing the classroom, teaching students with varying learning needs, and working with challenged learners (e.g., see Bradley & Kendall, 2014; Girod & Girod, 2008). As in other domains, reflection and repeated practice are keys to learning from simulations in teaching (Girod & Girod, 2006); simulation-based practice allows pre-service teachers to translate their theoretical knowledge into action through repeated trials (Carrington, Kervin, & Ferry, 2011) without harming vulnerable students, and it allows more practice time and variety than would be available in limited live practicum sessions (Hixon & So, 2009).

While teacher-training simulations are becoming more common, simulation use for assessment appears rare in Canadian teacher education and in school systems. However, established practices in other fields can provide us with useful examples and guidelines for simulation use in teacher assessment, and existing teaching simulation examples show potential for future development as assessment tools. The following sections outline three broad types of simulations that have great potential as assessment tools for Canadian schools, together with examples from medical and health education of how they are used for assessment.

SITUATIONAL SIMULATIONS

Simulations have been categorized in many ways, based on their situations, tasks, disciplines, and supporting technologies (e.g., Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Bradley & Kendall, 2014; Georghiou, n.d.; Gredler, 2004; Maier & Grössler, 2000). Simulations involving role play and interpersonal interaction are called "situational simulations" by Alessi and Trollip and are particularly relevant to teacher training and assessment. As described by Lyons (2012):

[A situational simulation] ... could be a clinical scenario, a conflict situation or an emergency situation where the student makes decisions to respond to the situation and develops strategies to rectify the situation as they would do in real life contexts. The provision of a real life situation gives learners a sense of immediacy and involvement where time and the chosen response matter to the successful outcomes. (p. 4)

In medical and health education, situational simulations such as interactions with patients, crisis situations, emergency departments, and operating rooms are well established and researched as tools for training and assessment beyond technical skills. Situational simulations in teaching

often focus on planning, classroom management, or parent-teacher interaction – educational settings requiring users to exercise their knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve student learning or resolve conflicts.

Researchers and educators in medicine and the health professions have accumulated extensive research evidence and experience around the use of simulations for both teaching and assessment. Drawing on parallels between these domains and teaching, the following discussion builds on this evidence and experience to envision the potential for simulations as teaching assessment tools. Three broad types of situational simulations are included: scenario/ role-play simulations, standardized students, and computer-based clinical simulations.

Scenario/ Role-play Simulations

A scenario/ role-play simulation asks the student to assume a role and perform tasks in that role, such as diagnosing an illness (as a physician) or handling a series of tasks (as a business manager). The scenario is presented on paper, in a video, or digitally on a computer, smart device, or online. The student may have enough initial knowledge to complete the tasks or may have to engage in research to gather needed information. The scenario might play out following a branching tree logic based on the user's decisions or a linear scenario in which the user simply describes sequential actions. A variation is the "in-basket" exercise (Stearns, Ronald, Greenlee, & Crespy, 2003), in which the student takes on a role where they are presented with a collection of memos, documents, and requests that require setting priorities and handling multiple tasks. This requires effective communication with others in limited time. In-basket exercises are often used in management, public-sector, and educational recruiting to test the skills of potential managers and school leaders (e.g., see Schroffel, 2012).

In teacher education and assessment, scenario/ role-play simulations are used extensively for training but less frequently in skills assessment and hiring. Niemeyer, Johnson, & Monroe (2014), citing Mississippi Teacher Corps. (2012), argue for classroom role-plays for training alternate-route teachers (those with nontraditional training). They list 21 relevant scenarios for teachers involving single and multiple students, administrators, and parents, both inside and outside the classroom. In one hiring application, Stanford University uses an office-hour simulation to screen potential second-language teaching assistants for their language fluency and communication skills (Stanford University, 2014).

Citizen Schools (www.citizenschools.org), a US organization that provides enrichment teaching in low-income schools through trained tutors, uses "job simulation activities" (JSAs), a form of in-basket exercise, as part of a multi-stage hiring process that also includes a background review, a screening test, and interviews. JSAs introduce Teaching Fellow candidates to the organization's work environment and provide data on candidates' work styles, critical thinking skills, and overall project approaches (Citizen Schools, 2015a). For a JSA, a candidate takes on a role and prepares a lesson plan based on a scenario description, email correspondence, records of student backgrounds and learning needs, with additional feedback from hypothetical previous classroom observations (Citizen Schools, 2015b).

In medicine and health care, the main form of scenario/ role-play simulations is problem-based learning (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1980). Case-based learning is sometimes regarded as a separate approach (Srinivasan, Wilkes, Stevenson, Nguyen, & Slavin, 2007) but is included for the purposes of this discussion. There are many styles of problem-based learning, ranging from

short single-paragraph cases used in residency and continuing medical education, to long cases requiring several pages that are used in the first and second year of medical school. Depending on the instructional goals and the student's prior knowledge, the case may demand anywhere from quick judgments to in-depth, multi-stage reasoning and research. Cases that simulate actual patient problems are used for training in diagnosis and clinical reasoning, as well as for assessment by many professional bodies (e.g., in Part 2 of the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination).

A variety of methods has been used for PBL assessment (Miller, 2014). These assess students in various formats, such as the triple jump format, which is effective for measuring skills in analysis, critical thinking, and problem resolution (Navazesh, Rich, Chopiuk, & Keim, 2013). In this format, the student meets with the examiner and is presented with a case. After a question and answer session with the examiner about the student's existing knowledge and planned reasoning (first jump), the student does library research for a designated time to find needed information to resolve the case (second jump), and then returns to the examiner for a final oral session presenting their solution or management plan (third jump). A variation of this method used in diagnosis cases is called the "quadruple jump," in which a fourth step is added that requires the student to consult a clinician for expert advice.

Standardized Students

In teacher education and assessment, a type of simulation called an Objective Structured Teaching Exercise (OSTE) (Boillat, Bethune, Ohle, Razack, & Steinert, 2012; Sturpe & Schaivone, 2014) is set in a classroom with one or more people trained to play the roles of students with individual behaviours, learning characteristics, and possibly special needs. The simulated students are trained in advance to act and respond in particular ways, and the student, playing the teacher role, must manage the situation. So far used only for teacher training, the OSTE consists of a teaching scenario involving a simulated learner. Immediate feedback is given to the teacher based on a pre-determined behaviourally-based scale or assessment checklist. A natural extension of this approach would be to set up a simulated classroom with more than one student and to run a more realistic OSTE. However, due to the high cost of doing this, the simulation field has moved towards computer-based classroom simulations, described below.

In a similar approach, eduSIMS (<http://edusims.syr.edu>) are simulations for pre-service teachers and school leaders (Dotger, 2009; Dotger & Alger, 2012; Dotger & Smith, 2009). These simulations move scenarios out of the classroom to teach communication and management skills through simulated interactions with standardized parents, students, paraprofessionals, and community members. To quote the eduSims web site:

Each simulation centers on a problem or issue that teachers and leaders commonly encounter in daily practice – academically struggling students, parents with concerns over discipline or curricula, teacher or leader ethical dilemmas, school bullying/harassment, drug/alcohol abuse, and fully including students with disabilities. The standardized individual is carefully scripted to present a distinct problem of practice, but the teacher or leader is not scripted at all, and must utilize professional knowledge and skills to address the question, concern, or issue presented within the simulation. (eduSIMS, 2015, par. 2)

Each simulated conference is captured on video and used for post-simulation feedback and debriefing.

The Objective Structured Clinical Examination, referred to as the OSCE, is used extensively

in medical and health care education for both practice and final assessment of clinical and interpersonal skills. For example, Part 2 of the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination is run as an OSCE. In the OSCE, actors (professional or amateur) are used to simulate patients with certain conditions. These people are called standardized patients because several of them are trained together in advance to simulate a particular situation in a similar fashion and to respond to questions or maneuvers in the same way. At an OSCE “station,” students are given a task to perform in a specific time period, such as taking a history, performing a physical examination, or giving bad news. An expert assessor is usually present with a predetermined checklist to assess the student, although this is sometimes done later using a video recording of the interaction. Shorter OSCEs (e.g., five stations) are used for training and feedback, while longer ones (12 or more stations) are typically used as part of a high stakes examination to increase validity and reliability (Kahn, Gaunt, Ramachandran, & Pushkar, 2013; Pell, Fuller, Homer, Roberts, 2010). OSCEs have also been used for admissions screening to assess candidates’ interpersonal skills (Eva, Rosenfeld, Reiter, & Norman, 2004).

Computer-based Clinical Simulations

Advancing technological capabilities have resulted in widespread computer-based simulation use in medical and health education (Issenberg, McGaghie, Petrusa, Gordon, & Scalese, 2005). With computer-based simulated patients, for example, the user works through the steps for the simulated medical case from history-taking to physical examination to laboratory tests to diagnosis. In some cases, management of the patient’s condition is required. These cases might use multimedia to present the patient and allow the user to perform virtual maneuvers on the patient. They are so well developed that users receive detailed feedback on their performance, such as whether they were efficient, systematic, and cost-effective (Melnick, 1990). Computer-based simulated patients are used in a number of medical certification exams (Boulet, 2008).

Like simulated patients in medicine, computer-based classroom simulations are being used with growing success for teacher education. The Cook School District simulation, for example (<http://cook.wou.edu>), is designed to support pre-service teachers in their practice of connecting teaching and learning (Girod, Girod, & Denton, 2007). The simulation animates the Teacher Work Sample Methodology (TWMS) (Girod, 2002), which dates from the 1970s and models in detail connections between teacher actions and student learning. Originally used in the context of a real field experience with real students, TWMS requires a student to define and defend learning goals, pedagogical approaches and lesson plans, along with pre- and post-tests, analysis of results and student learning gains, and reflections on connections among teaching, student learning, and personal professional growth (Girod & Girod, 2006). The simulation provides a practice setting with simulated students that are based on real students (taken from the experience of former classroom teachers). Users are able to repeat and modify their teaching strategies and plans in a variety of grade levels and content areas. Interaction is in the form of choices, with feedback provided through documents and reports. Cues, prompts, and personal notes encourage reflection during and following the simulation, and feedback is provided through impact of user decisions and actions on student learning. The TWS methodology is used for assessing teacher performance at about 30 US institutions that are part of the Renaissance TWS Group (<http://www.wku.edu/rtwsc/>), although the simulation itself is used only for practice of TWS skills.

ClassSim, an online simulation, provides users with a place to practice lesson structure, classroom management, and responding to students, particularly those with special needs (Ferry

et al., 2004, 2005). The simulation operates through a series of virtual episodes in a kindergarten class setting with decision points for the teacher. Learning is supported with materials, online links, and a reflection space. ClassSim has been shown to contribute to the development of pre-service teachers' professional identities and to their skills in connecting theory to real-life practice (Carrington et al., 2011).

More recent simulations attempt to reproduce the experience of working in a classroom setting more fully. Probably the most fully developed fully-computerized classroom simulation, simSchool, is a web-based simulation designed to offer practice experiences for pre-service teachers (Badiee & Kaufman, 2014; Christensen, Knezek, Tyler-Wood, & Gibson, 2011; Gibson, 2007). SimSchool uses screen shots of a classroom seen from the teacher's position at the front of the room. The class is populated by up to 20 students represented as cartoon characters, with a vast range of possible appearances (randomly generated), cognitive abilities, and personalities, including ESL and autistic; based on a model of cognition, personality and communication theory, the simulation dynamically generates learner behaviours in response to teacher actions chosen from lists of possibilities. Although it is relatively low-fidelity on the surface, evaluation results have shown it to be valid for pre-service teachers to practice instructional activities (Deale & Pastore, 2014). Gibson & Halverson (2004) documented initial research on its suitability for pre-service teacher assessment.

Rather than attempt to reproduce a classroom fully in virtual reality, TLE TeachLivE (<http://teachlive.org>) uses a "mixed reality environment" that blends real and synthetic content. Because suspension of disbelief (i.e., belief that the simulated environment is in some sense "real") is important for learner engagement in a simulation (Dede, 2009), users teach in a physical classroom environment (the TLE TeachLivE Lab) or using a mobile TV cart, and the simulated students are avatars operated as puppets by a trained human (Dieker, Rodriguez, Lignugaris/ Kraft, Hynes, & Hughes, 2014). Classroom scenarios can be set up to teach specific skills and behaviours, and the system enables repeated practice. It is now in use at 48 US universities; in addition to teaching a wide range of general classroom management skills, it has been successfully used to train teachers of special-needs learners including severely autistic students (Dieker et al., 2014). The puppetry approach allows a wider range of learner behaviours to be modeled without the need for full psychometric computational models.

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

The above examples reflect current simulation technologies, but rapid advances give us glimpses into additional possibilities. For example, Gibson (2013) suggests assessment using cloud-based simulations on mobile devices, offering new ways of reaching users, modeling student behaviours, and conducting large-scale data collection and analysis. The recently announced Microsoft HoloLens, a VR headset supporting augmented reality (Bailey, 2015) suggests the idea of realistic student avatars in any classroom or office setting. TLE TeachLivE researchers envision highly personalized simulation environments, making simulated teaching environments ever more individual, believable, and immersive (Dieker et al., 2014).

MOVING FROM TEACHING TO ASSESSMENT

These examples show that simulations are becoming well established as tools for pre-

service and practicing teachers to augment practicum experience; practice and develop new classroom, management, and interpersonal skills; and in some cases assess existing skills and attitudes in support of candidate screening or hiring. Formative assessment through a cycle of practice, feedback, reflection, and repeated practice is a common aspect of these simulations.

Experience in medical and health education, shows the hurdles to be overcome in order for simulation-based teaching assessment to be widely accepted. Extending simulation to summative assessment requires defining the skills to be measured, choosing appropriate simulation tasks, developing appropriate metrics, assessing the reliability of test scores, and providing evidence to support the validity of test score inferences (Boulet, 2008). Each of these demands rigorous research and analysis when the consequences of decisions based on simulation data are important, as for medical licensing. Implementing assessment simulations also requires extensive training and strong administrative practices to ensure assessment consistency and validity (Furman, Smee, & Wilson, 2010). For technical and practical reasons, high-stakes teacher assessment is clearly not likely to arrive overnight.

As mentioned earlier, political considerations can add additional difficulties for implementing high-stakes simulation-based assessment. Any new form of assessment is likely to encounter resistance when it changes existing norms or appears to challenge existing power structures; this is a significant issue in the Canadian education system, where collective agreements largely govern current practice. In addition, the decentralized nature of our school systems makes it more difficult to implement widespread changes in existing practices.

Still, the potential of simulations to strengthen our school hiring and teacher development shows promise. Future research, as well as practical initiatives, are geared toward improving our teacher hiring and continued development. Perhaps the most practical suggestion, from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2013), is to use multiple sources for teaching quality assessment. Simulations could then become one in a set of tools contributing to school improvement by providing better evidence for assessing teachers' competencies and their impact on student learning.

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CHAPTER 8**Navigating the Bermuda Triangle of Teacher Hiring
Practices in Canada**

By Jerome A. Cranston, University of Manitoba

ABSTRACT

Highly interpretive assessments of potential teacher effectiveness constitute a significant component in almost all teacher-hiring decisions even though little is known about the efficacy of such approaches. In many ways, for better or worse, hiring practices are replicated year after year through a ritualistic adherence by principals and school system administrators, to honour past practice. This chapter describes an innovative teacher hiring approach that draws on the decades of research on the determinants of teaching effectiveness and explains how a framework of the knowledge, skills, and disposition to teach can be used in tandem with existing hiring practices to yield better outcomes from the screening and selection process. The author offers that such real-world approaches can increase the likelihood that those who demonstrate the greatest promise of teaching effectiveness are given the opportunity to teach.

Keywords: teacher effectiveness, teacher hiring, teacher screening and selection

PROLOGUE

“I know it when I see it,” the workshop participant muttered with a bronzed Buddha-like glow on his face.

“Excuse me,” I replied. “Are you speaking to me?”

“Great teaching,” he said. “You know?”

The workshop participant – a veteran principal who proudly wore the look of a graduate of “The School of Hard Knocks” etched on his face – appeared puzzled that I didn’t know the subject of his monologue disguised as a dialogue.

“You know? That PowerPoint slide you had up just before the break with that model of what makes for an effective teacher; it’s not how it works in the real world. It might look good in a text book, but I can just tell as soon as I start the interview”, he continued. “Within the first minutes I know, right then and there if a person has that ‘it factor’ or not. If my spidey-sense goes off, well then I know the person just won’t be any good.”

He did not wait for a reply before he added, “Guess I am one of ‘those’ who can tell right

away”.

I kept on scarfing down the stale croissant I had balanced between my fingers hoping my now lukewarm latte would prevent me from choking on what I really wanted to say. I moved back to the front of the room and behind the lectern to continue the workshop I had been requested to provide to the school division’s administrative team on improving teacher hiring processes.

THE CHALLENGES OF IDENTIFYING THE MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

Anecdotes like the one offered above are, sadly, more akin to reality than they are to fiction. They reflect the folklore of teacher hiring practices that gets passed along in an act of communal reinforcement by uncritical practitioners who pass on speculation and conjecture as fact (Cochran-Smith, 2003). Such stories might be mildly entertaining to hear if it were not for the fact that research (for examples see, Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993; Pappano, 2011) demonstrates that such tales do, in fact, become the truths teachers are hired by. Decades of research have elucidated how stereotypes seriously influence perceptions and assessments of applicants’ capabilities, and affect hiring decisions (Bendick & Nunes, 2012). And one person’s version of just what that magic “it” is could be heavily seeped in stereotype or other unchecked factors of preference.

Assessments of teaching effectiveness are sometimes formed in less than ten seconds of observation, and research has demonstrated that those first impressions are formed in a myriad of ways and can remain unchanged even after a semester’s worth of time actually spent observing a teacher (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993). While such claims may seem absurd, elsewhere researchers have suggested that principals who interview have taken, on average, about 20 minutes to determine a candidate’s potential effectiveness in the class (Toomes & Crowe, 2004). Yet, others have suggested that it is possible to identify which applicants show signs of effectiveness from the analysis of a single email (Pappano, 2011).

Obviously, education is by no means immune to such declarations. Specific to teacher hiring, Clement (2013) identified that hiring decisions are oftentimes based on split second “gut feelings” and “best guesses” while Liu and Johnson (2006) have documented how teacher-hiring decisions are often late, rushed, and conducted in an absence of reliable information about a candidate’s potential to be effective. In far too many cases, year-after-year, such practices are repeated in school districts. Very little attention is paid to the efficacy of the processes by which teachers are hired into schools (Levin & Quinn, 2003; Rutledge, Harris, Thompson & Ingle, 2008).

Teacher hiring myths, thus, can be promulgated as truth when school leaders do not sufficiently analyze the reasons by which they act, and do not examine the assumptions, commitments, and the sense they make of administrative life (Burbules & Berk, 1999). In some sad but whimsical ways, the myths of teacher hiring endure like the hysteria associated with the Bermuda Triangle. Tales of the Bermuda Triangle persist even though L. D. Kusche, a research librarian at Arizona State University and the author of *The Bermuda Triangle Mystery: Solved* (1975) presented a rebuke that poked holes in the claims of the inexplicable disappearances of ships and planes in a loosely defined geographic region in the western part of the North Atlantic. Kusche’s research demonstrates that the vast majority of disappearances are based on exaggerated, dubious, or unverifiable accounts of unknown and mysterious forces, such as extraterrestrials capturing humans for study, or the influence of the lost continent of Atlantis, or vortices that

suck objects into other dimensions. Yet, to this day the Bermuda Triangle folklore continues to be passed on; as do far too many myths associated with teaching in general, and specifically about assessing and hiring based on potential teaching effectiveness (Berliner & Glass, 2014).

Given the important role that teachers play in supporting student success, what is required in teacher hiring practices these days – and this is true in education, in general - is a willingness to be more discerning in recognizing faulty arguments, hasty generalizations, assertions lacking evidence, and truth claims based on unreliable authority. Ambiguous or obscure concepts that may not be based in research nevertheless come to govern the decisions of who gets to teach (Burbules & Berk, 1999). It seems logical to conclude that those charged with hiring teachers would draw from the education-focused personnel management literature to hire the ones who seem most likely to be effective while trying to avoid those who are likely to be ineffective (Cranston, 2012a, 2012b). But, gut feelings that hiring is a mysterious psychic phenomenon with no systematic or scientific approach available to us, like lingering vestiges of the Bermuda Triangle myth, persist.

If finding an effective teacher were simple, however, Stronge (2007) argues that the great many books that exist that describe teacher effectiveness would not be needed. There is, in reality, no consensus on the one best way to assess teacher effectiveness, and, thus, no consensus on how best to assess among new teachers or candidates for teaching positions which ones hold the best promise of becoming effective teachers (Gordon, Kane & Staiger, 2006; Mihaly, McCaffrey, Staiger, & Lockwood, 2013). It seems safe to suggest that if a single method for developing and identifying an effective teacher existed, such a teacher would be in every classroom.

This focus on searching for the most promising candidates should not, however, be abandoned because for those concerned with school-wide improvement initiatives research has demonstrated that two of the most effective approaches to improve a school are to support the teachers currently employed to improve professionally, and to hire the most promising teachers (Whitaker, 2012). Whitaker states that, “a principal’s single most precious commodity is an opening in the teaching staff. The quickest way to improve your school is to hire great teachers at every opportunity” (p. 49). Research suggests that while curriculum, class size, divisional funding, family and community involvement, and many other school-related factors contribute to school improvement and student achievement, the single most impactful in-school factor is the effectiveness of the teachers (Stronge & Hindman, 2003).

Simply stated, good screening and selection policies can help schools do a better job in choosing those who get the opportunity to teach because not everyone who wants to teach is necessarily suitable for teaching or capable of being effective at teaching (Walsh & Tracy, 2004). Prior to beginning the search for great teachers it seems logical to examine what the research suggests are the determinants of teaching effectiveness. By hiring the most promising prospective teachers and simultaneously encouraging the least promising to help society in some way other than teaching students and working in schools, the society would be well served (Cranston, 2012a).

FRAMING THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS TO TEACH EFFECTIVELY

When we consider the complex task of teaching, effectiveness is an elusive concept. Some researchers define teacher effectiveness in terms of student achievement. Others focus on high performance ratings from supervisors. Still others rely on comments from students, administrators,

and other interested stakeholders (Phillips & Olson, 2013). In fact, in addition to effectiveness, scholars vacillate on just how to refer to successful teachers. Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) noted that good teachers, at various times, have been called: ideal, analytical, dutiful, competent, expert, reflective, satisfying, diversity-responsive, and respected.

While Good, Wiley, and Flores (2009) offer that the research on effective teaching is by no means scarce, it is worth noting that conceptions of effective teaching, and the domains that contribute to teaching effectiveness, are contested (Goodwin, 2011; Rose, 2013; Welch et al., 2010). It is, therefore, important to reiterate the point that there is no singularly agreed upon definition of effective teaching (Good et al., 2009; Goodwin, 2011; Ko & Sammons, 2013; Shulman, 1986 & 1987; Stronge, 2007). Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) suggest that acknowledging the tensions associated with defining effective teaching foreshadow the complexity of assessing it.

For example, debates have raged for decades over how important it is for teachers to be experts in their subject areas to be effective (Goodwin, 2011). Hattie (2012) argues that while teachers' subject-matter knowledge does not improve student achievement, "expert" teachers identify the most important ways to represent the subjects they teach. What does make a difference, Hattie contends, is how expert teachers organize and use this content knowledge, how they introduce new content knowledge in a way that integrates it with students' prior knowledge, how they relate the current lesson to other subject areas, and how they adapt the lessons according to students' needs.

Shulman's (1987, p. 5) seminal work on the "knowledge base of teaching" offers a point of departure by which to consider what prospective teachers, at a minimum, ought to know. In broad strokes, Shulman (1987) proposes that there are at least three categories of knowledge from which effective teachers must draw. These are: (a) subject matter knowledge, (b) pedagogical content knowledge, and (c) curricular knowledge. In many ways, Hattie's conclusion resembles Shulman's (1986 & 1987) arguments that a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge is critically important to support student learning.

In order to understand what teachers do, Freiberg (2002) offers "a framework of skills" built on what research has demonstrated about effective instructional strategies (Freiberg & Driscoll, 2000). While not a definitive list, Freiberg's framework can be organized into three broad categories: organizing, instructing, and assessing. It is through the acquisition of practical skills, Freiberg (2002) contends, that new teachers "bridge theory and practice and create high-quality learning environments in their classrooms" (Freiberg, 2002, p. 60).

Alternatively, Good et al. (2009) propose a list of nine specific skills-based principles that are related to teaching effectiveness. The general principles they describe include such factors as: 1) appropriate expectations; 2) proactive and supportive classrooms; 3) opportunity to learn; 4) curriculum alignment; 5) coherent content; 6) thoughtful discourse; 7) scaffolding students' ideas and task involvement; 8) practice/application; and 9) goal-oriented assessments (see Good et al., pp. 805-806 for greater detail). In addition, it has been suggested that given that teachers spend most of the day thinking on their feet and communicating with students, it's not surprising that teachers' verbal and cognitive abilities and skills are strongly tied to their success in the classroom (Goodwin, 2011; Nieto, 2006). Giroux (2002) cautions that it is overly simplistic, and, indeed, dangerous to reduce the notion of learning to teach as being a transactional process of the mind-numbing acquisition of technocratic skills. With that important proviso noted, it seems glib to ignore what seems to be a sound conclusion, which is that effective teaching requires a skilfulness

in professional practice (for examples, see Good et al., 2009; Goodwin, 2011; Nieto, 2006 among others).

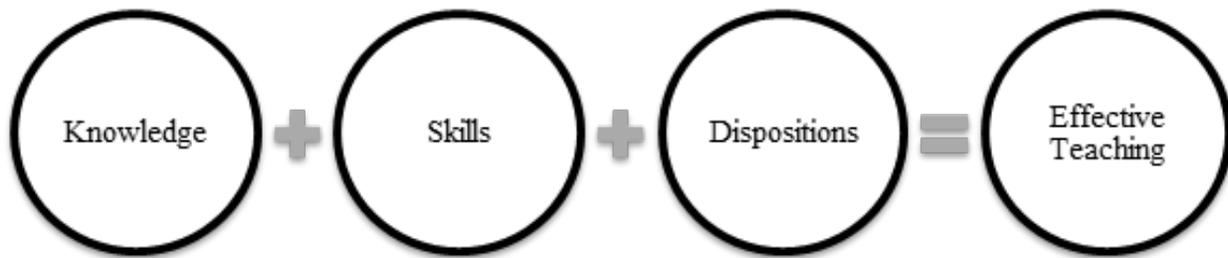
While the utility, purpose, definitions, and assessment of a list of the dispositions required to teach effectively is contested (Welch et al, 2010; Wilson, 2005), authors such as Wadlington and Wadlington (2011) contend that there is little doubt that a teacher's dispositions directly affect her or his effectiveness as an educator. Borko, Liston, and Whitcomb (2007) contend that an individual's dispositions offers insights into a person's tendencies to act in specific contexts and can present predictive patterns of how she or he might act in the future. In a teaching context, Schulte, Edick, Edwards, and Mackiel (2004) suggest that dispositions offer insight into whether, or not, a prospective teacher who possesses the necessary knowledge and skills to teach, will be effective at teaching.

Even with all of the differences of opinions noted about the various knowledge domains, skills, and dispositions required to teach effectively it is hard to ignore the fact that there is an expanding body of research that consistently demonstrates that to teach effectively individuals need to be knowledgeable, skilful, and possess certain dispositions to affect student learning positively (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Hattie, 2012; Kauchak & Eggen, 2011; Stronge, 2007). In general terms, when taken together it is worth noting that research suggests that those teachers considered to be effective possess the following common characteristics in varying levels:

- Knowledge of the subject matter being taught;
- Pedagogical content knowledge;
- Curriculum knowledge;
- Communication skills;
- Organizational and facilitation skills; and
- Values, beliefs and attitudes commensurate to teach in increasingly diverse school communities that are nested in a postmodern industrialized, interdependent and globalized world (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Freiberg, 2002; Good et al., 2009; Goodwin, 2011; Nieto, 2006; OECD, 2005; Rice, 2003; Shulman, 1986 & 1987).

In addition to the research literature, a number of American teacher accreditation bodies, such as the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the American Accreditation Council have established professional credentialing standards for new teachers based on assessments of their knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Rose, 2013). Figure 1, "Domains of effective teaching" below illustrates, in very general terms, the three common domains that research has indicated are related to measures of teaching effectiveness.

Figure 1. Domains of effective teaching



Admittedly, such a formulaic illustration is intentionally presented as being overly simplistic to clarify the point that research suggest that these three domains matter a lot in terms of teaching effectiveness.

Goodwin (2011) suggests that effective teachers possess a few simple, identifiable attributes, namely: Who teachers are, what they know, what they do, what they value and believe, what attitudes they display, and how they organize and structure learning. Thus, it seems warranted for those who seek to hire teachers – those who hold the best promise of being effective – to consider carefully the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of those who apply and are interviewed because certainly those invested in staffing classrooms with the very best teachers ought to consider the factors that research suggests contribute to teaching effectiveness (Clement, 2013; Cranston, 2012a; Mason & Schroeder, 2010).

DATA USED IN TEACHER HIRING DECISIONS

It is well documented that the best school predictor of student outcomes is high-quality, effective teaching as defined by performance in the classroom (Goldhaber, 2002; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, & Rivkin, 2005; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997), and that the best predictor of future effectiveness is proven effectiveness in a classroom (Glaeser, 2008; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane & Staiger, 2011; Smith, Wenderoth & Tyler, 2013). However, a recruitment policy that only focuses on hiring veteran teachers with demonstrated effectiveness would be unfeasible in most school jurisdictions (Rockoff et al., 2011). Even though research (Gordon et al., 2006; Rockoff et al., 2011) suggests it would improve the selection process, very few hiring authorities require a teaching simulation as part of the selection process (Cranston, 2012a).

Decision makers, thus, face the difficult task of systematically identifying among the most and least promising candidates without any evidence related to actual performance in the classroom (Rockoff et al, 2011). It is important to note that those responsible for hiring teachers are not being delinquent in their duties by not observing applicants teach, but are, oftentimes prevented from actually observing applicants in action because of the increasing time pressures associated with being a principal or superintendent (Fink, 2010; Gronn, 2003; Liu & Johnson, 2006). It seems clear that school and system leaders are overburdened, overworked, and overwhelmed these days as the work of leading schools has intensified (Gronn, 2003; Fink, 2010). In the end, they make the best decisions they can in the time that is available to make these important hiring decisions (Bendick & Nunes, 2012; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995).

As is the case in many organizations, when school leaders are tasked with finding the most promising potential employees they can, administrators undertake a review of cover letters and résumés, hold interviews, and conduct reference checks to determine which applicants are most capable of meeting the expectations associated with the job in the specific organizational context (Balter & Duncombe, 2006; Bendick & Nunes, 2012; Cranston, 2012a, 2012b; Engel & Finch, 2015; Ralph, Kesten, Lang, & Smith, 1998; Rebore, 2007; Rutledge et al., 2008; Theel & Tallerico, 2004; Wright, Domagalski & Collins, 2011). When they review the information collected, those in charge of making hiring decisions are presumed to have taken into consideration, thoughtfully and deliberatively, certain criteria that are indicators of teaching effectiveness, while dismissing other criteria that they believe are less valid, less reliable predictors of potential on-the-job success (Ballesterro & Romero, 1998).

While some authors (see for examples, Abernathy, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2001; Braun, Willems, Brown & Green, 1987; Cain-Caston, 1999; Ralph et al., 1998; Theel & Tallerico, 2004) have suggested that student teaching reports are rich data sources that are reviewed as part of the hiring process, elsewhere research has identified that in some jurisdictions student teaching reports are considered to be important hiring criteria in less than three-quarters of all hiring decisions (Cranston, 2012a). This devaluation of the practicum report may be a result of the fact that the construct of the “practicum” is a contested one (Lawson, Çakmak, Gündüz & Busher, 2015) or the fact that the manner in which the practicum unfolds varies considerably across university and school settings in length, intensity, and expectation of what constitutes “practice” teaching (Bowen & Roth, 2002) and, thus, what is described in the practicum report is very hard to interpret. Furthermore, Neville, Sherman, and Cohen (2005) compared the preparation of teachers to that of six other professional fields, and found that:

The richness and value of the clinical experience vary depending on the quality of the supervisor and the amount of time she or he spends monitoring and coaching the student. In Education, clinical experiences are often reported to be limited, disconnected from university coursework, and inconsistent. (p. 13)

Consequently, while it is irresponsible to suggest that there is little to no value in reviewing student teaching reports, it is clear that they are not always considered as important criteria in hiring decisions for a variety of practical reasons.

Teacher selection, as a decision-making process, like almost every decision that is made, requires the balancing of multiple criteria and the most common evidence that is used in almost all hiring processes is information gleaned from cover letters and résumés, interviews, and reference checks (Abernathy et al., 2001; Cranston, 2012a, 2012b; Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, & Thompson, 2007; Peterson, 2002; Rebore, 2007; Theel & Tallerico, 2004). In fact, Rebore (2007) suggests that hiring the best candidate is a direct result of screening cover letters and résumés, conducting interviews, and checking references. While it is impossible to offer a comprehensive review of each of these steps of the hiring process, a brief overview of each is described below.

Cover letter and résumé

Numerous studies (see for example, Abernathy, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2001; Cranston, 2012a; Harris et al, 2007; Theel & Tallerico, 2004) have demonstrated the importance that hiring authorities place on assessments of cover letters and résumés in the initial screening stage of the hiring process. This reliance on cover letters and résumés persists even though research has

demonstrated that they may not, by themselves, accurately represent a candidate's capability given their highly manipulable content (Wright et al., 2011). Still, a résumé and its cover letter are typically the first information that a prospective employer receives about an applicant and often this creates not only a picture of the applicant but also an image of the applicant's competence, motivation, and experience (Knouse, Giacalone, & Pollard, 1988; Rebore, 2007; Wright et al., 2011). A cover letter and résumé give prospective employers a first look at an applicant's overall suitability.

Interviews

Employment interviews are a popular selection technique from many viewpoints. In many types of organizations, employment interviews continue to be one of the most frequently used methods to assess candidates for employment (Judge, Cable, & Higgins, 2000; Macan, 2009). And, while interviews are maligned for a lack of inter-rater reliability on what constitutes a good interview, wrought with inherent biases that interviewers' hold about the appearance, gender, age, and non-verbal cues given by interviewees, and coupled with the fact that most interviewers have poor recall of what was said during the interview, employers still rely on the interview as the most important component of the hiring decision (Bendick & Nunes, 2012; Judge et al., 2000). Research indicates that the most important criteria assessed in the decision of who to hire as teachers is based on the success of candidates in an employment interview (Clement, 2013; Cranston, 2012a, 2012b; Liu & Johnson, 2006). "The interview process," state Mason and Schroeder (2010, p. 187), "is typically when final hiring decisions are made".

Reference checks

Conducting pre-employment reference checks has long been a part of the ritual of hiring (Fenton & Lawrimore, 1992), and it is generally regarded as a process that limits some of the "uncertainty" that is undoubtedly part of the hiring process (Bonnani, Drysdale, Hughes, & Doyle, 2006). The weight employers assign to pre-employment reference checking and background screening is somewhat baffling given the findings of Aamodt (2006) who identified that reference checks are the least accurate and reliable of all measures typically assessed through the traditional hiring process. The practice, however, continues, at least in part because reference checks are regarded as a safeguard against allegations of negligent hiring and of any real or perceived liability associated with negligence that might be connected with hiring employees who do harm to clients (Aamodt, 2006; Fenton & Lawrimore, 1992). It is common for superintendents and principals to check references once interviews are conducted but prior to making offers of employment as the final step in the hiring process (Peterson, 2002; Rebore, 2007).

THREE DATA SOURCES: ONE DECISION

Each of the three measures listed above has its weaknesses. What constitutes a "good" cover letter and résumé, or interview, or reference check is contested (Cranston, 2012a; Judge, Cable & Higgins, 2000; Macan, 2009; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). However, even with the various deficiencies noted, research suggests these three data sources are critically important in almost all hiring decisions (Abernathy et al., 2001; Cranston, 2012a, 2012b; Harris et al., 2007; Peterson, 2002; Rebore, 2007; Theel & Tallerico, 2004).

The efficacy of any teacher hiring process hinges upon the extent to which the screening

and selection approaches used by schools and school divisions lead to credible and trustworthy assessments of an applicant's knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach (Wise, Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1987). Conversely, ineffectual hiring practices can prevent schools from hiring, supporting, and retaining the most promising candidates (Pappay, Kraft, Bloom, Buckley & Liebowitz, 2013). Therefore, limited by the information they gather and bound by the time available that they can commit, hiring authorities undertake a process of systematic determination of the merit, worth, or value of an applicant as a teacher to try and find the most promising ones by assessing job applicants who, in most cases, are, practically speaking, strangers (Bendick & Nunes, 2012; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995; Scriven, 1995).

Given the growing body of research that highlights the influence that teachers have on students' opportunities to succeed in school (for examples see, Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Hattie, 2008; Hanushek et al., 2005; among others), and the various critiques of the current teacher hiring practices (for examples, see Cranston, 2012a, 2012b; Harris et al., 2007; Liu & Johnson, 2006; among others) greater effort needs to be placed on choosing an analytical approach that is supported by the research on effective teaching and will help hiring authorities with the difficult task of screening and selecting those who hold the greatest promise of being great teachers.

TRIANGULATION: A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE HIRING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Effective decision-making is more than a simple sequential process and most certainly depends on the judgment and disposition of the decision-maker (Hoy & Miskel, 2007). Choosing those who will be involved in hiring decisions, and supporting them to develop professionally, in terms of effective personnel leadership, is a critical first step (Cranston, 2012a, 2012b; Peterson, 2002; Rebore, 2007). A second one is equipping educational leaders with the analytical tools that will help them frame hiring decisions around understandings of what domains of professional practice contribute most to teaching effectiveness.

It is worthwhile, at this point, to pay attention to the caution that many conventional definitions of decision-making unnecessarily narrow hiring to some kind of routine task that does not take into account what individuals bring into the dynamics of decision-making (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995). Decision-making is a human activity in which the value judgments of the involved actors play a crucial role (Bana e Costa & Vasnick, 1999; Hoy & Miskel, 2007) and no simplistic model of human activity can adequately represent the complexity of human thought. Thus, the approach described below is not offered as a step-by-step process intended to be followed blindly. It is meant to serve as a framework to support better approaches to hiring, and ones that are done on more than a "gut feeling".

Numerous authorities in research methods identify the importance that the processes of triangulation can play to validate the credibility of the findings of qualitative studies (see for example, Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Cohen & Manion, 2000; Creswell, 2013; McMillan, 2012, among others). Triangulation, a conceptual metaphor borrowed from navigational techniques, draws on multiple reference points to locate an object's position more precisely using convergence techniques from more than a single data source (Rothbauer, 2008; Smith, 1975). Almost fifty years ago Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest (1966) noted that: "once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation

is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes” (p. 3).

Triangulation of data drawn from three distinct data sources allows decision makers to summarize multi-dimensional indicators into a single concept, which in the case of teacher hiring can be phrased as: the likelihood of effective teaching practice (Webb et al., 1966). Triangulation of the information collected during the hiring process will yield thicker descriptions of the applicants in terms of the density and accuracy of the specific information that can be related to notions of effective teaching, and which can vividly, or not, portray an image of what one might expect to transpire in a classroom context (Creswell, 2013; McMillan, 2012).

Triangulation when contextualized within Simon’s (1955) notion of bounded rationality of administrative decision-making offers hiring authorities a powerful approach to make better evidence-based hiring decisions that cannot be deferred until some unknown time in the future. Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) report that even T. B. Greenfield, a staunch critic of the scientification of administrative life, acknowledged that there was merit to take seriously Simon’s point about the logic and psychology of human choice as being bound by the availability of time. In reality, hiring authorities do not have an infinite amount of time and/or money to use when it comes to hiring decisions, and there is little evidence that this will change (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995; Liu & Johnson, 2006). Classrooms need to be staffed, and hopefully with the very best teachers who can be found.

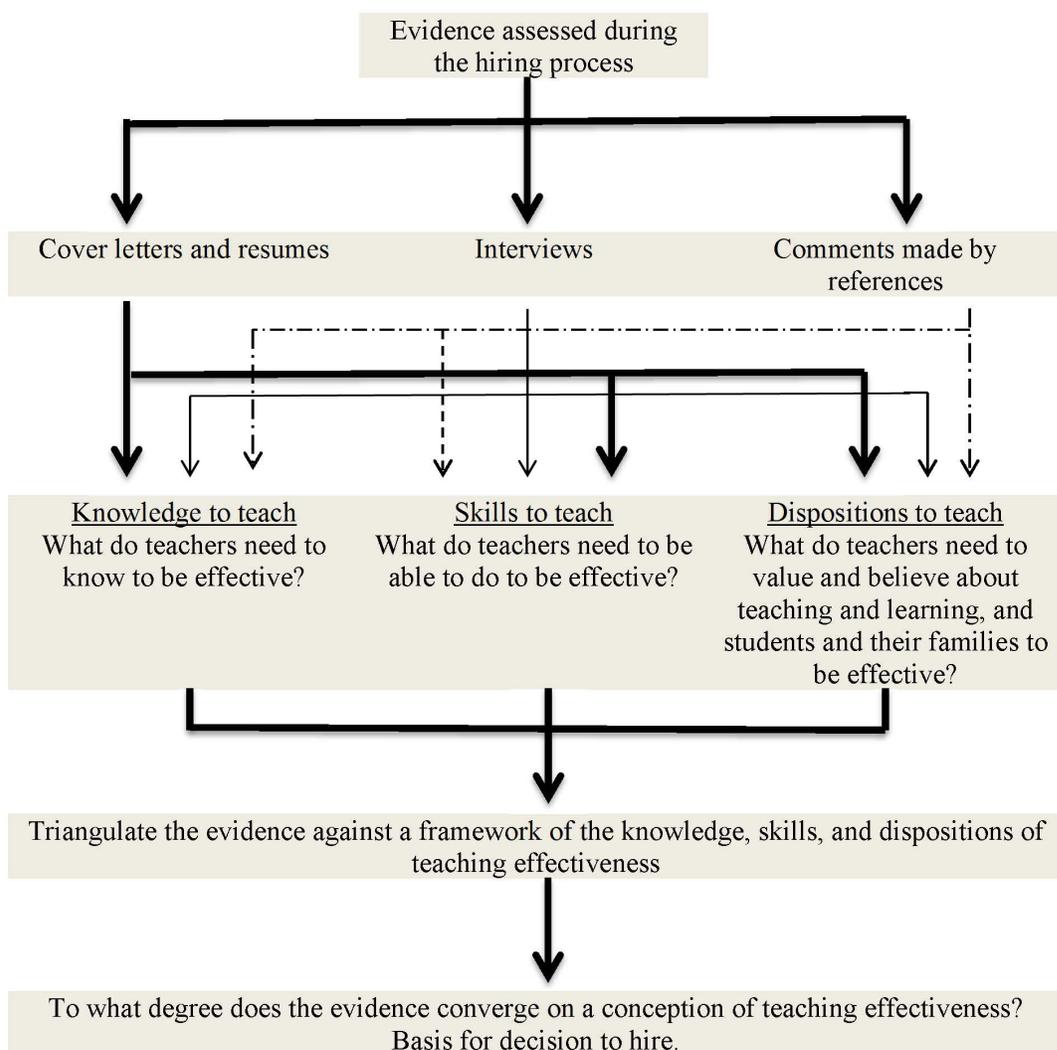
Simon (1955) argued that decision-making necessarily takes place in a context of limited and incomplete information. Decisions are contextually bound by the amount of time available. In a hiring context, principals and superintendents must have teachers hired and in place when children arrive to the classrooms. Rather than rushing through hiring using approaches that are information poor and not aligned to agreed upon standards of effective teaching (Liu & Johnson, 2006) a triangulated approach offers a focused means to assess the most commonly collected information against the research-based determinants of teaching effectiveness in order to help make better hiring decisions. Research (Cranston, 2012a; Liu & Johnson, 2006; Strauss, Bowes, Marks & Plesko, 2000) suggests that those charged with hiring teachers may spend less than two hours with the average applicant before making a decision to hire.

In terms of improving the processes used to hire teachers, this process of triangulation entails gathering evidence of potential effectiveness from the three most common data sources, which are: (a) cover letters and résumés, (b) interviews, and (c) reference checks (Cranston, 2012a; Peterson, 2002; Rebore, 2007) and corroborating the evidence gleaned about the applicants against the standards that a hiring committee has established as the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach effectively in a specific context. Notions of what constitutes teaching effectiveness vary across grades, subjects, and school contexts. It is wise for local hiring authorities to review the extensive literature on teaching effectiveness to develop an “ideal type” of teaching effectiveness that reflects the dynamics of a specific grade or school or school division. As a cautionary note, the concept of an “ideal type,” which is drawn from the work of Weber (Shils & Finch, 1949) when applied to teaching effectiveness is only meant to serve as a heuristic device for making comparisons among the applicants. By employing an approach that triangulates the evidence of potential teaching effectiveness, a system of crosschecking inferences drawn from one source against inferences made from two other independent sources, more trustworthy assessments can be made.

On a daily basis, teachers confront complex decisions in the classroom, and in order to make the most appropriate choices, ones that can, at times, have a lasting impact on students' futures, they must rely on many different forms of knowledge, skills, and a variety of dispositions (Bransford, Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005). It is important, thus, for hiring authorities to spend considerable time determining, without narrowly prescribing, what they expect from new teachers in terms of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be effective teachers in their jurisdiction prior to embarking on the hiring process. It is about matching applicants against what a local jurisdiction expects from its teachers in terms of teaching effectiveness.

By drawing on these commonly valued sources of information and mapping the information gathered from each of them independently against a concept of effective teaching in terms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, the strength of each data source can compensate for blind-spots that exist in another data source (Berk, 2005). Inferences drawn from an analysis of each of the data sources against the same expectations of teaching effectiveness can then converge towards an assessment of the applicant's potential teaching effectiveness. Figure 2, "A framework for hiring decisions based on evidence of effective teaching" below illustrates how the process can be put into practice.

Figure 2. A framework for hiring decisions based on evidence of effective teaching



Such a process of triangulation of data against conceptions of what the research suggests effective teaching represents, allows hiring authorities to make more credible and trustworthy assessments of potential teaching effectiveness than could be made from a single data source, and specifically the one that is traditionally most prized in hiring decisions, specifically the interview (Cranston, 2012a).

Practically speaking, while the hiring process cannot be insulated against human error if hiring authorities use the most highly regarded and commonly assessed information they gather about applicants – cover letters and résumés, interviews, and reference checks – in a process that actually assesses the information collected against agreed upon standards of effective teaching, more robust evidence-based hiring decisions would be made. While it may appear harsh in print, a fundamental task of those charged with the responsibility of staffing classrooms is to distinguish between the worthwhile and the worth-less by gathering and analyzing information about applicants and analyzing it against a standard of teaching effectiveness (Alder & Gilbert, 2006; Berk, 2005; Scriven, 1995).

A PATHWAY TO IMPROVE HIRING PRACTICE

When hiring authorities begin the process of hiring a new teacher -- through a process of systematic and objective determination of merit or value (Scriven, 1995) -- they consider some of the information contained in the cover letters and résumés they receive, the interviews they hold, and the references they check as stronger indicators of potential effectiveness more valuable than others (Cranston 2012a, 2012b; Peterson 2002; Rebore, 2007). There is little evidence to suggest this reliance will change in the near future.

Therefore, by triangulating the information and anchoring the inferences they make from each data source against agreed upon standards of effective teaching, hiring authorities are likely to make more credible decisions than those formed as a general but unfocused synthesis of all of the material candidates provide (Mason & Schroeder, 2010), or ones based solely on interviews (Cranston, 2012a; Peterson, 2002), or ones that are based on nothing more than idiosyncratic opinions formed on observations of teaching that lasted less than twenty seconds (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993).

While the definitions of an “effective” teacher vary, those responsible for hiring teachers ought to try to ensure that any assessment made with respect to application documentation and information gleaned from interviews and reference checks be evaluated and weighted in a way that correlates with a general framework of effective teaching (Cranston, 2012a). Thus, while it may be true that determining a precise definition of what constitutes effective teaching in all schools in all settings will forever remain elusive (Harris & Rutledge, 2007; Moore, 2004), potential employers consistently attempt to hire the most seemingly effective teachers while trying to avoid hiring those who are likely to struggle in classrooms and schools. By improving hiring practices, those charged with hiring teachers are more likely to select strong candidates, provide targeted professional development for new teachers, and potentially decrease teacher attrition rates by creating a better fit between applicants and schools (Coggshall, Ott, Behrstock & Lasagna, 2009; Cranston, 2012b; Levin & Quinn, 2003; Liu & Johnson, 2006).

While some (see Mason & Schroeder, 2010) may suggest that hiring decisions are well served through processes in which all of the candidate information is synthesized, Edmunds and Morris (2000), present a caution when they suggest that a paradox of the times we live in is a

surfeit of information and a paucity of useful information. Gatewood and Field (2001), however, state that “the crucial issue...is not whether an organization can collect information from applicants then decide which are to be given employment offers...the issue is whether the organization can collect information from applicants about individual characteristics that are closely related to job performance and effectively use these data to identify the best applicants for employment offers” (p. 18). With respect to hiring teachers, school and divisional administrators collect a tremendous amount of information about applicants, and, in some regards, they try to consider as much of it as possible in order to get a fuller picture of an applicant.

There appears to be a level of consensus in the management literature that we live in a climate of “infoglut” (Andrejeviv, 2013), or as Shenk (1997) puts it, we are surrounded by data smog, which is an expression for the sludge and muck that gets pushed out in the information age in which we live. Those charged with the responsibility of collecting useful information to screen and select new teachers are not, in fact, immune to the pathogenic effect of this smog. Information overload, the point where there is so much information that it is no longer effective to use it to make decisions, affects principals and superintendents as much as everyone else (Feather, 1998). Such is the end result of holistic assessments of potential teaching effectiveness that do not allow decision makers to focus their attention on those factors that research suggests ought to count most in hiring decisions. Instead, decision-makers become distracted by marginal pieces of information that not only draw attention away from the most reliable information but also obscure it from sight (Glazer, Steckel & Winer, 1992; Mason & Schroeder, 2010). To be fair, holistic assessment approaches such as this have become part of the fabric of the contemporary K-12 education system (Sadler, 2013). However, such assessment approaches that seemingly serve students well may not lead to better decision outcomes when it comes to hiring decisions. Assessment approaches designed to support student achievement and growth, do not necessarily transfer to adult work contexts. Robust and practical hiring approaches designed to screen and select the adults who will work in schools are needed. Deciding what counts, and then counting what counts is critically important in hiring decisions (Boudreau & Ramsted, 2007).

SUMMARY

This chapter addresses one of the concerns that Harris and Rutledge (2007) identified as a substantial disconnect between the research on the broad range of characteristics that are related to teaching effectiveness and the actual approaches used to screen and select prospective teachers. It provides a promising new framework, one intended to serve as a practical approach, to improve teacher-hiring practices. While narrow definitions of the determinants of effective teaching continue to be contested, it is perilous to ignore the research that consistently demonstrates one clear conclusion: great teachers make a profound difference in the lives of children. Opaquely claiming that navigating the information collected during the hiring process requires gut instinct or innate ability is akin to maintaining the position that extraterrestrials are, perhaps, responsible for the mysterious vanishings somehow still attributed to the Bermuda Triangle.

Effective teachers are critically important to support student success and a key factor in school-wide effectiveness, and useful research-based hiring practices are important avenues for ensuring schools are staffed with high quality teachers. Accordingly, the approaches used to make hiring decisions have become the subject of a great deal of recent research and policy interest (Harris et al., 2008; Levin & Quinn, 2003; Rockoff et al., 2011). Supporting principals and system administrators to make efficient, timely, and informed hiring decisions ought to be of vital

importance given the fact that teaching effectiveness is integral to student success.

Authors such as Baker et al. (2010) Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, (2012), and Rothstein (2010) among others have raised concerns about the validity of narrow measures that suggest: “all effective teachers possess the following set of characteristics,” regardless of grade level, school composition, or local community expectations, and, thus, the triangulation framework proposed in this chapter has not offered such a list. The triangulation framework recognizes the role that those charged with the responsibility for hiring teachers hold while intelligibly advocating that they should use the extensive research base on teacher effectiveness to determine what factors they consider are the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach the students in their schools effectively.

While it is fair to think that school leaders would like a guaranteed approach to teacher hiring, it is hard to imagine that a formulaic algorithm can be developed that would serve all school contexts. However, approaches that help school leaders better navigate the expanse of terrain that comprises the current screening and selecting practices, ought to be disentangled from the mythology of teacher hiring. Enough is known from research on the attributes of effective teachers to at least improve the odds that the most promising might be identified. In order to staff classrooms with prospective teachers who hold the promise of being effective, frameworks need to be developed that can be implemented in practice to support the important decisions educational leaders face in identifying the most promising from the least, and, thus, improving the likelihood that children will be consistently taught by great teachers (Rockoff et al., 2011; Walsh & Tracy, 2004). By using the most commonly collected and assessed information and triangulating it against the research on the characteristics of teaching effectiveness, school leaders who are confined by the reality that decisions need to be made within a time frame can improve the likelihood that better outcomes will come from hiring decisions (Cranston, 2012a; Peterson, 2002; Rebore, 2007; Harris & Rutledge, 2007; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995; Simon, 1955).

Over and over again research has demonstrated that teaching effectiveness is the single most important in-school factor to support student achievement and a key lever in almost any school-wide improvement initiative (Hattie, 2012; Whitaker, 2012). Research-based hiring practices that support differentiating among the applicants to find the most promising, therefore, are important pathways for ensuring schools are staffed with the highest quality teachers that can be selected (Balter & Duncombe, 2006; Harris et al., 2010; Levin & Quinn, 2003; Rockoff et al., 2011; Stronge & Hindman, 2003). When hiring practices are supported by evidence-based research they open up the sometimes invisible decision-making processes, or what Heck and Hallinger (1999) referred to as the “black box” of school leadership, to more promising outcomes than random assessments by unschooled hiring committee members. Such a commitment to greater transparency by those dedicated to hiring the most promising new teachers underscores the critical role that knowledgeable, skilful, and effective teachers play in supporting student achievement, however defined. Settling for a process that delivers anything less is unacceptable because it may well deny children access to the very best in-school variable related to their success; effective teachers.

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CHAPTER 9

**Excellent Teachers for Northern and
Remote Alberta Schools**

By Jim Brandon, University of Calgary, Alberta

ABSTRACT

This instrumental case study provides insights into a number of ways that four northern school divisions, the provincial government, and teacher preparation programs are striving to realize the promise of the *Alberta Task Force for Teaching Excellence* (Government of Alberta, 2014) that: “For every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher.” In the face of seemingly insurmountable geographic, economic, social, and cultural challenges to preparing, attracting, developing, and retaining excellent teachers in northern and remote Alberta contexts, seven key findings provide evidence of progress, persistence, and innovation. Further analysis of the data collected from eight telephone interviews, field notes, documents, artifacts, and a reflective research journal yielded four *assertions or analytical generalizations* that chart productive pathways forward: (a) Preparing excellent teachers involves connected, evidence informed, and research–active teacher learning in both university and school settings. (b) There are multiple ways of attracting excellent teachers to northern and remote schools. (c) Welcoming and learning enriched school communities enhance teacher development and retention. (d) Sustained, ongoing partnerships among school systems, municipalities, the provincial government, and teacher preparation programs are needed to sustain remote and northern schools and communities.

Keywords: teacher effectiveness; teacher attraction; teacher induction; teacher retention

INTRODUCTION

In the face of seemingly insurmountable geographic, economic, social, and cultural challenges in attracting, preparing, developing, and retaining excellent teachers for northern and remote Alberta contexts; school divisions, the provincial government, and teacher preparation programs are striving to realize the goal of the *Alberta Task Force for Teaching Excellence* (Government of Alberta, 2014) that: “For every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher.” Despite the fact that the province is recognized as one of the world’s most successful education systems (Hargreaves, Crocker, Davis, McEwen, Sahlberg, Sumara, Shirley, & Hughes, 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012, 2012a; Levin, 2010), the Task Force presented the Ministry of Education with 24 recommendations to better align teaching with *Inspiring Education* – Alberta’s long-term vision centred on the student in a rapidly changing world (Government of Alberta, 2014, p. 6).

Alberta's school system serves the province's 606 627 students in 1868 schools organized into 62 school jurisdictions. The system employs 41 000 full and part-time teachers, each of whom is professionally prepared and provincially certificated in accordance with the provincial *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 1997). In addition to their university level teacher education, teachers are only granted permanent certification on the recommendation of their school superintendent following two full years of successful teaching. Individuals wanting to become teachers first need to have a Bachelor of Education or possess a recognized university degree supplemented by completion of a teacher preparation program leading to a provincially approved *Interim Certificate*. Of the approximately 2000 teachers who gain interim certification through Alberta's nine teacher education institutions each year, only 75% become teachers in the province. Although more teachers graduate each year than the number of available teaching positions, there are still serious teaching shortages in the rural north of the province.

The primary purpose of the study upon which this chapter is based was to provide insights into the ways that four northern school divisions are working to overcome the obstacles to ensuring that high quality teachers serve their students. A secondary purpose was to examine the ways in which the Ministry and teacher preparation programs can contribute to this cause. The chapter is presented in five parts, beginning with the study's research design, followed by an overview of the four northern school systems. Next, the theoretical framework that guided the study is outlined. Seven findings generated by analysis of four sources of data are then described. The chapter concludes with the presentation of four *assertions or analytic generalizations*, which may serve others wishing to help ensure that for every child, in every northern and remote Alberta class, there is an excellent teacher.

THE STUDY

Approaches to attracting, preparing, developing, and retaining excellent teachers in northern and remote Alberta contexts are illustrated in this investigation, which was guided by the following research question:

In what ways are school divisions, the Ministry, and teacher preparation programs working to overcome the challenges of attracting, preparing, developing, and retaining excellent teachers in northern and remote Alberta contexts?

The research design used to address the research question was case study, which is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection from multiple sources (Creswell, 2007). "Bounded means that the case is separated for research in terms of time, place or some physical boundaries" (Creswell, 2012, p. 465). The phenomenon investigated within the bounded system of the Alberta school system in 2015 was *perceptions of the ways through which selected school divisions, the Ministry, and teacher preparation programs were working to overcome the challenges of attracting, developing, and retaining excellent teachers in northern and remote Alberta contexts*. The study was conducted within the protocols of the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board.

Data collection and analysis were informed by instrumental case study methods (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2009). The data generated through eight qualitative telephone interviews, field notes, documents, artifacts, and my reflective research journal allowed for a rich and in-depth exploration of the research question. A *constructivist* approach to research interviewing was employed. Such interviews are understood to be flexible, context sensitive, and

dependent on the personal interrelationship of the interviewer and interviewee (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 198).

Rich, specific, and relevant perspectives were sought from the eight interviewees: four school division representatives, two Ministry of Education representatives, and two representatives of the University of Calgary's Werklund School of Education. I tried to use their time effectively, while giving participants ample opportunity to explain their views. To a large extent, the meanings of participant responses and comments were probed and clarified throughout each interview. I attempted to verify my interpretations of their answers over the course of the interview in keeping with the criteria for effective qualitative interviewing itemized by Brinkman and Kvale (2015, p. 192).

As a former teacher, school leader, and deputy superintendent with more than 16 years of experience as an educator in remote, northern settings, I have tried to locate myself transparently as a researcher through all phases of this study. My history as a former northerner and a lengthy involvement on the provincial executive of the College of Alberta School Superintendents *positioned* me as an *insider* in this research (Andres, 2012, p. 18). From this vantage point I was able to gain access to school jurisdiction personnel, documents, and artifacts quite readily. I was also able to collect, analyze, and interpret data continuously through the lens of my own professional experience. As a researcher who has transitioned away from the daily life worlds of practicing educational leaders and into the academic domain, I am also positioned as an *outsider*. From this vantage point, I was consciously committed to adhering to the principles of case study research. I was also diligent in critically establishing a clear *chain of evidence* from the research question through the multiple sources of data to the findings and assertions and back to the question (Yin, 2009, pp. 122-123).

By relying on a theoretical framework to guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation, I followed the consistent advice of the key scholars who most influenced my methodological choices (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2006; and Yin, 2009). All interview and focus group data, field notes and documents were reviewed and analyzed through iterative processes of reading, re-reading, theme development, and review. Analysis of these qualitative data was informed by the view that "coding is deep reflection about, and, thus, deep analysis and interpretation of the data's meanings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 72).

From the first telephone interview, the interactive nature of data collection and preliminary analysis became an important part of the process (Merriam, 1998, p. 148). Throughout the fieldwork period I was engaged in simultaneous data collection and analysis. As a regular practice during each data collection day, I reviewed interview notes and engaged in reflective writing that generated tentative themes. Next, the interview summaries were read in their entirety to get a better sense of their content and context. Subsequent readings of the texts looked for emerging themes and descriptive details. In second level coding, pattern codes were developed (Miles et al., 2014, pp. 86-104). Using the descriptive categories and criteria that emerged from the initial data analysis, more detailed pattern codes – larger categories or themes – were created to form the basis of the findings.

By design, I undertook a number of deliberate strategies to provide assurance that accurate information had been obtained and that interpretations were warranted. Stake (2006) indicated that triangulation "has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, but it is also verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (2006, p. 37).

I worked toward triangulation through the use of multiple data sources, repetitious data gathering, and by sending interview summaries to participants for member checking verification.

FOUR NORTHERN AND REMOTE SCHOOL DIVISIONS

The four school divisions selected to participate in this study were Fort Vermilion, Peace River, High Prairie, and Lakeland Catholic. As one of the eleven *Northern Tier* jurisdictions with unusually high annual teacher mobility and attrition rates, each of the four school divisions participated in an Alberta Education *Supporting Beginning Teachers Project* designed to provide additional support and guidance to strengthen the transition of beginning teachers from their teacher preparation and practicum experiences to employment and through the process of moving from *Interim Professional Certification to Permanent Professional Certification*. The initiative provided financial support for provision of teacher time and mentorship opportunities. Action research to (a) investigate the phenomenon of early career attrition by teachers new to the profession and (b) to better understand approaches to *teacher Induction* was a requirement (Alberta Education, 2010).

Table 1. Four Northern and Remote School Divisions

School Division	Students	Teachers	Schools*	Central Office (CO)	Distance CO to Edmonton	CO to Most Distant School
Fort Vermillion	3116	217	20	Fort Vermillion	660 km	230 km
High Prairie	3000	198	11	High Prairie	370 km	115 km
Lakeland Catholic	2162	128	7	Bonnyville	240 km	150 km
Peace River	3217	194	20	Peace River	490 km	160 km

* Includes outreach schools, learning stores, Hutterite schools, and home education centres.

Though the construct of *northern and remote* schools and school divisions may be contested (Eaton, Dressler, & Gereluk, 2015) each of the four participating school divisions is to some degree typical of northern and remote Alberta jurisdictions, in my view. In each case the division is a considerable distance from the provincial capital of Edmonton and provides services over an extremely large and sparsely populated area. Regional economies in each setting are based on three main resources: oil and gas, agriculture, and forestry. Table 1 provides selected data on each school of the four systems to clarify the context for this study and to demonstrate aspects of their varying degrees of remoteness. Enrolment and teaching information was collected from provincial budget summaries available on the Alberta Education website. Alberta education indicates that these data were based on fall 2014 submissions by the school jurisdictions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this inquiry was to illustrate and illuminate innovative approaches to attracting, preparing, supporting, and retaining excellent teachers in northern and remote Alberta contexts to realize the following goal: “For every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher” (Government of Alberta, 2014, p. 6). In keeping with the requirements of case study research (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2009), multiple sources of evidence were gathered and analyzed. The interview questions and other data collection methods were derived from a five-

dimension theoretical framework presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework



What Does It Mean To Be An Excellent Teacher?

What it means to be an excellent teacher is at the centre of the theoretical framework. The *Alberta Task Force for Teaching Excellence* (Government of Alberta, 2014) called for more “flexible, innovative, and learner-centered” teaching with a shift in the role of the teacher from “that of a knowledge authority to an architect of learning – one who plans, designs, and oversees learning activities” (p. 10). Acting on their survey data, which indicates that 80% of participants (including 70% of teacher participants), are in favour of one common, province-wide practice standard for teachers, the Task Force recommended that the *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 1997) be updated (p. 28).

The Task Force report suggests that movement toward more current teaching standards could be guided by the *Framework of Effective Teaching for Learning* (FETL) designed by the Alberta Association of Deans of Education (AADE) to address the complexities teachers face in working with students in today’s rapidly changing world (Brandon et al., 2012). The AADE framework was commissioned by Alberta Education and was meant to serve as a foundation for dialogue toward the next iteration of the Alberta consensus on effective teaching. The Task Force report’s summary of AADE’s five competencies indicates that an effective teacher: (a) designs academically and intellectually engaging learning; (b) engages students in meaningful learning experiences; (c) assesses student learning to guide teaching and learning; (d) fosters supportive learning relationships; and (e) collaborates to enhance teaching and learning (Government of Alberta, 2014, p. 29).

Though the literature is by no means united on the benefits of common practice standards, the AADE framework aligns with several recent complex conceptions of teaching for learning that aim to foster the dispositions, skills, and knowledge students need to meet the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century (e.g., Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Friesen, 2009; 2011; Friesen & Lock, 2010; Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Sawyer, 2006; 2008; OECD 2001; Scardamalia

& Bereiter, 2006; Willms, Friesen, & Milton, 2009). Friesen and Lock (2010) indicated that approaches to teaching based on this research, scaffold active engagement, and help students to understand themselves as learners. Such learning environments recognize that learning is not merely a solo activity; rather it is a distributed undertaking, social in nature, and involves the processes of interaction, negotiation, cooperation, collaboration, and participation. Teaching in this vein is learner-focused and responsive to the fact that students differ in many ways, including their prior knowledge. Learning is maximized when each learner is sufficiently challenged and supported to reach just above their existing level and capacity. Assessment and instruction work together to ensure that learning goals are transparent and learners receive substantial, regular, timely, specific, meaningful feedback to improve learning.

Preparing Excellent Teachers For Northern and Remote Alberta Contexts

How best to prepare teachers for these new ideas about teaching for learning is the second framework component. Four of the 24 Task Force recommendations were designed to prepare teachers as *architects of learning*. Widening the entrance criteria for teacher preparation programs, aligning program content with *Inspiring Education*, establishing alternative pathways to teaching, and extending teacher practicums are featured recommendations in this section of the report, with the intention to create a well-prepared and professional “community of teachers that reflects the diverse communities they serve, with a range of backgrounds and experiences, so they can connect deeply with students” (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005, p. 31).

This notion of *connecting deeply with students* is especially important in northern and remote contexts. A notable large scale effort to alter American teacher preparation programs to meet the needs of students in the current century was presented in *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do* (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). This seminal report builds on recent studies of learning (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; OECD, 2001, 2007, 2008; Sawyer, 2006, 2008) to understand the cognitive, emotional, and social processes that result in the most effective learning and to use this knowledge within the design of curriculum, teaching, and assessment so that people learn more deeply and effectively. Bransford, Darling-Hammond and LePage (2005) offered a three part conceptual framework that organized “the vast amounts of information relevant to effective teaching and learning” in “three general areas of knowledge, skills, and dispositions” (p. 10) that are important for any teacher to acquire:

- Knowledge of learners and how they learn and develop within social contexts,
- Conceptions of curriculum content and goals: an understanding of the subject matter and skills to be taught in light of the social purpose of education, and
- An understanding of teaching in light of the content and learners to be taught, as informed by assessment and supported by classroom environments. (p. 10)

In their extensive review of the research, Eaton, Dressler, and Gereluk (2015) found that the potential benefits of blended and online pre-service teacher education have not been adequately explored in Canada. Though demand for qualified and competent teachers in northern and remote areas is high, potential students have little access to teacher education programs unless they move to an urban center or a satellite campus (Alberta Education, 2013). Dupuy, Mayer, and Morissette (2000) reported that 77% of those who leave their rural and remote areas to attend post-secondary institutions do not return to their communities. Students who live at a distance from urban teacher preparation programs are at a disadvantage (Eaton, Dressler, & Gereluk, 2015).

Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Excellent Teachers for Northern And Remote Alberta Contexts

Building on several years of research commissioned by the Ministry, the *Task Force* placed emphasis on attracting, preparing, and inducting beginning teachers through a total of ten recommendations. For the purposes of this study, *attracting, developing, and retaining* excellent teachers are grouped into this one section of the literature review and are viewed as parts of continuum of transition into accomplished professional practice (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

In response to concerns about a high rates of teacher attrition, Alberta Education and education partners have been exploring the benefits of teacher induction programming since 2006 (Alberta Education, 2009, 2010). With close to one third of beginning teachers leaving the profession in their first five years of practice (Alberta Education, 2009), ongoing research in a variety of settings affirmed the following four key elements of effective induction programs: (a) mentorship by trained master teachers, (b) deliberate efforts to adjust the beginning teacher assignment in a manner consistent with the teacher's beginning level of training and experience, (c) opportunity for reflection and follow up planning with a cohort of beginning colleagues, and (d) time built into the schedule for beginning teachers to visit and team teach with other professionals as part of a focused and supported plan of professional learning (Alberta Education, 2009).

The review by Eaton, Dressler, and Gereluk (2015) draws from a number of studies to make it clear that attracting and retaining teachers for rural and remote areas of Canada is a much more significant problem than in urban settings and cite evidence that the rural and remote teacher shortage has become worse in recent years. They further claim there is "simply not enough access to teacher certification for individuals in rural and remote areas" (Grant, 2010) and point to a Northern Alberta Development Council recommendation that Alberta communities make an increased priority to recruit local teachers with the proposed solution of "growing our own teachers" (Northern Alberta Development Council, 2010, p. 11).

FINDINGS

This instrumental case study was designed to illustrate and illuminate approaches to attracting, preparing, developing, and retaining excellent teachers in northern and remote Alberta contexts. Despite a number of geographic, economic, social, and cultural challenges, the seven key findings presented in this section provide evidence of progress, persistence, and innovation. Data were collected from multiple sources through the lens of a five-dimension theoretical framework, which was then used as an organizational guide for coding, description, and report writing.

Discussion of each of the seven key findings includes a short statement of the finding followed by a description of the evidence upon which it is based and reference to selected research literature. This pattern was informed by Merriam's (1998) advice to balance *particular description* (quotes from people and field notes), *general description* (tells readers whether the comments are typical or unique), and *interpretive commentary* (provides the framework for understanding) (p. 235). The findings are categorized under four headings, three of which were derived from the theoretical framework: (a) preparing excellent teachers for northern and remote Alberta contexts, (b) attracting excellent teachers to northern and remote Alberta contexts, (c) developing, and retaining excellent teachers in northern and remote Alberta schools, and (d) partners in teaching excellence.

Preparing Excellent Teachers For Northern and Remote Alberta Contexts

Findings One and Two are based on participant perspectives of what it means to be an excellent teacher and how best to prepare teachers for northern and remote schools.

Finding One: *Preparing excellent teachers involves the development of robust and research informed teaching competencies linked to student learning. Excellently prepared teachers work collaboratively, build relationships, and capably design, activate, and assess student learning.*

There was general agreement about the ideas expressed in Finding One across the three participant groupings – university representatives, Ministry officials, and school division leaders. Only minor variations in what participants viewed as the *technical* aspects of teaching surfaced. Terms like *planning* and *delivery* were used in most cases rather than *design* and *activate*. Interestingly, all participants placed heightened importance on the *research informed, collaborative, and relational* teaching competencies. For instance, Sharon looks for teachers who are “innovative, risk takers, and have a passion to be really great professionals”. A university representative expressed that a great teacher is “someone who is kind and patient, who understands the curriculum, is willing to work hard, and respects the dignity of each child”. Several research sources support the ideas expressed in Finding One (for instance, Brandon et al., 2012; Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Friesen, 2009; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005; Hammerness & Darling-Hammond, 2005, Hattie, 2009).

Finding Two: *Field experiences are an important component of a high quality teacher preparation program. Field placements need to be selected carefully so that pre-service teachers learn with research-active practitioners in learning enriched schools.*

Participant perspectives aligned with recent research on teacher education that underlines the importance of field experiences for pre-service teachers as expressed in Finding Two. School division representatives were strongly supportive of longer practicum experiences as well as earlier engagement in schools. John indicated that, “longer practicums lead to stronger teacher preparation programs” and, like his colleagues suggested that teacher preparation programs could place greater emphasis on student assessment, the Alberta curriculum, and the application of technology. Teresa made this case:

Student teaching situations need to be good for student teachers. It is important to place them with excellent teachers. As one example a new teacher in our division was struggling with planning and we found out that her pre-service co-operating teacher did not give her an opportunity to do that. So we had to work with the new teacher to build these basic skills. In our division, we put a lot of thought to ensure that student teachers are placed in good situations where they will learn.

Ministry and university participants echoed these sentiments. Longer and earlier practicums were viewed as critical teacher preparation components. It is widely agreed in the research literature that early and ongoing learning experiences in welcoming and learning enriched school settings are key elements of strong teacher education programming (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Hammerness & Darling-Hammond, 2005; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005). Hammerness and Darling-Hammond (2005) captured the wisdom of learning about practice in practice:

Whereas in the traditional undergraduate program, student teaching was often placed at the end of the program, as a kind of culminating experience, many programs are now entwining carefully designed clinical experiences early and throughout a program. Many teacher educators argue that student teachers see and understand both theory and practice differently if they are taking course-work concurrently with fieldwork. (p. 401)

Attracting Excellent Teachers to Northern and Remote Schools

Participant perspectives on how best to attract and select teachers to northern and remote schools are presented in this section. In view of the interconnections between Findings Three and Four, they are discussed together.

Finding Three: *The four northern school divisions utilize a variety of strategies and deploy significant resources to attract teachers to their schools. Each jurisdiction approaches the challenge in nuanced ways they see as working in their specific context.*

Finding Four: *High teacher turnover rates are a costly and frustrating aspect of northern school system reality. Each of the four systems is methodical about their selection processes, which always involve more than a single employment interview.*

The participant perspectives and documentary evidence that contributed to Findings Three and Four describe a number of teacher attraction and selection approaches that are working to varying degrees in the four school divisions. Each of the four school divisions has developed systems it feels are successful at finding teachers for their more remote schools. Each division invests considerable time and resources on teacher recruitment. In most cases, interested and professionally qualified candidates are engaged in multiple interviews to test their suitability for living and working in the north. Skype, teleconference, and face-to-face interviews in tandem with extensive reference checking were making a difference, in Teresa's estimation:

We are doing better at retaining teachers because our selection processes are better. We don't settle anymore. There are good teachers who want to come to northern Alberta. We work as a team, with principals making sure of references, student teaching, and pedagogy. I check for red flags and discuss each candidate with the principal before an offer is made.

The data collected suggest a local to national continuum of attraction and recruitment strategies. *Community based* approaches were valued by all participants. In many instances these were encouraged, supported, and funded by one or more ministries of the Alberta Government in partnership with one or more teacher preparation programs. Concerted efforts of several forms have been underway for more than a decade. Bursaries for northern students and subsidies for northern practicums are two funding focused examples. As one participant observed, "the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) has operated for ten years through the University of Alberta, but it could be even more successful." Another participant attested to impressive results from a similar program with a shorter history, the Community Based Teacher Education Program (CBTEP). "Employment rates were high: 26 of 27 graduates were employed as graduates in their home communities."

The two Ministry participants identified several obstacles to online education in the remote north, including limited or unreliable Internet access. They both advocated for a variety of community-based strategies. One idea was to encourage remote schools and school divisions to recruit non-teaching school employees, interested high school students, and other members of

the community into community-based teacher education programs. Supported access to school computers and the inclusion of local pre-service teachers in welcoming learning environments in their local schools were viewed as ways to remove barriers. Such arrangements were seen as reducing the sense of isolation experienced by many rural pre-service teachers, while at the same time encircling them in learning supportive relationships.

The challenge of drawing recent graduates from the southern part of the province was clearly understood and expressed by one of the university participants.

Many student teachers do not understand the north. Many student teachers do not like or appreciate the north. We need to develop teachers from rural and remote parts of the province who want to stay in their home community.

The more centrally situated of the four divisions continues to recruit teachers successfully from other areas of Alberta. As Teresa reflected:

The majority of our teachers still come from Alberta. We try to find the right matches by looking for people for whom the north will be a good place. We look at what they've done for kids in the past along with their pre-service interests. We find that outgoing people who can make connections and who reach out to the community do better. Our former approach of going down east to recruit is no longer used. We have found that it's the support we provide that keeps people with us.

Michele also indicated that "most of our teachers come from the University of Alberta" and that her division's efforts "to connect with kids from high schools to encourage them to come back" resulted in a record number of area teacher education students completing their practicums back where they had gone to school. At the same time, she also noted that a relatively high proportion of their teachers migrated west from the Maritime Provinces or Ontario. In her experience, it was less effective to recruit from southern Alberta teacher preparation programs.

Attraction and recruitment strategies at the national end of the continuum are more prevalent in two of the divisions. Sharon's division devotes up to three weeks each spring recruiting teachers from several Eastern Canadian universities and notes, "we are very selective and don't settle". Although behavioural descriptive interviewing techniques are employed, Sharon looks at each interview as a conversation. "I want to listen to their stories and understand their experiences so that I develop relationships on a personal level with new teachers." The relationship building process continues to be a focus once the teacher joins the division. In her view, it is the welcoming and supportive nature of these relationships that helps to retain teachers within the system.

John's division also emphasizes the personal connections with all staff members, a large percentage of whom come from Eastern Canada. He fully understands the challenges of attracting and retaining teachers to the north and responds in pragmatic and personalized ways. Recruitment efforts "honestly" promote the benefits of starting a career in well-equipped, new schools, in communities with significant numbers of younger families. Opportunities for advancement are also part of the appeal for those who do join the division.

Along the community-based to more global continuum of intensive and extensive attraction and selection approaches described in relation to Findings Three and Four, there is not one single approach that stands above the others as the *one best way* to overcome challenges posed by such factors as isolation, distance, high cost of living, and limited availability of adequate housing.

Many attraction and selection approaches align with existing research (Cranston, 2012; Eaton, Dressler, & Gereluk, 2015; Government of Alberta, 2014; Maynes & Hatt, 2013; Northern Alberta Development Council, 2010; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005).

Developing and Retaining Excellent Teachers in Northern and Remote Schools

Documentary evidence and participant perspectives on approaches to teacher development and retention yielded Findings Five and Six, which are presented together.

Finding Five: *Each of the four northern school divisions has created a contextually workable version of a research informed teacher induction program. Mentoring and cohort learning are featured in all four programs.*

Finding Six: *Each jurisdiction is working to support the development of its principals as instructional leaders. The primary focus is to create school learning communities that support ongoing professional learning and the development of all teachers to serve student learning more effectively.*

Research informed, ambitious, and evolving teacher induction programs were described by each of the four jurisdiction representatives, the two Ministry of Education leaders, and outlined in Alberta Education reports and documents (Alberta Education 2009). As members of Alberta Education's northern *pilot* teacher induction initiative, the four divisions and other northern school authorities were provided additional funding and guidance "to support the transition of beginning teachers from teacher preparation and practicum experience, to employment and through the process of moving from Interim Professional Certification to Permanent Professional Certification" (2010, p. 3). Though provincial funding has ended, each division continues to implement a teacher induction program with intense late summer orientations, trained mentors and some opportunities to reflect and learn in beginning teacher cohorts. Documentary evidence and school division participant comments indicate that to varying degrees the programs feature visits to other classrooms and schools as well as the provision of modest workload reductions. Participants described the adaptations they had made to their initial 2009 program designs in all four cases. In some cases, participants indicated that the changes were made through reflection on the initial action research conducted with teacher preparation institution partners. Other reported changes were locally initiated pragmatic responses to realities of distance, school size, time, and available expertise.

Given the distances between the generally small and remote schools in the four divisions, the trained mentorship role envisioned in the teacher induction literature has evolved in similar directions in the four school authorities. In Teresa's setting, the mentor role has been adapted so that one divisionally based *mentoring coach* is now utilized to work with all beginning teachers. New teachers are now supported informally in their schools by teacher buddies and more formally by learning oriented school leaders. In Michele's division, five *learning coaches* provide support to teachers in all schools. Variations on the idea of learning coaches are being implemented in the other two systems as well. In most of these variations, instructional leadership expertise is provided to all educators by some form of coaching in areas such as inclusion, technology, differentiation, and diversity.

All four of the divisions have capitalized on support provided through the *Northern Tier*

School Leaders Program (SLP) (Phillips, Negroptes, & Hoppins, 2013), which was funded by Alberta Education to help school leaders to, among other outcomes, know and be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate that the mission of the school is improved student learning and the vision of the school is based on a shared understanding of exemplary teaching. As the lead teacher, the principal leads the staff to plan, implement, and assess professional learning for the staff. The professional learning improves the teaching practice;
- Demonstrate that the principal as leader of the school community needs strong communication, coaching, and conflict resolution skills. The principal must be able to develop, maintain, and foster strong interpersonal relations with the school community;
- Demonstrate that the principal as leader of the school community needs to have strong planning and resource management skills, including the ability to prioritize the work and support people through multiple change initiatives as well as engage all stakeholders in the community through excellent communication and relationship building skills. (pp. 1-2)

A key learning from this SLP work across the Northern Tier was to see the value of conceptualizing and supporting the school leader's role as a *leader of learning* or, in most cases, as a leader of a shared leadership team. Creating strong and welcoming learning cultures through professional community and distributing leadership to coaches, mentors, and others are ideas that participants in this study indicate are taking root.

Findings Five and Six add to a vast body of research that underlines the benefits of welcoming and learning focused school and division cultures. While each component of a research informed teacher induction program is in itself important, it is the beginning teacher's overall experience within a school community that has the greatest impact. The conception of teaching as a social undertaking is well documented (Couvier, Brandon, & Prasow, 2008; Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2005; Fullan, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Robinson, 2011; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Rosenholz, 1989; Timperley, 2011; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007; Wahlstrom, 2012).

Partners in Teaching Excellence

The single finding below is based on both interview and documentary data related to strategies to overcome the obstacles to retaining more teachers in these northern Alberta contexts.

Finding Seven: *Progress is evident in the efforts of northern school divisions, the provincial government, and teacher preparation programs to prepare, attract, develop, and retain excellent teachers. In the views of several participants, the way forward will be through the creation of longer-term partnerships and funding models to ensure equity of access in the face of significant geographic, economic, social, and cultural challenges.*

Finding Seven is based on the themes that ran through narratives of all three participant groups. School division, Ministry, and university participants spoke with pride and appreciation for the good work that has been done across these organizations during the last several years to attract, develop, and retain great teachers for their schools. However, to a person, participants voiced their desires to see longer-term solutions to the obstacles they continue to encounter through these

efforts. Though no directional pattern was consistently evident in these narratives, calls for more reliable long-term funding, intergovernmental cooperation, innovation in teacher education, and greater local community engagement were voiced.

This study's seven findings and the evidence to support them emerged from the thematic analysis informed by Brinkman and Kvale (2015), Merriam (1998), Stake (1995, 2006) and Yin (2009). Insights from further analysis of and reflection on the seven key findings are presented in the chapter's concluding section.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This chapter provides insights into ways that four northern school divisions, teacher preparation institutions, and the Ministry are working to overcome geographic, economic, social, and cultural challenges to ensuring that high quality teachers serve students in their schools. Analysis of data from multiple sources generated seven substantive findings described in the preceding section, which in turn were developed through further analysis into four major assertions presented below. These four analytical generalizations are based on reasoned judgement and assertational logic about the extent to which they may be transferable and can be used to shape policy and practice in other settings.

Stake (2006) observed that case studies such as this one are frequently used as a step toward theory:

It is true that social scientists seeking generalization attend to both the particular and the general. They often justify the study of the particular as serving grand explanation not so much in a statistical sense but in a conceptual sense. (p. 8)

The four assertions are cross-referenced to specific findings on Table 2, with the intent of making it easier to judge the soundness of each analytical generalization (Brinkman & Kvale, 2012, p. 297). As Stake (2006) cautioned: "The evidence that persuaded the researchers needs to accompany each Assertion. It is not evidence for a court of law or geometric proof. It is persuasion, logical persuasion, the Assertion is credible" (p. 41). Each of the four assertions on the left side of Table 2 is stated as an analytical generalization and is based on a further analysis of the finding or findings summarized on the right side of the table. Evidence that generated the findings was discussed in the immediately previous section.

Table 2. Assertions Cross Referenced to Key Findings

Four Assertions	Supporting Evidence From Seven Key Findings
<p>Assertion One: <i>Preparing excellent teachers involves connected, evidence informed, and research-active teaching and learning in both university and school settings.</i></p>	<p>Finding One: <i>Preparing excellent teachers involves the development of robust and research informed teaching competencies linked to student learning. Excellently prepared teachers work collaboratively, build relationships, and capably design, scaffold, and assess student learning.</i></p> <p>Finding Two: <i>Field experiences are an important component of a high quality teacher preparation program. Field placements need to be selected carefully so that pre-service teachers learn with research-active practitioners in learning enriched schools.</i></p>
<p>Assertion Two: <i>There are multiple ways to attract excellent teachers to northern and remote schools.</i></p>	<p>Finding Three: <i>The four northern school divisions utilize a variety of strategies and deploy significant resources to attract teachers to their schools. Each jurisdiction approaches the challenge in nuanced ways they see as working in their specific context.</i></p> <p>Finding Four: <i>High teacher turnover rates are a costly and frustrating aspect of northern school system reality. Each of the four systems is methodical about their selection processes, which always involve more than a single employment interview.</i></p>
<p>Assertion Three: <i>Welcoming and learning enriched school communities enhance teacher development and retention.</i></p>	<p>Finding Five: <i>Each of the four northern school divisions has created a contextually workable version of a research informed teacher induction program. Mentoring and cohort learning are featured in all four programs.</i></p> <p>Finding Six: <i>Each jurisdiction is working to support the development of its principals as instructional leaders. The primary focus is to create school learning communities that support ongoing professional learning and the development of all teachers to serve student learning more effectively.</i></p>
<p>Assertion Four: <i>Dynamic and innovative partnerships among school systems, municipalities, the provincial government, and teacher preparation programs are needed to sustain remote and northern schools in their communities.</i></p>	<p>Finding Seven: <i>Progress is evident in the efforts of northern school divisions, the provincial government, and teacher preparation programs to prepare, attract, develop, and retain excellent teachers. In the views of several participants, the way forward will be through the creation of longer-term partnerships and funding models to ensure equity of access in the face of significant geographic, economic, social, and cultural challenges.</i></p>

Assertion One

Preparing excellent teachers involves connected, evidence informed, and research–active teacher learning in both university and school settings.

Assertion One was derived from Findings One and Two. Participant perspectives align with recent research on teacher education. Both leaders in the field and teacher education researchers assert the benefits of coherence and strong connections between both arms of pre-service teacher development. It is widely agreed that early and ongoing learning experiences in welcoming and learning enriched school settings are key elements of strong teacher education programming. It is also significant to work toward overlapping program coherence and dynamic collaboration between robust, evidence informed university programs and research-active schools (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Hammerness & Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005; Hammerness & Darling-Hammond, 2005).

Assertion Two

There are multiple ways to attract excellent teachers to northern and remote schools.

The participant and documentary evidence that generated Findings Three and Four revealed several contextually rooted and nuanced approaches to attracting and selecting teachers. Assertion Four makes the case that a variety of approaches to attracting and selecting will continue to be advisable. Each of the four school divisions has found ways to attract and retain teachers more successfully in their more remote schools. This is not to say that the challenges will be less daunting going forward. What it does suggest is that creativity, hard work, and persistence will continue to be needed.

Assertion Three

Welcoming and learning enriched school communities enhance teacher development and retention.

Further analysis of the data that generated Findings Five and Six led to Assertion Three. Participants at all levels were consistent in the views that welcoming and learning enriched school communities are vital to successful teacher induction, professional learning, and teacher retention. Though each component of a research informed teacher induction program is an important contributor to initial teaching success, it is the beginning teacher's overall experience within a learning enriched school community that has the greatest impact (Alberta Education, 2009, 2010, 2011; Hammerness & Darling-Hammond, 2005; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Rosenholz, 1989).

Assertion Four

Dynamic and innovative partnerships among school systems, municipalities, the provincial government, and teacher preparation programs are needed to sustain remote and northern schools in their communities.

The data gathered from participants and the documentary evidence that pointed to Finding Four made it clear that more was at risk in remote communities than the quality of teachers willing to migrate north to serve student learning in their schools. Assertion Four is constructed from participant perspectives of the need for broader partnerships with an emphasis on innovation to

sustain small schools in their communities. It is linked to community-centred conceptions of student and teacher learning. Just as it is important for teachers to invest in understanding and engaging with their new communities, participants see it as vital for municipal and provincial governments to create equitable funding and partnership models that support vibrant and sustainable communities for people to live well.

These four *analytical generalizations* were formed through reasoned judgement and assertational logic about the extent to which the findings of this study can be used to guide policy and practice in other settings. Case studies such as this one aim to be generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes as in statistical generalization (Yin, 2009, p. 15). The four assertions are offered from the perspective that “most fields informed by the social sciences have imperfect evidence available to inform their practices” and, as such, “judgments are rightly based on the best available evidence, along with the practical wisdom of those actually working in the field (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 9).

Research insights along with practical wisdom will increase the chances of northern and remote schools realizing the promise of the *Alberta Task Force for Teaching Excellence* (2014) that: “For every child, in every class, there is an excellent teacher”.

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CHAPTER 10

What's Wrong with Getting Teacher Hiring Right?

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the existing evidence in an Ontario context of practices and processes that are currently used to hire new teachers and while examining Reg. 274, advocates a multi-stage hiring process. Previous studies by the authors identify essential characteristics in teacher applicants that are desirable 'look fors' in teacher hiring practices. Additionally, preliminary data in an ongoing study of province-wide board hiring practices is provided. In this latest research, school boards were directly contacted and asked: who is hiring teachers, who is making up interview questions, who is doing the interviewing, and what training do these hiring members have in hiring teachers effectively? Finally, a multi-stage hiring process is proposed. It addresses these concerns and establishes a comprehensive approach to hiring that enables schools/boards to benefit their students by providing them with access to the best teachers focused on improving student learning and pedagogical success.

Keywords: Regulation 274, traditional hiring procedures, essential teacher qualities, focus on student learning, multi-stage hiring process, principal engagement, high-stakes investment

INTRODUCTION: ONTARIO REGULATION 274 – CONSTRAINING THE TEACHER HIRING PROCESS

Hiring teachers is a high impact and morally significant obligation of school boards. The Province of Ontario Regulation 274/12 (more commonly referred to as Reg. 274) has imposed on school boards restrictions that severely limit their elected responsibility to establish a district hiring process that will ensure the employment of the best teachers for their schools and their students. As experienced educators and researchers we provide evidence in the writing of this chapter that a one-dimensional or monocratic, seniority-based hiring process, as set forth in Reg. 274 is problematic and boards are professionally ineffectual in dealing with the ramifications. In addressing the problem, we advocate that school/board hiring committees clearly identify the essential qualitative and quantitative characteristics in teacher-hires who have transitioned from a focus on their teaching to a focus on student learning. We further advocate that school/board hiring committees deepen their search to identify those teacher applicants who are life-long learners and who are establishing themselves as consciously minded professionals. As a problem-solving technique and building on the firm foundation of identified teacher qualities, we examine the post-Reg. 274 effect on teacher hiring processes and through reference to the preliminary results of an ongoing study suggest that school/board hiring committees increase their capacity building using

a multi-stage high impact hiring process. Finally, we present and describe in detail each of the nine stages of a multi-staged high impact hiring model that can provide school/board hiring committees with a comprehensive, flexible, approach to hiring the ‘best’ teacher(s) for their students.

The Ministry of Education in Ontario in partnership with the Ontario College of Teachers is a strong advocate of standards: standards of professional practice; standards of prescribed, legislated curriculum; standards of school-based discipline; standards of assessment; standards of evaluation; standards of achievement; standards of promotion; standards of student well-being; and, most recently standards of teacher hiring and standards of teacher education. Standards are intended to establish the criteria of an acknowledged measure of comparison for quantitative or qualitative value. Standards are intended to establish the degree or level of requirement, excellence or attainment. A standard is also a requirement of moral conduct. However, when standards are imposed on boards “without consultation or discussion” (Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group, LLP, 2014, p. 5) then voices are silenced and autonomy, the right of self-government, self-determination, and independence is denied.

The establishment of Regulation 274 occurred within the context of a set of complex factors: an oversupply of teachers seeking K-12 teaching positions in the province; mismanagement of entrants into teacher education programs across the province; demographic imbalance of student enrolment (declining enrolments in small urban, rural, and depressed settings in large metropolitan areas contrasted with increasing enrolment in progressive, or preferred, metropolitan areas); geographical inequalities particularly in respect of teacher-student ratios and students requiring special assistance; increased tension between and among government, teacher and non-teacher unions, and boards; and, increased regulations regarding teachers, teacher education, and classroom teaching.

The Final Report from Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group (2014) on Regulation 274 had as an expressed goal to vouchsafe the Ontario government’s core priorities of: “increasing student achievement; reducing gaps in student achievement; and, increasing the public’s confidence in publicly-funded education“(p. 6). It is unfortunate that after two decades, the “useful crisis” (Klein, 2008) engineered by Ontario Premier Harris and Education Minister Snobelen continues to impact government policy regarding local control of education. The result of the “shock doctrine” (Klein, 2008) administered by Harris and Snobelen was the passage of Bill 170 in 1997. The Bill gave the province’s legislative power to: control municipal education taxes; cut teacher preparation; exclude principals and vice-principals from teachers’ unions; determine class sizes (25 for secondary classes, 22 for elementary classes); introduce standardized tests; and, grant early retirement incentives to older, experienced teachers. All of these powers were wielded while launching an attack on local control of public schools, and on union bargaining influence, and while seeding mistrust in the quality of Ontario’s education system and undermining public confidence in boards, schools, their administrators, and their teachers.

Regulation 274 is yet another erosion of local control of public education. A real challenge in Ontario public education is dealing effectively and equitably with the oversupply of credentialed teachers. The reasons for the oversupply may not be entirely known but universities over-maximizing their enrolments in teacher education programs; the accreditation of new programs in universities not traditionally engaged in teacher education, and the contracting out with international agencies specializing in teacher education, all contributed to the crisis. As a direct result, a surplus of disgruntled teachers looking to find K-12 teaching positions in Ontario was created. In short, the reality in Ontario public education is too many certified teachers for too

few teaching vacancies. The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) (n.d.) stated: “There are currently thousands of qualified teachers looking for full-time employment and they are, understandably, frustrated with not being hired as quickly as recent graduates were over a decade ago. This over-supply of qualified teachers ... is the result of the government funding too many places at faculties of education and not addressing the over-supply in a timely fashion” (n.p.). Their collective frustration helped to produce the political and bureaucratic reactions that found expression in Regulation 274; and, in the restructuring of teacher education in Ontario from two terms to four terms; and, in halving the number of new teachers who will eventually graduate from teacher education programmes. The overall effect of these actions is to narrow the route to full-time teaching for qualified teachers transferring into Ontario from other provinces, or internationally and, most specifically, for new graduates from teacher education programs.

Future graduates from teacher education programs are restricted by the policies and standards of Regulation 274 from immediate entry into the workforce. A newly graduated teacher, certified by OCT, would first need to apply and be interviewed for inclusion on a board’s roster of occasional teachers. They would then need to have “taught as an occasional teacher in one or more schools of the board for at least 20 full days during a 10-month period that is within the five years immediately preceding the day the application is submitted”(Reg. 274/12, n.p.) to qualify for inclusion on the board’s long-term occasional list. They need to have “completed a long-term assignment in a school of the board that was at least four months long and in respect of which the teacher has not received an unsatisfactory evaluation;”(Reg. 274/12, n.p.) and, be among the five applicants with the most seniority with the board to be interviewed and possibly be offered a permanent teaching position. From the time of graduation a new teacher will need two years to complete all the requirements to be offered a permanent contract if no one else is ahead of her/him on the seniority list. If s/he is lacking in seniority with the board, it could be an additional three or more years before a permanent contract is proffered. The impact of hiring “new” teachers who are three to five years removed from their program introduces a whole new construct into teacher hiring practices that has yet to be sorted out and raises the question of pedagogical currency and its immediate worth to students as learners.

One of the expressed goals of Reg. 274 was to make hiring practices fairer for long-term occasional and new permanent teaching positions. And yet, selecting who gets on the Occasional Long-Term List in each district is at the discretion of the board. Hiring for permanent teaching positions is seniority-based and the candidates for each position are the five qualified, most senior teachers drawn from the district’s occasional long-term list. Regulation 274 is akin to a rubric that obfuscates to public view the underlying criteria for assessment and evaluation. In the case of teacher employment, the criteria for hiring have been determined by the board in accordance with Regulation 274. But what remains obfuscated is the hiring process itself. The notion of hiring teachers based on discretionary selection, seniority, and a satisfactory teaching evaluation is merely addressing the mechanism of assessment and evaluation of a candidate in a standardized hiring process. Such criteria are not based on whether the individual board’s hiring process enables it to hire the best person for the job or equips it to determine the fit of the person for the job based on the candidate’s knowledge, skills, and attitude; her/his familiarity with school and community culture; and, interpersonal and professional relations with students, faculty, staff, administration, and parents.

School boards, as democratically elected bodies, should design their own hiring protocols and Regulation 274 should inform, not dictate, that design. Ontario Premier Wynne reportedly called the government’s policy of hiring teachers based on seniority, an “overcorrection”, and

stated: “The government may have gone too far in making seniority the key criterion in hiring teachers” (Ferguson, Benzie, & Rushowy, 2013, n.p.). This kind of appropriation of power is taken up by Galway, Sheppard, Brown, and Wiens (2013) in their informed and informing discussion of the problems that can and do occur when local school district governance is centralized.

Presently, Regulation 274 stipulates that the process for hiring new teachers will be identical for each board and will have rules and standards of conduct that will move a teacher through three stages: occasional, long-term occasional, and permanent. However, boards are uniquely different in character and culture and in the constituency they serve. It makes sense that boards should, with confidence and competence, design a hiring protocol that is transparent, accountable, and equitable. There should be in place a process that: leads to targeted individual school growth, provides for professional improvement of the new hire, ensures that the best candidate is hired for the position in terms of qualifications and fit, and, that socially and culturally, the selection accurately reflects the diversity of the communities that the board serves.

The “essential elements” in new teacher hires who have transitioned to student learning

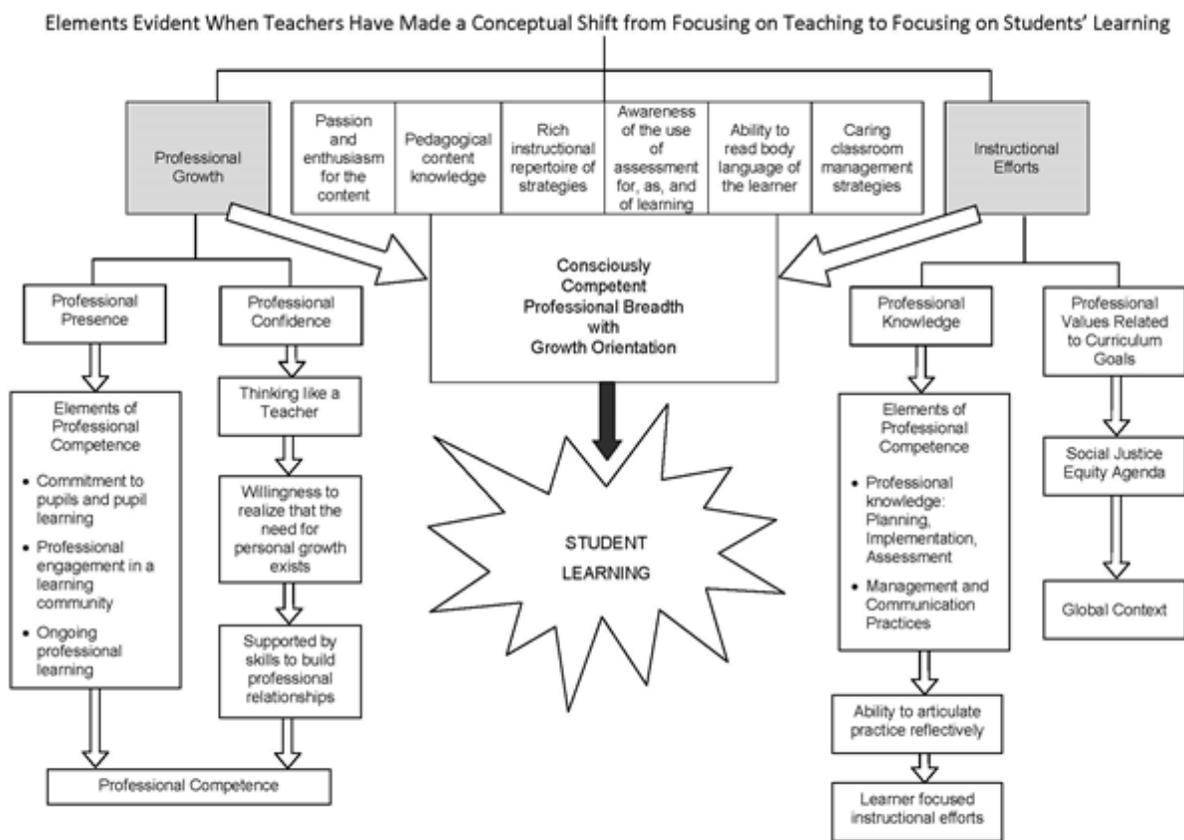
One positive element in Reg 274 is its underlying, but unexpressed, key premise; that is, teachers get better at their teaching with increased or increasing opportunities to teach. We have, in previous work (Maynes & Hatt, 2011, 2014a), conceptualized this process as a shift in teacher’s thinking from focusing on their own teaching to focusing on students’ learning. If we re-conceptualize teacher hiring as a continuum of supports that focus all efforts on the professional goal of improving students’ learning, we need to understand the elements that facilitate the shift in teachers’ focus from focusing on their teaching to focusing on students’ learning; and, we need to support teachers’ professional growth more effectively (Coulter, 2010; Donaldson, 2007; Rogers, Hacsı, Petrosino & Huebner, 2000; Chen & Rossi, 1983). In this chapter, we intend to explore this proposition by asking: *What are the elements that characterize a teacher’s shift in focus from focusing on their teaching to focusing on students’ learning?* Identifying these elements provides us with the opportunity to align the multi-stage hiring process and the personal and professional growth of the new hire to achieve a conceptually unified focus of efforts.

In order to identify the key elements of the professional shift in focus that moves teachers from emphasizing teaching to emphasizing students’ learning, we employed a focus group inquiry. This was a purposeful sampling approach and we assembled a focus group of seven professors from within our Faculty who had experience as classroom teachers, faculty of education professors engaged in teacher preparation programs, and faculty advisors involved in practicum supervision including mentoring. All agreed that a shift in teachers’ focus is a characteristic that reflects the teacher’s increasing professional maturity. All participants also agreed that a clearer conception of the elements that contributed to a professional focus on students’ learning was timely and necessary as a filter when hiring the best teacher (in terms of qualifications and social, cultural, and educational fit) for a continuing contract.

After each of the three focus group meetings, the researchers transcribed recordings and examined data for recurring themes and observations (Creswell, 2012). Transcriptions were represented to focus group participants for verification, clarification, and checking of tonal intent and accuracy of content. Recurring themes became evident in the transcriptions and when supported by follow-up discussions, a saturation of ideas was reached.

Our research data revealed that the central theme in this shift was identified as a consciously competent professional, with professional and instructional breadth and strong evidence of a growth orientation. The theme was reinforced by six contributing attributes and confirmed with supporting skills, attitudes, and dispositions. The consciously competent professional teacher, who focuses on students' learning, evidences an accumulation of attributes (Figure 1) that consistently support instructional efforts directed at improving students' learning. These attributes, or characteristics, include: passion and enthusiasm for the subject content; pedagogical content knowledge; a rich instructional repertoire of teaching strategies; awareness of the various productive ways that assessment data can be used; a sophisticated ability to read the body language of the learner; and, caring classroom management strategies.

Figure 1. The Consciously Competent Professional Teacher



The decision was made to capture the main points of discussions in a diagram that would represent the elements of teachers' conceptual shift in focus. In designing the schematic, data collection, analysis, and conceptual formulation were connected in a reciprocal and recursive sense. The schematic was then subjected to the four requirements identified by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Specifically: 1) the fit between the diagram and the 'shift in conception' phenomenon, including its evolution from diverse data and its adherence to the common universal reality of experienced Faculty Advisors; 2) the ability of the diagram to support understanding of this shift in thinking for teachers; 3) the applicability of the conceptualizations in this diagram to broad contexts; and 4) the potential of the diagram to provide direction about its applicability and support of action

related to teachers' professional growth. The diagram provided a distinct advantage of capturing program theory in an accessible and understandable format as reinforced by Henry, Bastien, and Fortner (2011): "...in light of novice teachers' significant capacity for growth, improving their initial effectiveness as rapidly as possible seems to us to offer the greatest promise for improving student performance" (p. 279). An additional and critical advantage of the conceptual diagram is that it provides an alignment of all efforts that will result in the best teacher being hired for a contract position. It also provides a visual perception of strategies to extend the focus on student learning by teachers at all levels of their career (Timmons, 2006; Jordan & Stanovich, 2004) not just that of pre-service or novice teachers.

As evidenced in Figure 1, all participants agreed that a shift in teachers' focus is a characteristic that reflects the teacher's increasing professional maturity. Additionally, all participants agreed that a clearer conception of the elements that contributed to a professional focus on students' learning was timely and necessary as a filter when hiring the best teacher (in terms of qualifications and social, cultural, and educational fit) for a continuing contract. In the hiring process, a positive approach to the improved student learning would include application of a consistent vision of the elements present when teachers focus on learning (Maynes & Hatt, 2011). The conceptions, visually presented in the schematic, position learning as a function of teaching (Phelan, 2009) rather than as a function of students' efforts to learn and see the enterprise of teaching as "a site of possibility" (p. 106) that influences all learning.

THE POST REG. 274 RIPPLE EFFECT ON BOARDS AND TEACHER-HIRING PROCESSES

Principals have a vested interest in selecting the best teacher-hire in terms of qualifications and fit. As set forth in Reg. 298 of the Ontario Education Act, principals are also in charge of "the instruction and discipline of pupils... and, the organization and management of the school" (Province of Ontario, 2014, Education Act R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 11.1 (a) & (b)). In addition to the assigned duties of supervision of instruction in the school, the principal is to "advise and assist any teacher" who may be struggling; who may need scaffolding in respect of their instructional practice; or, who may need additional in-service support. Section 298 of the Education Act and its accompanying sub-sections clearly and legally establish the principal as the instructional and managerial leader of the school. However, Reg. 274 with its imposition of seniority as a dominant criterion for hiring, has restricted the principal's ability to hire the best person for the teaching position. It has further delimited her/his ability to check the fit of the person for the position in terms of knowledge of students, school-climate, parent-relationships, and local environ. A lack of knowledge or familiarity on the part of a teacher hire (as prescribed by Reg. 274) concerning the parents in a community, can be detrimental to the principal's ability to appoint that teacher to the school council, of whom the majority of elected members are parents. It is critical to the effective collegial and cooperative working of the school council that teachers appointed to the council be informed and be informing of parent and community concerns, initiatives, and level(s) of support.

A major legislated responsibility that the principal has to the school council is to inform them of the establishment or amendment of policies or guidelines of the Act, the Board, and/or the school in respect of student achievement or accountability of the education system (Reg. 298, s. 19.(1), i & ii; (2), i & ii; (3)). The principal is the designated envoy to deliver updated reports to the school council on student achievement and accountability of the school. The teacher appointed to the school council is a professional support to the principal and a pedagogical liaison with the

school council. How is a principal to ensure sustained or enhanced student/school performance and comply with the legislated responsibility to “make recommendations to the board with respect to the appointment and promotion of teachers” (Reg. 298, s. 11.3.j) if s/he is not given the opportunity to choose the ‘best’ teacher for the teaching position on her/his staff and a possible appointment to the school council?

Unfortunately, because of Reg. 274, the traditional hiring ground under principals is shifting drastically. This reality, among others, prompted us, as researchers, to undertake an investigation into hiring practices in school boards throughout Ontario. Our study is ongoing but the respondents, to-date, although limited in number, microcosmically reflect the geographical regions of Ontario (30% are from the North-East; 10% from the North-West; 20% from Central Ontario; 10% from the South-East; and, 30% are from the South-West). Initial findings suggest the composition of board committees or panels selecting applicants to be short-listed for interviews within the Districts were not representative of any geo-physical or organizational model; indeed, they were not consistent across the reporting boards. The boards’ hiring teams ran the gamut from a team consisting entirely of principals to a team consisting of no principals and compositions in between such as: a team comprised of board members, the principal, and the district business administrator; another team comprised of human resources staff, the human resources manager and retired principals; and another team exclusively comprised of the director, superintendents, and human resources personnel.

In determining the criteria to be used in selecting applicants to be interviewed, one thing that stood out to us, as researchers, was the need on the part of boards to develop an effective way of screening which Curriculum Vitae(s) would lead to an initial interview for possible inclusion on the board’s occasional teacher list. It was as if the boards were struggling with an embarrassment of riches; too many new-teacher graduates seeking employment and no consistent screening policies that could effectively narrow the applicants to the select few who would get the interview. As a result, 20% of the responding boards reportedly used a criterion-based assessment model, sometimes referred to as a systematically applied grading model for initial review of curriculum vitae(s) and selection of teacher applicants for interview as possible additions to the board’s occasional teacher list. Another 40% used a combination of systematic and intuitive grading or assessment while 20% used a blend of criterion-based and intuitive-based assessment in compliance with Reg. 274. The remainder of the reporting boards indicated the use of intuitive-based assessment in accordance with the policies detailed in Reg. 274. The majority of boards specifically cited compliance with Regulation 274 as additional, constraining, criteria in deciding which applicants will or will not be interviewed. One board simply stated that they were: “[b]ound by Reg. 274, which necessitated a more holistic process of reviewing applications; and, if needed they would go to a grading system based on criteria”.

Traditionally, principals have been the chief selection officer in the process, or protocol, of hiring a new teacher but that role, since Reg. 274, has been altered. Increasingly, principals are being displaced and/or replaced on Board hiring committees. Preliminary findings from our study reveal that in deciding which applicants will be interviewed for a teaching position, 50% of the boards reported the principal as a key figure in the selection process; 20% indicated that the principal was consulted after the shortlist was decided; 20% excluded the principal from the screening process; and, 10% provided no information on the selection process at all. It would appear that in the majority of the boards responding, the policies and procedures advanced in Reg. 274 have further distanced the principal from the hiring process. The list of candidates screened for a designated teaching position in compliance with the policies in Reg. 274 is prepared by a board’s

hiring panel or interview committee and presented to the principal for her/his selection. However, if the principal cannot find a suitable person from the five most senior teachers as identified by government policy and implemented by Board administration, then s/he faces a real challenge with no way forward provided within Reg. 274.

Teacher hiring is an extremely important leadership task for principals who have traditionally had primary responsibility for screening, interviewing, and selecting teachers to fill vacancies in their schools. Clearly there needs to be a way forward for principals and for hiring practices within schools; and Boards must allow for more autonomy while ensuring the government's goal of student achievement and well-being. As evidenced in the preliminary findings presented above, board interview committees or hiring panels use formal and informal resources in their hiring practices. These may or may not include the direct or indirect participation of principals. One thing becomes very apparent from the data analyzed in our study and that is that boards are essentially using a massed practice approach to hiring procedures. The hiring process in most boards appears to be crammed into a lock-step approach that is further constrained by timelines that provide little opportunity for administrators to exercise their leadership and organizational skills. And yet, Engel and Finch (2015) demonstrate that research studies conducted within the last five years (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010; Rice, 2010) indicate that principals' skills and time spent on organizational management – including hiring personnel – are positively associated with increased student achievement.

The 1966 report of *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Coleman et al., 1996) concluded that: “teacher quality was found to account for a larger portion of the variation in student test scores than all other characteristics of the school” (as cited in Goldhaber, 2002). Thirty years after the Coleman Report was issued, Sanders and River (1996) found similar results in their study, as did Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005). Each study concluded that the effectiveness of teachers has more of an influence on student achievement than any other schooling factor. Goldhaber (2002) asserted that: “Much of the research published since the Coleman Report has confirmed the finding that high-quality teachers raise student performance – indeed, it appears the most important thing a school can do is to provide its students with good teachers”(n.p.). This theme is echoed in the chapter by Dr. Jim Brandon, from the University of Calgary in support of the goals of the Alberta teacher hiring practices.

Distributed leadership incorporates the principle of a collective approach to capacity building in schools and necessitates the involvement of the many (a hiring team) rather than the few in leadership tasks. One of the most important leadership tasks a school or board can undertake is the hiring of teachers. The recruitment process is a board's/school's first, and sometimes only, opportunity to secure a high quality teaching force for its students. Understanding the complexity of hiring and how new hires are effectively positioned within the educational landscape of the school/district can inform the development of strategies that attract effective teachers who are focused on student learning.

CAPACITY BUILDING USING A MULTI-STAGE HIGH IMPACT HIRING PROCESS

In our research study, we discovered that the majority of boards were using an administrative team approach to hiring teachers but none provided evidence of distributive leadership. Distributive leadership is about leadership practice that draws upon the interactions of all those who contribute

to the lifeblood of the school – teachers, administrators, educational assistants, support staff, community members, parents, and, most importantly, students. Distributive leadership is modeled at the board or district level and implemented through effective training at the school level. It necessitates the collaboration of all stakeholders in exploring an issue and collectively seeking a way forward or a resolution. When a team performs a task ahead of a designated deadline, invariably they perform that task following the principles of distributive leadership. Distributive leadership is more about maximizing the competencies of an organizational resource than it is about identifying a set of skills that can be employed in a given situation.

Ninety percent of the boards reported that the administrative team had no formal interviewing training. However, several were quick to cite the use of mentoring; coaching; guidance by senior administrators; introduction to interview protocols by human resources or business management; and, the use of experienced or seasoned personnel on interview committees and throughout the hiring process to compensate for formal interviewing training. The remaining 10% of the boards reported “providing formal training based on appropriate best practices for interviewing” however, were unable to elaborate on what the formal training looked like, who instructed it, or how often it was conducted.

As researchers, we are left to wonder if there isn't any print or electronic materials available for training the hiring team then how is consistency maintained, accountability established, and transparency made apparent throughout the hiring process? If these factors are not in evidence, how is a Board to ensure the “rights of [an] unsuccessful candidate”, who is legally entitled to request a meeting with “the person or panel that conducted the interview to discuss: his or her performance during the interview; measures he or she could take to enhance his or her professional qualifications; [and,] other ways to improve his or her chance of being successful in a similar interview in the future” (Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group, LLD, 2014, p.6)? From the data gathered and analyzed in our study, it would appear that boards are reacting to an immediate need to fill a teaching vacancy by using an informal, cramming approach to screening, interviewing, and hiring new teachers rather than a well-planned, organized, distributive practice to secure a high quality teaching force for its students. The question remains: If a board is hiring a teacher for a long-term or contract position and that teacher in her/his practice will impact the lives and learning of hundreds of students during a thirty to thirty-five year career, can a board afford to rely on ad hoc teams that are amassed to address an occasional need or a series of immediate needs?

While there are undoubtedly individual board hiring teams that are trained effectively in performance-based interview techniques, other board hiring teams receive no formal training. They can reasonably be assumed to be hiring the most effective teachers available to them but many remain heavily dependent upon the brief interview (on average 20-30 minutes) to identify the most promising teachers. The short-interview has been traditionally sustained and supported by reference checks, board policies/guidelines, and/or job-specific criteria. When teachers are being hired internationally or outside a local jurisdiction, often the interview is conducted over the telephone or via electronic transmission by one interviewer. Efforts to improve the quality of interviews have been moderate and are usually focused on attempts to match the organizational needs of the school/board with the perceived and demonstrated talents of the applicants rather than the specific classroom demands of an effective teacher focused on student learning (Zhu & Dowling, 2002; Montgomery, 1996; Herriot, 1989; Plumbley, 1985).

When distributive leadership is coupled with predictive hiring approaches, potential

employers have access to strategies that will enable them to identify the most promising teachers. Maynes and Hatt (2014b) presented a detailed multi-staged, flexible, approach to high impact hiring that combined the traditional letter of application, resumé, and interview with predictive hiring approaches. Predictive hiring approaches may include some or all of the following: an initial phone interview; observation of a model lesson taught by the apprentice/substitute teacher; a problem solving e-mail challenge; in-basket assignment(s); and, a simulation of a professional on-the-job task to help hiring teams select the best applicant for the teaching position (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). Predictive hiring approaches are being used by some schools/boards to find the best fit of prospective teachers with the working environment, with the responsibilities of the teaching assignment, and with the organizational or school culture (Pappano, 2011). However, if boards/schools fail to use a systematic, research-based approach to hiring practices and rely heavily upon a single method of selecting new teachers as they engage in high stakes decision-making (Boyd et al., 2007; Walsh & Tracy, 2004), the whole approach is a house of cards poised to fall in on itself.

The multi-staged high-impact hiring model has nine potential stages from which to customize a local hiring practice. It is strongly recommended that those tasked with the responsibility of hiring be fully trained in all stages of the model in order that they may, in their decision-making, use input from all available sources to ensure that the strongest possible teacher applicants are hired to teach their students. Hiring panels or interview committees can select from the full range of suggested hiring practices to customize and confidently choose those stages of the model that best fit their specific board circumstance(s).

In a previous study, Maynes and Hatt (2014, Spring) found that principals working within the constraints and limitations of a short, single interview lacked confidence that they were making the best hiring decision. They reported wanting more involvement and more intense engagement with apprentice/substitute teachers in all aspects of the hiring process before hiring. The multi-staged hiring process is antithetical to the weak hiring practices that are currently in existence across a number of schools/boards. It is research-based, systemic, and comprehensive for the task of hiring teachers (Fullan, 2011). It addresses the inadequacies of the present approach to hiring which is inconsistent across boards and over-regulated by legislation that does not always support selection of the strongest teacher(s).

A multi-staged hiring process addresses the need to support educational improvement, specifically student learning and achievement and is flexible and adaptable to the unique needs of individual boards/schools. In order to obtain maximum benefit in hiring practices, hiring teams may elect to use all stages of the model: pre-screening applications; an initial phone interview; an observed teaching of a lesson; a short-term apprenticeship with a master teacher; a student-engagement problem-solving task addressed while on apprenticeship; a formal interview; a conflict-embedded problem-solving task; a student achievement data-action-planning task; and, a final screening interview.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have posited that a one-dimensional or monocratic hiring process; specifically seniority-based, as set forth in Reg. 274, is problematic. As a problem-solving approach we have advocated an identification of the essential elements in teacher-hires who have transitioned to student learning and have moved toward becoming consciously competent professionals. Building

on a firm foundation of identified teacher qualities, we examined the post-Reg. 274 ripple effect on teacher hiring processes and based on the preliminary results of our ongoing research suggested that school/board hiring committees develop capacity building using a multi-stage high impact hiring process. We concluded this chapter by presenting and describing, in detail, each of the nine stages of a multi-staged high impact hiring model that could ameliorate the constraining impact(s) of Reg. 274 by providing school/board hiring committees with a comprehensive, professional, informative, yet customizable, approach to hiring the 'best' teacher applicant.

The multi-stage hiring process creates a cooperative community of learnership among the members of the hiring committee that metaphorically requires them to be 'in sync' and literally requires them to work hard toward the defined goal of hiring the 'best' teacher(s) for their school/board. The policies and procedures as detailed in Reg. 274 hinder this process by removing the opportunity for Ontario school boards to design their own hiring protocols. Instead, boards are legally required to apply an across-the-province standardized seniority-based hiring process complete with a lock-step system of progression in employment status from occasional to permanent teacher. Interview committees are obligated to interview the five most senior occasional long-term teachers for all permanent positions provided the senior teachers have the requisite qualifications; teaching experience in at least one four-month term appointment; and, satisfactory rating on their teaching evaluation(s). But, as instructional leaders and managers of the educational process in schools, principals, of necessity, must have their thumb on the pulse of the school. Principals are responsible for ensuring that all functions of the school are working well together including setting clear directions toward specific goals, establishing high expectations for learning and teaching, providing support to students and teachers to scaffold their academic and professional success, and implementing government-directed initiatives and accountability requirements. The regulation seems antithetical to the real responsibilities of those who hire teachers.

Hiring procedures are increasingly being taken over by boards and central hiring committees; and principals, if they are involved in the hiring process, are in many instances interviewing only those five senior long-term occasional teachers from the list provided by the board office. In pre-Reg. 274 hiring practice, the principal was the chief selection officer in selecting new teachers for her/his school, but since Reg. 274, principal involvement is declining significantly. The data from our ongoing study of Ontario board hiring procedures shows that 50% of principals remain involved in the teacher hiring process within their respective districts; 20% of principals are consulted only after the short list is established, and 20% are not consulted at all, while 10% of reporting boards provided no information as to the level of engagement of principals in board hiring procedures. The fact that 40% of principals are being excluded from the screening of candidates and/or, in some boards, are being excluded from the interview and selection process, is a trend that we, as educators and researchers, find disturbing.

Principals seek out new teacher hires who are not only prepared academically but have a passion for teaching and are fully focused on student learning. They know, in large part, what their school needs and they want dedicated teachers who are self-starters, other-minded, and, when needed, are willing to augment or revise their pedagogical practice. They want teachers who will 'fit' the school culture and add to the school climate by developing genuine and positive relationships within colleagues, administrators, parents and most importantly, their students. While principals generally have an understanding of the tangibles of an effective teacher (solid academic background in the grade level and subject(s) to be taught, strong pedagogical knowledge and instructional skills, extensive experiences interacting with children and youth), they are also looking for the intangibles (passion, enthusiasm, sensitivity, compassion, caring, humour); those

additional qualities that teachers need to connect emotionally, socially, and intellectually with students and their learning. We believe that opportunities to reflect on the teacher characteristics displayed in Figure 1 would help hiring teams clarify their teacher hiring priorities as they prepare for this important task.

If principals are marginalized or minimally utilized in the hiring process then the traditional knowledge and insight of the instructional leader of the school must be compensated for by a well-informed and well-trained hiring committee employing a multi-stage hiring process. It is critical to the effectiveness of the hiring process that members of the interview/hiring team are fully and professionally trained in their duties and responsibilities. They need to have an informed understanding of: organizational 'fit' theory; tangible and intangible characteristics that are desirable in the new teachers hired within their school/board; structures, orientations, and perceptions imbedded in interview questions; duties, responsibilities, and roles of each member of the team during each stage of the multi-stage process; criterion-based observation frameworks for various stages of the process; relevant problem-solving, data analysis/planning, communication, and assessment/evaluation tasks at appropriate stages; and, protocols for communicating with apprentice/substitute teachers at each stage of the multi-stage hiring process.

The multi-stage model advocates the use of a school-based hiring team modelled on the construct of the school council. The principal, parents, teacher, student, and community member(s) are requisite in the hiring process. Communally, they have the best understanding of the needs of their school and the communities that it serves. They have a shared responsibility and vested interest to search out and hire the 'best' teacher for the permanent position in their school. They can and need to support each other as community to arrive at consensus, shared vision, and determination of the 'look fors' within each stage of the hiring process. While nine specific stages are clearly documented, the model has the advantage of flexibility and offers school/board hiring committees the opportunity to choose those stages that best fit their local circumstances. Despite the constraints on the hiring process that Reg. 274 imposes, several stages can be incorporated into the long term occasional appointment within their school or board.

Hiring new teachers is a high-stakes investment and cannot be left to chance or the inconsistencies of ad hoc committees generally established to address an immediate hiring need. The Ontario Ministry of Education, an informed general public, and educational leaders, are all focused on student learning outcomes and have reached consensus supported by research (Walsh & Tracy, 2004). The most critical, strategic action plan a school/board can take is in preparing, recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining the most effective teachers. Action plans initiated by hiring committees and based on the principle of getting the best teachers into classrooms dominate discussions on how best to leverage student success. The incontrovertible fact remains, teacher quality matters and it hugely matters in efforts to improve student learning. It has traditionally been said of teaching that it is a science as well as an art; so to, is ensuring that students have access to the best teachers possible – can we afford not to get it right?

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CHAPTER 11**After-Hiring Support for New Teachers:
Facilitating Their Ongoing Learning**

By Clive Beck, OISE/University of Toronto

ABSTRACT

Beginning teaching is very challenging, both because of the inherent complexity of teaching and because pre-service teacher education at its best provides only a fraction of the knowledge and skill required. Moreover, formal induction and professional development (PD) programs at present are typically too sparse, narrow, inconsistent, and top-down to offer much additional support. Fortunately, as our SSHRC-funded longitudinal study of teachers is showing, new teachers learn a great deal informally, especially in the classroom. My proposal is that we build on that informal learning, acknowledging it, helping teachers enhance it, facilitating sharing and vision building at the school level, and making system-level PD more dialogical. In particular, we need to establish an education knowledge development and sharing process (along the lines of Wikipedia) to which everyone – both academics and practitioners – can contribute and on which everyone can draw.

Keywords: new teachers, teacher induction, school-based support, system-wide support

INTRODUCTION

As the title of this volume suggests, there is much to be done in relation to new teachers apart from hiring them. My focus in this chapter is on one of these additional tasks, namely, supporting new teachers in their continued professional learning. Fortunately, new teachers learn a great deal informally, especially through experience in the classroom (Day, 1999; Dewey, 1916; Loughran, 2010; Schon, 1983). However, this informal learning could be significantly enhanced by support from colleagues, administrators, and others; and in addition, formal means of ongoing professional development (PD) are needed.

I use the term “new teacher” in this chapter in an extended sense to refer to teachers in their initial eight years. In my experience teachers over this time continue to think of themselves as new in an important sense, and rightly so. The “settling in” period for teachers is longer than commonly thought, and there is so much still to learn after certification (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2012). There is some evidence that the professional learning of some teachers begins to level off rather early in their career (Day & Gu, 2010; Huberman, 1989); but my own research on teachers, reported in this chapter, suggests that in most cases substantial growth continues for at least eight years.

This chapter is addressed primarily to policy developers, administrators, and PD facilitators, those who are in a position to design and implement support for new teacher learning. Among administrators I see school principals as a key group, for reasons to be explained later. However, there are two other relevant groups: pre-service teacher educators need to be aware of their important role in preparing teachers for ongoing learning after graduation; and teachers themselves must realize the extent to which they learn on the job, both so they can enhance their own learning and so they have due pride in their steadily increasing expertise.

This chapter draws on a number of sources, including research literature and discussions with colleagues, pre-service and graduate students, and teachers in the field. However, the main source of ideas and information is a longitudinal study of 42 teachers that a group of us at OISE/University of Toronto have been following since they started teaching, 20 who began in 2004 and 22 who began in 2007 (Kosnik & Beck, 2009; Beck & Kosnik, 2014). (Although the study is ongoing, the chapter uses data only up to 2011-2012, the eighth and fifth year of teaching respectively of the two cohorts.) The chapter also refers to a study conducted by two colleagues and myself in 2005-2006 at Bridge Street School (pseudonym) in downtown Toronto (Beck, Kosnik, & Cleovoulou, 2008). When speaking about these two studies, I often note what “we” – the research team – did and concluded, but at other times return to the singular “I” as the writer of this chapter; hence the alternation between “I” and “we.” When referring to participants in the studies, pseudonyms are used.

Findings from the two empirical studies are not of course definitive: given the relatively small samples and limited range of settings, it is clear that more research is needed. However, I hope the tentative conclusions to date will provide useful lines of inquiry, experimentation, and discussion for researchers and practitioners alike. To provide an overview, the topics to be addressed in this chapter are the following:

- The challenges of beginning teaching
- The need for continued teacher learning
- Informal teacher learning
- Formal professional development activities
- Induction and early mentoring
- The key role of the principal
- School-based teacher learning
- System-wide support for new teachers

The Challenges of Beginning Teaching

New teachers are often surprised at how difficult teaching is and how much they still have to learn. They believed, naturally enough, that their teacher preparation program would give them most of what they needed for the classroom. Although they noticed some problems during practice teaching, they assumed that when they had their own class, things would be better. Moreover, having had 12 years of “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) during their own schooling, they thought teaching would be rather straightforward. A factor contributing to their simplistic

view of teaching is the often artificial nature of practice teaching. Student teachers are usually just given their topics and teaching times by their associate teacher, without having a window on the intricacies of the planning process.

In reality, teaching is very complex and challenging (Kennedy, 2006). Time is severely limited: it is impossible to cover in depth all the topics listed in the official curriculum, so choices have to be made and some topics emphasized more than others. Classroom organization takes up a great deal of time and energy, as do marking, report card writing, and a host of administrative tasks. There are many interruptions: student incidents, announcements, special events, assemblies, and more. And the ability range in each class is enormous: teachers cannot just go systemically through the curriculum for their grade level, or assume that all students will have mastered the previous year's topics. Felicity, teaching grade 3-4 in her second year, said:

I've got students who are reading at grade 1 level and others at grade 6. Some of my students are writing at grade 1 or 2 or not even that – some don't even write, everything has to be scribed [for them] – while others are writing at grade 5. There are just so many different levels.

For the same reason, the chosen textbook is too difficult for some students and boringly easy for others; it is often necessary to adapt textbook content and activities, go to other sources for supplementary materials, and individualize sub-topics, activities, and assignments.

An area of particular concern among the new teachers in our longitudinal study was group work, strongly advocated in their respective pre-service programs. For example, most had been introduced to "guided reading," which involves dividing the class into groups for reading instruction and having the teacher work closely with one group while the others do activities of various kinds. However, many of the teachers were simply unable to implement this approach during their initial two or three years, partly because they did not know how to keep the other groups on task. Felicity said:

We didn't really learn about guided reading in the program, so I end up in a school that requires it and suddenly have to figure out how to implement it...the scheduling, rotation of the students, and exactly how to do guided reading.

David remarked: "I knew what shared reading and guided reading were, and that those have to be done...I just would have liked more perspective on what it was like to do that in the classroom." Anna in her third year reported: "I still don't really know what guided reading is."

Another area that was more complex than expected was pupil assessment. Marisa in her second year noted that, "assessment is this huge thing that is not covered enough [in pre-service].... [We needed to] look critically at some actual students' work and assess it". John in his third year said: "Coming in, I really didn't know what I should assess, what I should be looking for.... I've kind of educated myself on it through reading and asking others. But I really think it should have been covered more." A practice many of the teachers moved toward increasingly was taking quick notes during class on students' challenges and achievements, and then putting the notes in each child's folder for later use in grading and answering parent questions. This approach was often more feasible and useful than some of the very structured assessment methods taught in pre-service such as running records and diagnostic reading assessment (DRA).

Apart from instructional matters, the new teachers found that their overall role was broader

than they expected, and they had to learn how to juggle its various dimensions. John in his sixth year said:

Teaching is challenging because of the number of hats and the range of responsibilities, and this has increased since I began teaching. To name just a few: you have to teach media literacy, social justice, and daily physical activity, and you have to be a counselor to the students, a friend at times, a judge, and a motivator.

Although many of these aspects of teaching were mentioned in pre-service, there was not detailed discussion of the practicalities of negotiating them. For example, Vera at the end of her first year said she would like to have learned in her teacher education program “how to maintain a positive climate while keeping structure--how to be fun without being unkind or mean”; she wishes she had known “that the students won’t hate me for being firm”.

The Need for Continued Teacher Learning

Given the complexity and challenges of the profession, teachers have to keep on learning. According to Feiman-Nemser (2001), we should see the pre-service program not as producing experts but as “laying a foundation...and preparing novices to learn in and from their practice” (p. 1016). The distinction between “novice” and “expert” should not be emphasized *too* much: new teachers have many talents, acquired prior to and during their preparation program, and some are already more able in certain areas than their more experienced colleagues (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005). But whatever their initial talents, there is always much more that needs to be learned. Apart from the limitations of pre-service preparation, the demands placed on teachers keep changing: teachers need to develop “as teaching contexts, pupil behaviour, and expectations of teachers change” (Eraut, 1999, p. ix). A report on over 30 OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries notes that, “the role and functioning of schools are changing – as is what is expected of teachers” (OECD, 2012, p. 73). As examples, the report mentions the growing emphasis on creating multicultural classrooms and integrating students with special learning needs.

Given the need to keep on learning, there is increasing emphasis today on the *continuum* of pre-service and in-service teacher development (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). This is especially so in less wealthy countries, where teacher candidates and new teachers often lack basic content knowledge (Guzman, 2013; Torres, 2000). However, even in the Norwegian context, “[t]he idea of teacher education as a continuum is gaining momentum” (Munthe, Malmo & Rogne, 2011, p. 448). And in Germany, Richter et al. (2011) observe: “Modern views of professional development characterize professional learning not as a short-term intervention, but as a long-term process extending from teacher education at university to in-service training in the workplace” (p. 116).

Informal Teacher Learning

While they must keep on learning, however, it is important to note that *new teachers learn a great deal informally*, largely in their own classroom (as distinct from formally, through workshops, courses, formal mentoring, and the like). If we do not recognize this, we will tend have a deficit view of new teachers as inadequate professionals in desperate need of rescue through formal mentoring and professional development (PD). But in fact, we have found that most new teachers progress very quickly, even in cases where their designated mentor meets with them infrequently (if at all) and worthwhile PD activities are in short supply.

The amount teachers learn informally is acknowledged in the research literature. Long ago, Dewey (1938) argued that learning comes in large part through experience on the job: “all principles by themselves are abstract...everything depends upon the interpretation given them as they are put into practice” (p. 20). Similarly, Schon (1983) famously maintained that teachers learn an enormous amount through “reflection-in-action” as distinct from the application of expert knowledge. In more recent writings, Day (1999) speaks of “the largely private, unaided learning from experience through which most teachers learn to survive, become competent, and develop” (p. 2), noting the “relatively small proportion of learning” contributed by formal means (p. 3). And Feiman-Nemser (2012) states that, “teaching must ultimately be learned in practice” (p. 239).

In our longitudinal study, we found that the new teachers made large gains by informal means in the following *areas*. (a) Program development: learning how to prioritize topics, adapt materials, integrate subjects, individualize lessons, and modify plans. (b) Activity and strategy development: devising effective and engaging classroom routines such as pairs and small group work, classroom presentations, other whole-class sharing activities, individual silent reading, scrapbook writing, online inquiry. (c) Feasible and individualized assessment: finding ways to assess their students that are part of everyday teaching, giving students ongoing direction, and providing a basis for final assessment. (d) Classroom organization and management: keeping everyone involved, shortening transition times, grouping students in ways that minimize behaviour problems. (e) Community building: establishing a class culture in which humour, sharing, and social interaction are valued and everyone feels respected and included.

Among the *processes* that led to the new teachers’ informal learning were the following: (a) everyday experience in the classroom (by the far the most common); (b) self-initiated professional reading of both print and online material; (c) informal discussion with colleagues, usually teachers at or near their grade level; and (d) informal collaborative planning with colleagues. In her fifth year, Lisa said:

Coming out of teachers’ college, your view of teaching is very theoretical. You’ve learned the importance of integration and differentiation, general ways of dealing with parents, ideal practice kinds of things. But it’s only when you’re trying it that you grasp what it means and what the balance is.

In her second year, Tanya spoke of how she and another teacher co-plan many of their lessons and units:

We bounce ideas off each other. We have the same books for our literature circles or sometimes we’ll split them up and say, “You use these ones this round and we’ll switch next round”. So all that is co-planned and the work is split up, which is very helpful.

Maria said in year 3: “I now have a better sense of how to do report cards [because I] have a better picture of what the students are capable of... You can’t know that until you’ve been teaching for a year.”

As we try to support new teachers, the amount they learn informally must be taken into account in two ways. First, we must approach them not as “mere novices” but rather as rapidly developing professionals who already have many ideas about how to teach. We must work with them and learn *from* them, giving them a major role in setting the agenda and plenty of airtime to articulate their insights and queries. Second, much PD should be focused on helping them increase their informal learning, e.g., through discussion with their students, discussion with each other

and more experienced teachers, regular but doable reflections on their learning, observing others teach, and visiting teacher-friendly websites. Unless we acknowledge the extent of new teachers' informal learning, we will not have this mind-set of working with them to *enhance* their informal learning.

Formal Professional Development Activities

Although they learn a lot informally, new teachers certainly need to get fresh ideas through external input and so can benefit from formal PD activities (Day & Gu, 2014; Earley & Porritt, 2010; Reeves, 2011). These typically include: induction, mentoring, and coaching; formal professional learning communities; workshops and other short PD events; professional courses (e.g., additional qualifications courses); further degree programs; and formal teacher leadership. The new teachers in our longitudinal study gave a high rating to some of these activities, especially self-chosen professional courses. Maria in her seventh year provided a good example of how new teachers can learn from formal PD:

My [literacy] teaching is starting to come together now because I have more resources and activities that are really effective.... I got some of them in teachers' college; some from student teaching; some from a school board induction event I went to after I was hired; and some from going to workshops where people say, "This book is great, and here's what I do with it".

However, much depends on how the formal activities are planned and conducted. From the beginning, teachers need to be respected and allowed a major say in the design of events, and considerable choice during the events. This has been stressed by a number of writers. For example, Zeichner (1995) is critical of how teachers are subjected to top-down "in-servicing" by university researchers who ignore the teachers' concerns and insights. And Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) express strong opposition to the common situation where teachers "are expected to learn about their own profession not by studying their own experiences but by studying the findings of those who are not themselves school-based teachers" (p. 1). In later writing, these authors describe teachers as "deliberative intellectuals who constantly theorize practice as part of practice itself [and who engage in] thoughtful critique of the usefulness of the research generated by others both inside and outside contexts of practice" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 2).

It is reasonable to assume that new teachers can learn from university researchers, but the learning must be reciprocal. Formal PD normally should take the form of a dialogue, with teachers and university researchers learning from each other (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Zeichner & Liston, 2014). One problem with university-based research is that it tends to be very specialized, whereas almost every teaching situation is complex; accordingly, figuring out the implications of such research for classroom situations requires intense conversations between university faculty and teachers rather than lectures on the latest university findings. Another difficulty is the amount of technical language in university research writings; once again, a dialogue is needed to determine what this language means in everyday terms and whether the underlying ideas are useful. Carr (1995) even maintains that everyday school language should be the *starting point* for university research, so researchers are forced to come to terms with school realities and the ideas generated by teachers.

Induction and Early Mentoring

Induction of new teachers – and mentoring them, as a specific method of induction – can of course be very helpful (Day & Gu, 2014; Menter & Hulme, 2011; Moir & Hanson, 2008; Strong, 2009). However, in many jurisdictions these activities are inadequately funded and minimal in extent. Many teachers in our longitudinal study said they rarely – if ever – met with their formally assigned mentor; and this is understandable since the mentors were not given training or release-time for their role. An exception in Ontario is the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), which has been in place for several years and was found very helpful by many of our study participants. NTIP provides some time for training of (part-time) mentors and for meetings with the new teachers, along with opportunities for the new teachers to visit classrooms and observe experienced teachers at work.

In other parts of the world there is more extensive provision for induction. For example, the New Teacher Center at the University of California Santa Cruz appoints full-time mentor teachers to work individually with about 15 new teachers for half a day every two weeks. The mentors themselves meet together every week for half a day of debriefing and training (Moir & Hanson, 2008; Strong, 2009). In Scotland, where new teachers have traditionally had a substantially reduced teaching load, a Teacher Induction Scheme was launched in 2002 whereby teachers in their first year teach at 70% load and are supported by an in-school mentor who is allowed 10% release for this work (Menter & Hulme, 2011). While the cost of these programs is considerable, I believe school systems in general should investigate adopting such measures, offsetting the cost to a degree by rearranging the workload within a school. It does not seem appropriate for new teachers to have the same teaching load as a 20-year teacher immediately, especially where they are given the most challenging classes, as is often the case. As I will discuss later, we need whole-school policies and practices, coordinated by the principal, to support new teachers.

One danger of induction and mentoring is that it will just perpetuate conventional pedagogy. Tickle (2000) argues that we should view the transition to teaching as a complex process: “we should not think of induction simply as if novices are to be socialized into some well formulated and accepted practices” (p. 1). He says that new teachers need to see the contestability of existing practices, and be given the opportunity to express *their* views on how to deal with the so-called “realities” of teaching. Feiman-Nemser (2001) also maintains that we must go beyond “generic and generalized models of learning to teach” and give more attention to “the kind of teaching being learned” (p. 1039). Induction and mentoring should be an occasion for rethinking and relearning by everyone involved rather than the re-affirmation of traditional ways.

The selection of mentors is a crucial dimension of induction. It should be done carefully, with a clear rationale and set of policies; or, failing that, new teachers should be allowed to choose their own mentor(s). Vera, in her fifth year, discussed the problems of formally assigning mentors:

Mentoring sometimes gets really artificial if it doesn't come from a willing heart.... In my first year (at another school) I had a mentor assigned to me, and I never connected with her the way I have with my “mentors” at this school. Here we were told to ask someone to be our mentor and that worked so much better. My mentor and I ended up having a wonderful friendship and to this day we are still very close.... But if someone who would normally be a great mentor is having a rough personal year, or they're just getting their feet wet in a new grade, they might not be good mentors that year.... However, if you can find a way to make mentorship more authentic, that can significantly reduce stress and workload for

new teachers.

David in his seventh year proposed a combination of teacher choice and school policies and practices.

One of the very few things I've disagreed with my administration about at this school is that they assign mentors to the teachers, not letting them choose... What I think is needed is to have the principal pick a list of individuals as mentors – or have people volunteer – and then let teachers pick who they want a formal relationship with. At the same time, the admin team should know who the potential mentors are, so when a teacher comes with an issue they know who the experts are in the building and can help link them up. That's better than just saying, "You are with x, you are with y."

The Key Role of the Principal

As mentioned already, I believe principals have a crucial role in new-teacher support, as in school improvement generally (Day & Gu, 2010; Dimmock, 2012; Reeves, 2011). In our 2005-2006 study of Bridge Street School (Beck, Kosnik, & Cleovoulou, 2008), we found that the principal (Janet) played a major part in creating a climate supportive of new teachers. Natalie, in her third year of teaching (her second at Bridge Street) reported:

I find that our principal is very supportive. She's always there for the kids and for the teachers as well. If I ever have anything I need to talk about or am concerned about, I know I can always go to her, whether it be a personal issue or a professional issue. And the teachers within the school are great. If you need a resource, you can pop into anyone's room and say, "Can I borrow this?" and they will say, "Yeah, take it, go." It's such a sharing community.

Jane noted that "When I first started in the kindergarten [in my third year of teaching and first at Bridge Street] other teachers were amazing, giving me resources, advice, and so on". James, who had taught at Bridge Street for four years, said the principal's work at the school led to his decision to move beyond supply teaching and take up a regular position.

A major aspect of the model of school reform at Bridge Street was leadership by the teachers. Not only was this a benefit to the new teachers but some of them were, themselves, recognized as leaders in particular areas. Mark had been at the school since he began teaching three years earlier, and was appointed early as one of the four main instructional leaders, with responsibility for behaviour issues. Natalie also helped in the behaviour area, with particular focus on implementing the Second Steps program. James commented on how helpful the leadership system was to him both in literacy teaching and behaviour management. He said behaviour was previously so bad at the school he declined requests to supply-teach there, even though he lived nearby. "The teachers used to have to take attendance ten times a day because children would literally run away, or hide in the bathrooms.... But now it's not really an issue any more, the school culture has changed so much."

The system of instructional leaders, so central to the supportive school culture, was mainly the principal's creation. She remarked:

I call them instructional leaders; it's just me calling them that.... Cindy's the only one who has an actual school board position, a 0.5 allocated for PD in literacy because we are an

EYLP (Early Years Literacy Project) school. The term instructional leader is used elsewhere in the board, but I use it in a different sense: to acknowledge their special leadership role in this school. For example, the MART (special education) position comes from the board, but together Linda and I built the “struggling learner” piece, and I consider that a leadership thing. Similarly, Mark built the behavior piece, and I consider that leadership.

Establishing this structure took a lot of administrative maneuvering on Janet’s part. Cindy’s half-time literacy position came under board policy; but having a specialist library resource position demanded a lot of ingenuity in a small school such as Bridge Street. With respect to the other two positions, Janet said:

In my first year here as VP (1996-97) the behaviour was really awful; so the staff, the principal, and I decided to put forward a proposal to have a 0.5 behaviour resource teacher, which meant that the other teachers agreed to accept higher class numbers in order to have somebody who would support behaviour. And that was the beginning of the turn-around for this school. We never looked back. Then eventually – about two or three years ago – they changed the special education model in the board and sent it all to the home schools. And that gave us the MART (Linda) 1.0 and 0.5 for the home-school program. So with 1.5 for special education, including Mark’s piece devoted to behaviour, we were able to lower class size again.

Typically principals have considerable latitude to juggle budgets, positions, and timetables in the ways illustrated by Janet’s actions. The time has come for this freedom to be exercised to a greater extent in support of new teachers, so they can survive, thrive, and be effective in their work.

School-Based Teacher Learning

While the principal is key to new-teacher support in a school, a general structure of school-based learning (usually established in part by the principal) is also vital. An important component here is having a common vision throughout the school. As Reeves (2011) maintains, a school must have a focus; it must pursue things that are important and can be done; and it must have ultimate goals. According to Reeves, when a school has such a vision, teacher growth is facilitated because teachers see the vision in action around them and are supported in learning how to implement it. Of course, in line with earlier discussion, teachers must be full partners in developing the school vision and have considerable flexibility in pursuing it.

At Bridge Street, much of the success and teacher satisfaction depended on the fact that the staff was pulling in the same direction. Natalie: “As a staff...we have common goals for our kids.... [W]e have main goals we want to accomplish, things we want to implement, things we want the children to learn. So it’s a whole-school approach.” While there was a common vision, however, it was not imposed in an overly strict or top-down manner. Second-year teacher Andrea said, “You pick and choose, and the things that really need to get done tend to get done”. Natalie stated that there was an acceptance in the school of teachers – especially new teachers – pacing themselves and implementing one thing at a time. Gina, a sixth year teacher, looked back at how the common vision had helped her grow professionally:

I started here as a new teacher, so this common agenda and structure were good for me personally, because I came in as a blank slate. I had my teacher education, had been in a couple of classrooms, and had taught ESL for a year; but it was nice to go into a primary classroom and have certain programs emphasized by the school, so I knew what the

direction of the school was.... And I feel it has helped me create a well-balanced literacy program because of the school's agenda and resources.

Apart from a school-wide vision, it is important to have school-based professional learning opportunities. Among the teachers in our longitudinal study, Wanda in her fourth year noted how much she had been helped in her first year by a school-based learning process for literacy teaching.

Since the pre-service program, I've definitely increased my knowledge...and one major factor was spending my first year at Martin Grove School. It was an Early Years Literacy Project school with an in-house literacy coordinator and a staff who often sat down together to discuss literacy teaching, look at resources, and decide what approach to take.... It was a small school and the teachers were not concerned with being 'stars'. The concept was that we were there to support the kids, a lot of whom were struggling learners; we had to figure out how we were going to get those children where they needed to be. It was an eye-opening experience and extremely positive.

At Bridge Street School, the staff worked and learned together, sharing strategies and resources and engaging in joint teaching and school-wide projects. Second-year teacher Andrea said: "We do a lot of team teaching in our school and a lot of collaboration on how to make students work together and how to teach the Second Steps program (on behaviour and conflict resolution).... That happens in every single grade: it is given to every class so they all know similar strategies." Teachers at the school conducted PD sessions for each other. James reported:

Since I've started here I've had some excellent workshops and programs run by people at the school, such as the literacy coordinator (Cindy) and our VP (when we had one). In First Steps literacy, experienced teachers within the school prepare workshops for us to attend in the library after school and at lunchtime.... They show us how they implement First Steps in their classrooms. They bring student work and charts they have used and put things on overhead projectors.... And the librarian will show us things that are on the computer.

Of course, being part of a collaborative enterprise can be demanding, but Natalie observed that all teachers have to work hard, and this is just a different (and better) way to do it. Andrea said:

It takes a while to build up a program and feel comfortable with what you're doing. Even if I was in another school I think I would be working just as hard, but my job would probably be even more difficult because I wouldn't have the resources to actually do what I want to do.

System-wide Support for New Teachers

Apart from the examples of induction and mentoring noted earlier (e.g., in Scotland and Santa Cruz, California), system-level support for new teachers is often small in amount, narrow in scope, lacking in direction, and too top-down to be effective (Reeves, 2011; Strong, 2009). What can be done about this? Part of the problem is funding: governments and school districts have very little money to invest in new teacher support, and this is likely to continue. (This is partly why I have emphasized school-based support, because much can be done at that level by juggling present resources, as at Bridge Street School.) But within the funding constraints, and apart from the induction and mentoring initiatives discussed before, I have two related suggestions.

First, we need to develop a more adequate theory base so new teachers and all others

involved in education have a better sense of direction. We have to become clearer about what we are trying to achieve in schooling, and the kind of practices that will get us there. The theory base I propose is constructivism, a position that has been advocated by Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, Freire, and many other highly regarded educational theorists. Briefly put, it sees students co-constructing their knowledge, beliefs, and approach to life in a context of teacher-student dialogue. This need not be at the expense of subject learning, but rather involves adapting subject learning to the exploration of wider personal and societal issues.

Constructivism already has very general support among educators. It is the pedagogy almost invariably advocated in teacher education programs; and most teachers also claim to favour it. A recent OECD publication (2012) reports that, “teachers’ beliefs about teaching practice are remarkably consistent across countries. TALIS 2008 revealed that, on average, teachers in all but one of the 23 participating countries endorsed a constructivist view of teaching, which focuses on students as active participants in the process of acquiring knowledge” (p. 39). However, the actual implementation of constructivism is patchy in both teaching and teacher education. Aubusson and Schuck (2013) note that there is often “a gap between the rhetoric and reality” (p. 325); and Sykes, Bird, and Kennedy (2010) observe: “Teacher education...fits into cultural scripts, with much of it occurring in classrooms where instructors dominate discussion, use PowerPoint, assign readings in texts, and give tests” (p. 467). I think educators are sincere in wanting to move toward certain aspects of constructivism, but often they are either not clear about which aspects they believe in, or are clear about them but do not know how to implement them in practice.

Second, and to help address the challenges of defining and implementing constructivism, I propose a system-wide framework that articulates *both the theory and practice* of teaching, and is readily available to all educators and policy developers. Fortunately, over the past decade the outlines of such a mechanism have begun to emerge, with some optimism that it could be feasible given advances in information technology. Bryk (2008), for example, advocates a “new vision of research...organized around core problems of practice” and involving both teachers and university researchers who together develop “something that has the potential of working on a broad scale across large numbers of different contexts and in the hands of different sorts of people” (p. 3). It would be an open, knowledge-sharing “system,” somewhat like Wikipedia. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) propose “[p]utting practice at the center and drawing on the collective intellectual capacity of practitioners collaborating with others, such as university-based researchers”, resulting in a “grounded theory of educational transformation” (p. 161). Lowrie (2014) says we need an “educational practices framework” (EPF) that allows for “sharing ideas, presenting options and stimulating rich practices and [includes] resources, learning tools and curricula” (p. 43).

My proposal, then, is that using the resources we already have, all of us in education – teachers, teacher educators, researchers, government and school district officials, and others – work together to build such a framework of theory and practice. It would be constantly evolving and not binding on practitioners; but would be an invaluable resource which new teachers could draw on (and contribute to). It would help overcome the problem of constantly changing, inconsistent, and top-down initiatives that the new teachers in our longitudinal study found so problematic. As Kennedy (2010) says, top-down “support” for teachers can in fact do more harm than good: “Every time we help teachers, they have to stop thinking about how to wrap their students’ minds around a concept and instead turn their attention toward accommodating the new innovation” (p. 19). What I am suggesting instead is a resource offering a coherent system of ideas and strategies that are so obviously helpful that new teachers will want to go to it, and will do so as they sense the need. There would still be special induction and mentoring activities to the extent feasible, but the

emphasis would be on helping new teachers design their own professional learning.

CONCLUSION

Beginning teaching is very challenging, partly because of the inherent complexities and difficulties of teaching, and partly because pre-service teacher education – no matter how well designed and implemented – provides only a fraction of the knowledge and skill teachers require (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Day, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Accordingly, new teachers must go on learning, and be supported in this in a variety of ways.

Fortunately, new teachers already learn a great deal *informally* (Loughran, 2010; Schon, 1983). They do this primarily through experimentation and reflection in the classroom, but also through discussion with colleagues and self-chosen reading (in print or online). It is important for those who wish to support them to acknowledge this informal learning, so they interact with new teachers as emerging professionals, and ensure that they have voice and choice in PD activities. Indeed, much of the focus in such activities should be on building on and enhancing new teachers' own informal learning.

New teachers can also learn through *formal* means. But at present, much formal PD for new teachers (and teachers generally) is too sparse, narrow, inconsistent, and top-down to be very helpful (Reeves, 2011). This is partly due to the lack of resources, a limitation that is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. But much could be done to improve formal PD by making it more relevant and interactive.

There is great potential for *school-level* support of new teacher learning, for example, by collaboratively developing a school vision, appointing instructional leaders within the school, and facilitating mutual sharing and observation by teachers. This could be achieved to a considerable extent with present resources. However, such an approach requires principals to see new teacher support as a major part of their role and implement it in ways that respect and build on teachers' informal learning.

At the *system-level*, as noted, there are resource constraints and also the tendency to deliver PD in a top-down manner, thus alienating teachers and hindering the sharing of insights. However, the system level is potentially very important. The time has come for researchers, policy developers, administrators, and teachers to work together rather than at a distance and often in opposition. This can be done in a variety of ways; but following Bryk (2008), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), and Lowrie (2014), I propose the development of a comprehensive process (along the lines of Wikipedia) for developing constructivist theory and practice, to which everyone could contribute and on which everyone (including new teachers) could draw. If all of us in education could get on roughly the same page through such an inquiry and dialogue process, this would help new teachers figure out (more quickly than at present) what and how to teach.

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