

Principals' Satisfaction and Faculty Renewal in Canadian Schools

Yamina Bouchamma

(Department of Educational Foundations and Practices, Laval University, Canada)

Abstract: School principals from every province in Canada (N = 2144) answered a questionnaire on their role and responsibilities with regard to the integration and development of new teachers. Factorial analysis identified three factors related to new teachers: (1) their daily practice, (2) integration, guidance and support measures, and (3) recruitment conditions. Stage regression analysis revealed a positive link between these factors and the principals' satisfaction with the performance of the new teachers.

Key words: beginning teacher, role of principal

1. Introduction

As the school's leader, the principal is directly responsible for teacher renewal, one of the most important challenges facing Canadian schools. In this regard, Québec's Conseil supérieur de l'éducation has emphasized the importance of decentralizing educational practices from legislation-based administrative activities and pedagogical regimes to an approach focusing on responsabilization at the teacher/school level (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1999).

The following article presents results from a vast pan-Canadian joint study by Université Laval's Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur la formation et la profession enseignante (CRIFPE) and Statistics Canada, in the project : Current Trend in the Evolution of School personnel in Canadian Elementary and secondary Schools. We will begin by presenting the issue of faculty renewal and the challenges faced by school districts and more directly, their principals. We will then present a review of the literature pertaining to faculty renewal, the role of the school and the various implications involved. Finally, the methodology and results of our analyses are discussed.

1.1 Faculty Renewal and Implications for School Administrators

Teachers entering into the profession first experience the school setting during their training activities. How their transition succeeds (or fails) depends greatly on the support received by their superiors and experienced peers who often serve as mentors in this process.

In the United States, almost half of new teachers quit their job after five years in the area where they began to teach (Fowlkes, 2004). In Québec, the *Le Devoir* newspaper reported findings from the school boards' PERCOS personnel records to the effect that approximately 20% of young teachers drop out of the profession. A study of a group of new teachers who graduated in 1998 revealed that 17% quit teaching in the five years following their induction within a school district (Chouinard, 2003).

Society invests heavily in teacher education. For example, Québec's Ministry of Education allocates some 15

Yamina Bouchamma, Ph.D., full professor at the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations, Laval University; research areas: exemplary schools, school effectiveness; academic achievement, supervision of teachers, linguistic minorities, ethnic minorities and professional learning communities. E-mail: Yamina.Bouchamma@fse.ulaval.ca.

million dollars annually to support pre-service teachers during their college education (Chouinard, 2003). The province of Ontario estimated an average of \$4,400 for the recruitment of each new teacher, in addition to the lengthy and expensive training and education. Needless to say, the recruitment budgets by the various sectors of education could undoubtedly be smaller if schools work to retain their teachers rather than add new members (Fowlkes, 2004).

1.2 Relevance of the Research

This study is relevant by a theoretical as well as a practical and economical perspective. Understanding the role and responsibility of Canada's school principals and their hiring practices may help eliminate this financial burden by introducing appropriate solutions to this area in which faculty renewal is a growing issue. In helping schools to better integrate new teachers by providing them with the necessary support during this ever-evolving process, these teachers will be more inclined to remain in the profession.

Several studies have shown that support from others can predict the level of perseverance of new teachers (Fowlkes, 2004; Spinella, 2003). Few, however, have examined how principals support first-time teachers, despite its relevance. Research on the subject mainly addresses the support by mentors or the directions taken early in the teaching career (Carver, 2002). In fact, new teachers themselves have expressed wanting to perform well for their bosses and feel frustrated, anxious or abandoned when they feel they are not living up to the expectations (Brock & Grady, 1997).

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (1999) emphasizes that a pedagogical style of leadership and an ever-evolving competency will enable school principals to successfully collaborate with experienced teachers in mentoring new teachers.

2. Review of the Literature

This section offers a review of the literature related to the reasons new teachers leave the profession and potential solutions for supporting them, challenges in facing the unknown, the principal's rôle in supporting new teachers, and support strategies in recruitment, welcoming, mentoring and professional development.

2.1 The Lack of Perseverance of New Teachers: Causes and Solutions

Many factors may explain why new teachers lack perseverance. The literature reports several causes and proposes solutions to encourage new teachers to remain in the profession. Among the more significant causes are exhaustion, the lack of support (Brewster & Railsback, 2001; Quinn & Andrews, 2004) and the heavy workload involved (Angelle, 2002). Furthermore, teachers have cited the lack of support and encouragement from their principal as being the number one reason for quitting their job (Eggen, 2002; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

According to the literature, what helps new teachers to pursue their career with their employer is proper training, a good support system (parents, colleagues, and administrators), and in particular, encouragement from their principal. In fact, educating teachers should not be limited to their qualifications and how well they prepare to teach (Moir & Gless, 2001; Moir & Bloom, 2003). Teachers must be provided with the necessary support that not only facilitates their integration (Seyfarth, 2002) but also ensures their effectiveness and their desire to remain in the profession (Andrews & Quinn, 2005).

2.2 The New Teacher: Facing the Unknown with What You've Got

Teachers who are candidates in initial preparation programs are often rated on several points such as

language skills, rapport with students, professional ethics, level of collaboration, sense of responsibility, commitment, capacity to establish relations with peers (Cheng & Cheung, 2002) and instructional know-how (Torok, 2004). However, the greatest challenges weighing on their successful induction into school systems tend to include student assessments (Cheng & Cheung, 2004), class management, discipline (Veenman, 1984; Kiley & Thomas, 1994; Drummond, 1990; Cheng & Cheung, 2004; Torok, 2004), their knowledge of certain social issues, and their relational skills (Torok, 2004). In short, the initial training of teachers has been qualified as insufficient in terms of adequately preparing them for what really goes on inside the school (Dillon, 2004).

In addition, several studies have revealed a discrepancy between teachers' perceptions and those of their principals (Leithwood, 1992), particularly with regard to the support provided and that received during the first year in the profession. Powell (2004), among others, emphasized that the most effective training for principals must enable them to better understand their role as chief mentor as well as their responsibility within a structured induction program (Powell, 2004).

2.3 The Role of the Principal in Retaining Novice Teachers

The principal's leadership abilities come heavily into play in implementing a successful induction program within the school (Seyfarth, 2002), which must be considered a priority (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). Weva (1999) cites that effective schools assist their new teachers in five areas: adapting to the new classroom, to the school, school district and community, and in their own personal adaptation.

In examining the best integration practices with new teachers, Golden (2003) retained four aspects regarding the role of the principal in an effective induction program. The principal must 1) ensure that the new teacher be assigned to the level most suited to his or her capabilities, 2) provide the new teacher with a compatible mentor with whom they can work effectively together, 3) offer frequent feedback, and 4) use a constructivist approach in the integration process by guiding the new teacher in their reflection on their profession and stimulate their professional development.

According to Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000), in order to guide novice teachers, it is important to improve their effectiveness and performance, encourage them to persevere by providing support and guidance, stimulate their professional and personal well-being, communicate and reward their appropriation of the school's/district's culture and vision, and help them respond to the demands of the education system and public education.

2.4 The Role of the Principal in Retaining Novice Teachers

Although many people are involved in supporting teachers and in helping to retain new teachers, it is the principal who stands out as the most influential person in ensuring a positive transition and continuous support for new teachers (Johnson and Birkeland, 2003; Angelle, 2002; Eggen, 2002). Principals who provide the necessary guidance to their novice teachers enable them to become more competent, thus increasing their chances of remaining in the school (Brewster and Railsback, 2001).

To effectively respond to the needs of their young teachers, principals must set the standard by providing direct support for them and encouraging the other staff members to do the same (Quinn and Andrews, 2004). This support in fact determines how new teachers react in the face of adversity and persevere within the profession. To achieve this, principals must be well informed and must understand their role with their new colleagues (Sergiovanni, 1995), as they are key figures to their success (Fowlkes, 2004).

Principals at different school levels have significant power within their schools, exerting a direct impact on both their school's climate and their teachers' behaviour (Quinn and Andrews, 2004). Leadership style and the

school environment have been shown to influence a teacher's decision to remain in the school or change careers altogether (Tirella, 2003).

Using the appropriate leadership and professional development strategies, principals may also play an important role in lowering the level of stress felt by their teachers (Christopher, 2004). In a phenomenological study on the four-year career plans of 50 new teachers (Johnson and Birkeland, 2003), eight participants expressed that they had transferred schools to be in a more effective and stable school environment that offered better opportunities for both learning and professional development and a principal who was more accessible and who displayed a positive attitude. In another study, newly hired teachers reported that the support received and the relationship with their principal influenced how they worked. Principals influenced them through their leadership and how they ran the school, as well as the professional and personal support they provided, their empathy and the feeling of collaboration they instilled among the teaching staff (Jones, 2005).

2.5 Recruitment

When principals are in charge of recruiting teachers, this represents the initial connection between existing faculty and these new employees. This is an important milestone in the transition of the new teacher for whom the principal represents the first contact with their new job (Brock & Grady, 1997). Principals who are directly involved in the recruitment process are shown to promote a better work environment (Brossard, 1999b) and encourage teachers to

2.6 Welcoming the newcomer

Once the recruitment is done, the principal informs the newcomer of how the school is run (Voge, 2004) and sees to welcoming them when school opens in the fall (Baillauquès and Breuse, 1993). However, the principal is not the only one responsible for the induction of the new teacher; the entire staff should participate in the process (Wood, 2005). The principal's primary role is to provide an appropriate academic environment that facilitates the newcomer's integration (Colley, 2002). In this regard, the principal should encourage collaboration among their teaching staff (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Lamarre, 2004) as well as continuing education practices (Brossard, 1999a; Darling-Hammond, 1999) focused on problem-solving within the principle of a learning community (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Angelle, 2002).

As the school administrator, the principal must see to it that the initial workload of the new teachers is reduced (Baillauquès and Breuse, 1993; Eggen, 2002; Lamarre, 2004; Angelle 2002; Nault, 2003; Vogel, 2004) to facilitate adequate planning with a mentor. Principals should also allow new teachers to learn teaching strategies by observing their more experienced peers at work, or to have work-related discussions with other novice teachers (Angelle, 2002). Furthermore, new teachers should not be assigned the more challenging special needs classrooms (students with learning and behaviour difficulties, etc.). These conditions are not always respected, as the initial assignments of new teachers are often the most difficult, with the least interesting schedules (Martineau, Presseau & Portelance, 2005).

2.7 Mentoring

An effective mentoring program for new teachers requires certain conditions. Participants must first understand the purpose and the relevance of such programs which should be well organized to take into account the various characteristics of adult learners (Torok, 2004; Powell, 2004). Orientation, mentoring and personal development should be included in the induction of new teachers, extending beyond the first year of teaching,

with the ultimate goal of bettering teaching skills and the appropriate achievement by the students (Torok, 2004).

The advantages of mentoring programs are indisputable (Monsour, 2003). Through feedback and guidance so essential to new teachers, mentoring constitutes a determining factor in encouraging these beginners to pursue their career. By helping new teachers to remain in the profession, mentoring creates an environment that favours both personal growth and professional accomplishment (Feaster, 2002). In a study by Perez and Ciriza (2005) conducted over a period of five years, teachers who participated in a mentoring program were shown to remain longer in the profession, compared to teachers who were not mentored.

Recent studies have examined how mentors are trained in terms of lesson planning, observations, communication and follow-up (Andrews and Quinn, 2005). In this regard, mentors are there to support the principal. Studies have shown that principals who benefit from an established team of mentors make a significant difference in the lives of their new teachers. Tillman (2005) examined mentoring practices in one urban school and showed that the role of the principal in laying down and applying a mentoring program was crucial to retaining the teaching staff and consequently, improving student achievement. In this perspective, mentoring has of three essential purposes: improving personal and professional skills, transmitting the culture of the school environment and activating a transformational leadership that offers more power to the teachers.

A qualitative study conducted by Normore and Floyd (2005) revealed that principals' perceptions of collaboration and professional development were important indicators of the level of satisfaction with the new teachers and the intent of the latter to remain in the profession. Research has also shown that school principals who work with mentors support their new teachers more effectively. The question remains whether the presence of qualified mentors has an impact on the role of principals in the induction of first-time teachers (Zeichner and Gore, 1990).

Many studies concur that principals can help their new teachers by encouraging mentoring practices (Angelle, 2002; Nault, 2003; Vogel, 2004; Wood, 2005) and even becoming mentors themselves (Angelle, 2002; Eggen, 2002) or delegating this responsibility to a mentor while providing the necessary conditions (time allotment) to work together.

2.8 Professional Development

With the massive induction of new teachers into the profession, school principals must go beyond their administrative responsibilities and use a style of leadership that encourages professional commitment and growth (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1999). Principals must also provide pedagogical support for the first-time teacher by guiding them with classroom observations based on specific objectives, pre-established common criteria and subsequent feedback (Wood, 2005).

Principals and mentors may complete or add on to the tasks of new teachers through professional development and the appropriate guidance. The relational aspect comes into play in achieving this duty. The ideal professional relationship between mentor and principal is based on mutual respect, a shared regard for the profession and collaboration in their assessment of the new teacher (Carver, 2002; Shulman, 1987). In a successful induction process, the principal uses a personalized approach and a structured environment that will enable new teachers to express their feelings as well as their teaching experience (Gagnon, 2004).

To ensure a smooth transition for in-coming teachers, Dillon (2004) recommends that principals formally designate a mentor for them, schedule individual meetings to properly explain the school's expectations and protocols, establish contact early summer to provide them with time to prepare, provide the necessary start-up

funding for supplies, and enable the new teachers to observe the in-service, more experienced teachers at work.

3. Methodology

3.1 Materials and Method

This study was part of a nation-wide longitudinal research project led by Université Laval's Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur la formation et la profession enseignante (CRIFPE). The project was divided into four separate studies. This article presents part of the results from 2144 questionnaires from the third study. Specifically, this study addressed the section on new teachers' induction and professional development. The 2144 principals participating in the study were comprised of 55% men and 45% women working in schools in which an average of 22% of teachers had less than 5 years of experience, 22% had 6 to 10 years of experience, and 51% had more than 11 years of experience.

The principals' perceptions were measured by means of four main questions consisting of 37 items determined with the help of a four point Likert scale rating from *least important* to *most important*.

4. Results

A factorial analysis was conducted using common factors with a varimax orthogonal rotation on 37 items found in section 3 of the questionnaire on the principal's role and responsibilities with regard to induction practices with new teachers. The initial principal component factorial analysis revealed that Kaiser's measure of sampling adequacy was .98, which confirms the factorization of the correlation matrix. A latent root analysis, used as the initial indicator to determine the number of factors to be retained, shows the presence of four factors with an eigenvalue greater than one. However, the downslope indicator shows that only three of the four factors were interpretable; therefore, these three factors were retained for analyses as best explaining the model.

In total, 8 items were eliminated by taking into account the presence of a saturation coefficient greater than or equal to a factor, the presence of a saturation factor greater than or equal to .35, and the absence of cross-saturations; an item presenting a significant saturation ($\geq .35$) on more than one factor was eliminated. Specifically, Table 1 shows that the significant saturations were found between a minimum of .57 and a maximum of .82.

Results indicate that 29 items on the questionnaire on the role and responsibility of principals in integrating new teachers are grouped together into three main factors, following a common factor factorial analysis with varimax rotation. This tridimensional solution shows that the first factor contained 15 items related to the daily tasks of new teachers, and the second factor consisted of seven items measuring the different types of welcome, supervision and support actions used to assist the beginner teachers, while the final factor housed seven items pertaining to the recruitment conditions of new teachers.

According to the results, following a rotation, the overall factors explain 72% of the total variance. Factor 1 explained 34.75% of the variance, factor 2 explained 19.85% of the variance, and factor 3 explained 17.41 of the variance (see Table 2).

A stage regression was conducted between the level of satisfaction of the principals with regard to their new teachers' performance and the three factors retained by the factorial analysis, namely, daily tasks, recruitment conditions and welcome, supervision and support measures). These were retained during the first stage of the

regression analysis and all demonstrate a positive influence with regard to the level of satisfaction of how well the teachers were doing (see Table 3).

The results therefore indicate that the variable on the daily tasks by new teachers correlates positively with the principals' level of satisfaction of the tasks performed by their newly recruited teachers and thus constitutes the most significant predictive factor ($\beta = .59, p < .001$). Our analyses confirm that the welcome, guidance and support measures for new teachers, corresponding to the second highest factor ($\beta = .36, p < .001$), and the recruitment conditions of the new teachers ($\beta = .25, p < .001$) were also positively linked to the level of satisfaction with the performance of the new teachers.

Table 1 Induction of New Teachers

| Items | Factors | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Daily tasks by new teachers | Welcome, guidance, and support | Recruitment conditions |
| Contributes to the school's culture | .82 | | |
| Adapts their teaching and learning activities to fit the characteristics and needs of their students | .82 | | |
| Collaborates with the principal | .81 | | |
| Communicates with the students | .80 | | |
| Collaborates with the parents | .80 | | |
| Provides feedback to parents regarding their children | .79 | | |
| Maintains discipline among the students | .79 | | |
| Learning assessments | .79 | | |
| Takes steps to improve their professional competency | .78 | | |
| Masters subjects in the program | .77 | | |
| Teamwork with the other teachers | .77 | | |
| Gets involved along with the other staff | .76 | | |
| Uses new technology in the classroom | .75 | | |
| Participates in extra-curricular activities | .74 | | |
| Helps students with learning difficulties to progress in their classroom | .74 | | |
| Network of help from other new teachers | | .80 | |
| Support group | | .80 | |
| Resource person designated by the principal | | .77 | |
| Sponsorship or mentoring | | .77 | |
| Continuing education | | .76 | |
| Transitional activities | | .72 | |
| Lessened workload | | .69 | |
| New teachers inherit student groups known to be the most difficult | | | .75 |
| I expect that new teachers may be called upon to teach subjects outside their specialty | | | .73 |
| The working conditions of the new teachers complicates their induction in my school | | | .73 |
| Recruiting is difficult for certain subjects | | | .73 |
| New teachers are forced upon me by other individuals or instances | | | .67 |
| When hiring new teachers, I receive help from the district board or other instance | | | .62 |
| I have total freedom when hiring new teachers | | | .57 |

N = 2144

Table 2 Three Factors Determining Principals' Satisfaction

| Factors | Initial personal values | | | Extraction sum of factors retained | | | Rotation of factors obtained | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|----------|------------------------------------|------------|----------|------------------------------|------------|----------|
| | Total | % var. | % cumul. | Total | % variance | % cumul. | Total | % variance | % cumul. |
| Daily tasks | 22.60 | 61.07 | 61.07 | 22.60 | 61.07 | 61.07 | 12.86 | 34.75 | 34.75 |
| Welcome/guidance /support measures | 2.21 | 5.97 | 67.04 | 2.21 | 5.97 | 67.04 | 7.34 | 19.85 | 54.59 |
| Recruitment conditions | 1.84 | 4.97 | 72.00 | 1.84 | 4.97 | 72.00 | 6.44 | 17.00 | 72.00 |

N = 2144

Table 3 Stage Regression between the Three Factors and Principals' Satisfaction

| Predictive variables | R^2 | B | SE | β |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------|------|---------|
| Satisfaction with teachers' work | | | | |
| Daily tasks | .35 | 2.12 | 1.45 | .59*** |
| Welcome/guidance/support measures | .48 | .65 | 1.30 | .36*** |
| Recruitment conditions | .54 | .45 | 1.22 | .25*** |

*** $p < .001$

5. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results, all of these variables, divided into three main factors (daily tasks of new teachers, welcome, mentoring and support measures, and recruitment conditions) explain more than two-thirds (72%) of the total variance in score, thereby contributing affirmatively to the principals' satisfaction.

These findings bring us to question whether the presence or absence of a teachers federation in their school district has any bearing on the principals' perceptions. We know that British Columbia and Ontario created their own professional associations in 1986 and 1996, respectively, and that other provinces such as Québec, Alberta, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick continue their efforts to improve the teaching profession (Tardif, Lessard and Mukamurera, 2001). It would be interesting to compare the perceptions of principals from Ontario and British Columbia, who have a teaching federation that assesses new teachers, with those from provinces who do not. The principals' practices probably do not differ from those of the school districts in which they work. Do principals who are members of a federation (Ontario and British Columbia) differ in how they perceive the induction of new teachers? Is their level of satisfaction greater?

Other variables should also be considered when comparing principals' level of satisfaction, such as socio-demographic (age and sex), socio-professional (years of experience), and institutional (size of school, public or private facility) differences, and language spoken (French or English). Regardless of the differences, the issue of teacher renewal must be openly discussed during the formal or informal training of our principals. In terms of professionalizing the teaching profession, teacher education must look beyond the initial training to a greater promotion of professional development in service.

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