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Understanding Early Career Teachers' Needs: Findings from the Pan-Canadian Survey

Benjamin Kutsyuruba[a]*, Keith D. Walker[b], Ian Matheson[a], John J. Bosica[a]
[a]Queen's University, Ontario, Canada; [b]University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan, Canada

Learning to teach in today's dynamic education climate requires considerable effort on the part of an aspiring teacher if this person is to manage all that the teaching profession entails. Researchers recognize the complexity and multi-layered nature of expectations for early career teachers (ECTs) during their socialization period, especially with respect to teaching, evaluation, and professional learning from districts, administration, colleagues, parents, and students (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Kelchtermans, 2017; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). ECTs are expected to build their personal and professional knowledge and instructional capacity in curriculum, assessment, classroom management, legal and policy literacy, and addressing the needs of students (Beck & Kosnik, 2014; Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Pogodzinski, 2015); yet rarely do we see novice professionals learning these requisite skills in isolation and without challenges. These beginning educators are situated in a dynamic contextual landscape which both influences their development and practice and also dictates professional expectations as ECTs enter this increasingly demanding work world (Kutsyuruba, Walker, & Godden, 2019). In Canada, administrative bodies at the provincial/territorial and regional levels have recognized the need to address the learning and growth of novice educators and have set up programs to support the induction, mentorship, and ongoing professional development of ECTs (Kutsyuruba, Godden, & Tregunna, 2014). Despite the existence of numerous programs across the country, there is a lack of consistency in both design and implementation. This is due to the variations in school systems and policies that stem from the exclusive responsibility afforded by the Canadian Constitution to the provinces over education. Given the contextual differences and nuances, we recognize that many programs are uniquely effective within certain areas and regions; yet we posit that deepening an overall understanding of ways in which ECTs' professional growth needs are met (or not) across Canada offers scholars, practitioners, and policymakers a better perspective on what supports are required and effective for the Canadian ECTs.

To this end, in our multi-year pan-Canadian research study, we examined the differential impact of induction and mentorship programs on ECTs' retention across the provinces and territories of Canada. This article outlines the results from a pan-Canadian *Teacher Induction Survey* (N=1343) that elicited ECTs' perceptions of induction and mentorship programs, with particular interest in retention and career issues. Along with demographic information, we describe the ECTs' experiences with induction support, mentorship, working environment, and career development. After reviewing the literature on teacher socialization with respect to induction and mentoring supports, we describe our research methodology and share the analysis of the survey responses from the Canadian novice teachers. We conclude with the discussions of our pan-Canadian study research findings and offer implications for policymakers, academics, and practitioners who work with ECTs.

* Email: ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca

Literature Review

Becoming a teacher involves learning about the professional standards and requirements, as well as being acculturated or inducted into particular school contexts. Known as teacher socialization, this process is characterized by the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and norms of both the teaching profession and the school community (Lacey, 2012; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2010). Achinstein, Ogawa, and Speiglman (2004) noted three factors that shape the socialization process for beginning teachers: teacher background, local context, and jurisdictional (state) policy environment. Novice teachers experience socialization differently based on such contextual factors as: individual background, histories, and experiences; organizational cultures, norms, beliefs and leadership practices in schools; and, various social, economic, and political influences on teaching profession and teachers as individuals (Kutsyuruba et al., 2019). Teachers who do not feel effective in their first years or do not receive adequate socialization support are prone to leave schools and abandon the teaching profession within the first 3 to 5 years (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Buchanan et al., 2013; Jones, 2005; Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009). Although conclusive statistics about the attrition rates in Canada are limited, studies noted early-career attrition rate variance from high to low across provinces and territories (Clandinin et al., 2012; Clark & Antonelli, 2009) and across certain segments of teaching profession (Karsenti, Collin, Villeneuve, Dumouchel, & Roy, 2008; Valeo & Faez, 2013). Overall, the view is attrition across Canada occurs mainly within the first five years (Karsenti & Collin, 2013). While significant challenges, difficult working conditions, and unreasonable demands are usually quoted as the main reasons for attrition (Andrews & Quinn, 2004; Anhorn, 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), other factors like restricting policies, job instability, and workforce economies also exacerbate teacher turnover (Holme, Jabbar, Germain, & Dinning, 2017; Ryan et al., 2017; Taylor & West, 2019), forcing ECTs to remain in temporary contract arrangements for significant length of time prior to securing full time or regular teaching contracts.

Conversely, effective socialization mechanisms help early career professionals grow in their confidence and competence, as manifested through the increased professional knowledge, skills, beliefs, and motivation, in turn resulting in enhanced sense of wellbeing, professional success, and reduced turnover (Lauermann & König, 2016; Le Maistre, Boudreau, & Paré, 2006). Retention of ECTs is also dependent on individual teacher characteristics and sense of efficacy, as well as job satisfaction and organizational factors (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Hughes, 2012; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Swanson, 2012). Mostly, retention efforts occur through induction and mentoring programs. Teacher induction is defined as a long-term, comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development process, organized by a specific jurisdiction to acculturate, train, support, retain new teachers, and help them develop a lifelong learning program (Wong, 2004). Beyond assisting ECTs with the transition into the profession, induction programs is viewed as one of the most useful ways to retain novices in the profession and prevent potential problems with their instruction and classroom management (Glazerman et al., 2010; Kang & Berliner, 2012; Kearney, 2014; Strong, 2005; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). . The ultimate goal of induction is ensuring ECT's full integration into a professional community of practice and continuing professional learning throughout their career (Kearney, 2014). While there is variance among and within programs in how this transition and support is accomplished and realized (Cherubini, 2009; Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012; Jones, 2002), researchers have reported on common factors among effective induction programs. These include the provision of well-trained and educated mentors, a developmental and multi-year format, supportive and engaged administrators, a supportive school culture, and supportive

conditions for reflective inquiry, professional autonomy, and development (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Eisenschmidt, Oder, & Reiska, 2013; Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

While some induction programs include mentoring as a major component among other structures, in other cases mentoring serves as the induction program (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Long et al., 2012). Mentoring matches ECTs with experienced teachers in a collaborative and nonjudgmental setting in order to assist with the transition into the profession and to help generate ideas for improvement of their craft (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010). Despite the multiple benefits of ECT mentorship (Hobson et al., 2009; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014), it often fails due to individual characteristics, inappropriate matches, lack of mentors, or lack of mentor training (Hobson, 2016; Johnson & Kardos, 2005). As a result, the traditional, formal one-on-one mode of mentoring has evolved into a "multiple relationships" phenomenon, where an ECT has a network of formal and informal mentors (Desimone et al., 2014; Higgins & Kram, 2001). Ultimately, formal or informal mentoring has personal learning of the protégé as its primary goal (Portner, 2008). In addition, ECTs can become reflective thinkers and co-learners if the mentoring environment is based on collaboration and grounded in overall induction process (Brock & Grady, 2006; Kochan & Trimble, 2000; Wynn et al., 2007). Self-initiated professional learning activities is an important aspect of teacher development (Kwakman, 2003), with reflective thinking in teaching providing an effective method to learn, develop, and excel (Brookfield, 2017; Larrivee, 2008; Lee, 2005). Properly designed and effectively implemented induction and mentoring programs can positively affect the retention of ECTs through increased professional development and teacher effectiveness, higher satisfaction and commitment, and improved classroom instruction and student achievement (Glazerman et al., 2010; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Richardson, Glessner, & Tolson, 2010; Strong, 2005). Overall, the literature suggests that ECTs are best positioned for success in their socialization when there is an induction program in place to support their transition, when mentorship is involved, when the working environment is supportive, and when opportunities exist for sustainable career development.

Methodology

This article describes the findings from the survey phase of a multi-year pan-Canadian research project that examined ECTs' experiences and the differential impact of induction and mentorship programs on teachers' retention across the provinces and territories of Canada.

Research instrument

An online survey was developed to examine the perceptions and experiences of ECTs within the publicly funded schools across Canada. The survey was based on relevant literature, as well as from the input generated from a pan-Canadian expert panel comprised of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. The survey questions covered such aspects as demographics, teacher induction, mentorship, school administration, work environment, and career and professional development. From the total of 89 questions, 77 questions were quantitative (multiple-choice and Likert scale) and 12 were qualitative (open-ended).

Research Sample

The survey instrument was field-tested with the expert panelists, principals, and teachers prior to distribution. The invitations to participate in the online survey were distributed through teacher

federations/associations, ministries of education, community organizations, and social media platforms. Participants of the survey needed to be beginning teachers (within their first five years of employment) in a publicly funded school in Canada. The survey was distributed in the spring-summer of 2016. With varying degrees of completion, the researchers received over 2000 responses to the survey from ECTs across all provinces and territories in Canada. Due to the nature and modes of survey distribution, survey return rate calculation was not possible. Processes of data cleaning and removing of incomplete datasets afforded researchers a final sample of usable responses (N=1343), with some variation in responses to individual survey items.

Data Analysis

This article selectively analyzes the survey questions that pertained to the type and nature of support, mentorship experiences, working environment, and career and professional development. For this purpose, we examined responses from 60 closed and 11 open-ended questions. The analytic software SPSS was used for Likert-scale questions to obtain descriptive statistics (e.g., percentages, means, and standard deviations). The open-ended responses were analyzed qualitatively using *emergent* and *a priori* coding procedures (Creswell, 2012); whereupon codes were combined into themes. As a team of researchers was involved in analyzing the data, we followed the general guidelines for assessing and reporting inter-rater reliability (Creswell, 2012).

Demographics

The demographic data showed that the mean age of the respondents was 29 years old, with 19 percent being male and 81 percent being female. Significantly, 96 percent of the respondents had a Bachelor of Education degree, and 27 percent of the respondents had other forms of credentials (i.e., Master of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science). While the current teaching location for the majority of participants represented three provinces, Ontario (33%), Alberta (27%), and British Columbia (18%), all 13 of the provinces and territories were represented in this study. This trend also reflected the province in which the respondents obtained their teacher certification/accreditation. For the overall years of teaching experience, data showed an almost equal distribution of respondent teaching experience, across span of one to five years. The question of grade level experience continued this trend of equal distribution, with each individual grade having had over 35% of the respondents having taught at that level. Grade 10 was the most highly taught grade with 26% of active respondents indicating that they had taught at that level. Again, each grade, except for Kindergarten at 16%, had a similar representation with Grade 1 to Grade 12 having over 21% representation. Eighty-five percent had occasional teaching (OT) experience, with almost a third of ECTs having taught occasionally for less than one year, while the rest had taught for up to five years in OT positions. Surprisingly, when asked how many teachers were teaching outside of their subject area, 37% noted they were teaching outside of the area that they had been prepared for, and for every three teachers who were teaching inside a grade level that they had been trained for, one teacher was teaching outside their grade level. Two-thirds (67%) indicated that they were teaching outside of the typical classroom setting, of which special education accounted for 37%, French Immersion for 24% and tutoring for 23%. Over a third of the respondents (37%) had been at their current school for less than a year. Twenty-three percent had been at their school for a full year, 22 percent for two years, ten percent for three years, five percent for four years, and four percent for five years. Moreover, the majority of these schools were

located in small cities (with a population of about 100,000). See Table 1 for detailed demographic information.

Table 1: Demographic Information for Survey Participants

Province Currently Teaching In		**Province of Accreditation**	
Ontario	33%	Ontario	38%
Alberta	27%	Alberta	23%
British Columbia	18%	British Columbia	18%
Québec	5%	Québec	5%
Manitoba	4%	Manitoba	5%
Saskatchewan	6%	Saskatchewan	4%
Newfoundland and Labrador	2%	Newfoundland and Labrador	3%
New Brunswick	0.4%	New Brunswick	1%
Nova Scotia	0.4%	Nova Scotia	1%
Prince Edward Island	0.4%	Prince Edward Island	1%
Nunavut	1%	Nunavut	0.3%
Northwest Territories	1%	Northwest Territories	0.2%
Yukon	1%	Yukon	2%
Age Range		**Overall Years Teaching**	
19–22	1%	In Their First Year	20%
23–26	34%	In Their Second Year	23%
27–30	35%	In Their Third Year	21%
31–34	14%	In Their Fourth Year	16%
35+	17%	In Their Fifth Year	20%
Gender		**Length of Occasional Teaching**	
Female	81%	Less Than One Year	28%
Male	19%	Full Year	19%
Occasional Teaching Experience		Two Years	22%
Yes	85%	Three Years	15%
No	15%	Four Years	8%
		Five Years	9%

Research Findings

In the following sections, we present key findings from select questions from the survey related to the following themes: induction support, mentorship experiences, working environment, and career development. Wherever appropriate, we offer verbatim quotes from the participants' open-ended responses (with indication of province) to complement the statistical data analysis from closed survey items.

Induction Support

Early-career teachers responded to a number of questions about the induction support they had received, including the type of support and what support what most beneficial (seen in Table 2). Other

supports rated as most beneficial by ECTs included resource sharing amongst peers (10%) and networking with other teachers (6%). Another closed question focused on the sources of support; 37% of ECTs reported that support came from the school, 35% reported that it came from their school board, and 18% reported that it came from their teacher association or union.

Table 2: Support for New Teachers

Type of Support		**Most Beneficial Support**	
Professional Development	82%	Informal Mentorship	44%
Informal Mentorship	73%	Professional Development	14%
Formal Mentorship	27%	Resource Sharing with Peers	14%

A number of open-ended questions prompted ECTs to provide additional insight about induction support they had received. Regarding whether or not the support they had experienced met their needs as a beginning teacher, most ECTs reported a mixed response, though responses also varied from exclusively positive to exclusively negative reviews. ECTs' responses referred to formal programming, colleague support, and level of formal support.

Regarding formal programming, many ECTs believed that the new teacher orientation and professional development they received had been helpful in meeting their needs, and that they had been given adequate planning time to prepare for teaching. One Alberta teacher, for example, reported that "there is a wealth of information available and as a new teacher having access to professional development has helped me with my planning and delivery of lessons." At the same time, a considerable number of ECTs expressed frustrations about the lack of mentoring and induction support; specifically, in Northern Canada where some teachers were without mentors, and with non-permanent staff that were not able to access support given their status. Many ECTs felt that formal induction programs were too time-consuming, took too much time away from the classroom, and that the professional development and orientation were insufficient or unhelpful. Another ECT from Alberta noted:

> The New Teacher Induction Program [that] I completed in my very first year of teaching I found to be very overwhelming. It involved a lot of time away from the classroom, and therefore lots of booking and preparing for sub teachers. I didn't 'click' with my mentor teacher, so I didn't feel very motivated or encouraged by them. Overall, I found the program added more work and didn't add value.

Some participants indicated that they had not been given enough planning time to prepare for teaching. Others noted that mentoring and induction support provided to them was too vague, and many felt that they needed specific services such as observation of their teaching for their growth. Several of the ECTs indicated that they did not qualify for formal support, given their non-permanent status or because of their position at a school had commenced after the formal support had begun. Many of the respondents also shared that they had to seek out their own support; instead of support being provided to them by someone else's initiative.

Colleague support emerged as a positive source for ECTs, particularly those colleagues who listened to, collaborated with, observed practice, and provided resources for ECTs. One teacher from Alberta shared that "Yes, I have been very lucky to have many colleagues provide me with advice,

materials, and support." Beginning teachers indicated that formal experienced mentors were helpful in meeting their needs, and many also indicated that they had developed their own informal mentors in their colleagues who had supported their growth. Respondents who said they felt that colleague support was non-existent or not helpful indicated that they had not received nor benefited from observation of their teaching from a mentor or colleague, that they had a poor relationship with their formal mentor, or that their mentor had not provided them with resources. One such ECT from Ontario shared that "the NTIP Mentor was too busy to mentor me, and actually worked against me by talking to my Principal behind closed doors despite it being against the rules."

The perceived *level of formal support* was directly related to ECTs' satisfaction with the support or the lack thereof. For beginning teachers who felt that they were well supported, administrators were commended for their support and feedback, as were the district and teachers' union personnel. One Alberta teacher commented on their satisfaction, stating "…the administration is very active and played a large part in my growth. As did the division's supervising teacher. They gave me a lot of advice that was largely helpful. Also, every co-worker was more than willing to share resources." New teachers who felt their needs had not been met, indicated that administrators were not supportive of them, that formal support systems were poorly implemented, and that they were not receiving support from above to meet their students' needs. A teacher from British Columbia shared: "No one has supported me in my classroom to deal with management issues. My students who require additional learning/behaviour supports are not receiving them, despite many requests. It is all falling to me to deal with on my own."

ECTs also identified elements of their teaching experience that had either met or not met their needs. Some cited feelings of comfort and confidence within their school environment as an indication that their needs were being met. One Alberta ECT indicated "I think it has, because I have become more comfortable and a lot more confident over the course of this year." Others noted that they had felt they were made to feel that they were a part of the school community, and some shared that they felt comfortable to communicate issues they had experienced with colleagues and administrators.

Elements of ECTs' personal experiences that did not meet their needs included feelings of isolation and of being undervalued within the school. One Ontario participant commented on the amount of support he had received, saying "It has been very minimal as an [occasional teacher], and it's really up to me to ask for help if I need it. Otherwise there's no real organized initiative to support us." Some felt that expectations of them had not been communicated, and some ECTs shared that they were afraid to seek help within their school. Several beginning French teachers pointed out that formal support did not seem to be designed for their unique needs, and many beginning teachers actually felt that the formal support provided added more stress to their lives.

Whether formal or informal, ECTs overwhelmingly communicated that support was needed, and that it made a huge difference in ECTs personal growth and induction into the profession. A participant from Alberta shared:

> The first few years of teaching are incredibly difficult because your job is not steady. Most of the time you are just a substitute and are waiting for a contract. At this time there is no support. The year where I had a contract, it seemed as if there was no one I could turn to. I felt like I had to do most of everything on my own. My teacher partner was also young and did not provide adequate support. A teacher with a lot of experience is needed to provide the support necessary. It doesn't matter if they are teaching the same grade or cycle.

Many ECTs also focused on mentoring, sharing that mentor teachers needed more training, and also that many ECTs wanted extended mentoring and support beyond the initial year or two years provided.

Mentorship Experiences

A number of questions focused on the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship for ECTs. Over two thirds (67%) of the respondents noted that they had a mentor at one point, and of that two thirds 77% had an informal mentor. Table 3 provides Likert-scale responses to a number of items related to ECTs' experiences with mentors. Over half (54%) of the respondents rarely or never had been observed teaching by their mentor, though almost half (44%) reported that their mentor encouraged them to try different teaching approaches often or very often. Two-thirds (66%) of the respondents reported that they at least sometimes had opportunities to work with more experienced teachers to plan collaboratively.

Table 3: Mentorship Experiences

Question/Statement	**N**	**R**	**S**	**O**	**VO**	**N/A**
How frequently do you and your mentor meet?	4%	15%	30%	21%	12%	18%
My mentor provides constructive feedback about my practice.	9%	15%	29%	20%	8%	20%
My mentor provides constructive feedback about my students' learning.	10%	16%	30%	18%	5%	21%
My mentor clearly communicates school expectations.	9%	9%	22%	26%	10%	23%
My mentor observes my teaching to enable more effective practice.	34%	20%	16%	6%	3%	21%
My mentor encourages me to try out different teaching approaches.	7%	8%	22%	29%	15%	19%
My mentor guides me to set goals related to student learning.	11%	11%	22%	25%	10%	21%
My mentor and I have professional conversations.	3%	4%	15%	32%	28%	18%
I work with more experienced teachers to plan collaboratively.	7%	12%	24%	23%	19%	16%
My mentor and I discuss my ongoing career planning.	16%	18%	21%	16%	9%	20%
My mentor helps me to communicate with school administration.	18%	15%	20%	14%	10%	23%
Mentoring helps me with my personal development.	9%	9%	21%	25%	18%	19%

N = Never, R = Rarely, S = Sometimes, O = Often, VO = Very Often, N/A = Not Applicable.

Three major themes emerged from the open-ended responses of Canadian ECTs regarding the different ways that mentors had been valuable to them and their teaching, indicating value through *general collaboration, guidance for teaching, and non-teaching guidance.* Responses that involved the mentor and mentee working together were considered to be collaboration, and responses that involved the mentor providing material or modelling behaviour were considered to be guidance. Mentors who provided value through collaboration with ECTs did so in helping with report cards, co-planning for teaching, and co-developing resources to use in teaching. An Alberta ECT noted valuable instances of

"collaboration within lesson planning, decoding the curriculum, making me aware of policies and regulations, and finding resources." Mentors who guided ECTs in teaching provided resources, modeled their own teaching practices, and modeled communication practices to students. An Ontario teacher benefitted from observing her mentor being "a model for building positive relationships with students and classroom management." Mention was made of a number of instances where mentors guided ECTs in non-teaching contexts. For example, it was shared that mentors provided general career feedback and advice, and assisted with a number of first-time experiences, including speaking with parents and how to handle students failing courses. One Alberta teacher valued the support received from a mentor, particularly "in situations where I've had to make tough calls -- failing a student, contacting parents about plagiarism, etc."

ECTs also shared challenges that they had experienced with mentoring *processes, structure, and relationships*. Challenges related to mentoring processes included finding time to meet and understanding responsibilities within the mentor-mentee relationship, and many also indicated that the mentoring process had added more stress. Overall, the sentiment was that there was not enough time to meet together during the school day/week.

In terms of structural challenges with mentoring, many ECTs indicated that they had wanted but had not received observation of their teaching nor had they received feedback from their mentor. ECTs felt that having a mentor either out of the subject area or grade presented a structural challenge, as did having a mentor from outside of their school or community. Some novices shared that a lack of budget for funding their mentor-mentee meet-ups presented a structural challenge, and that there were not enough formal activities related to mentorship. Several ECTs felt the relationship created a power dynamic challenge in that they felt beneath the mentor. Some non-permanent ECTs indicated that they had structural issues with general access to a mentor; one Ontario teacher shared:

> I was formally matched with a mentor who had never taught the same grade level as me. She was also assigned to a different school. It was difficult to connect with her as we had very little in common and did not interact regularly. I feel like mentoring partnerships should be developed more naturally between two people who can connect more authentically.

In terms of relationship challenges with mentoring, ECTs noted that having a different style and/or personality than their mentor had created challenges. An Ontario teacher shared a perspective that illustrated the clash in style or approach to teaching:

> Just being told sometimes the way that I must do something even if I don't necessarily agree. I understand that the other teachers are very experienced but sometimes I would like to try out a new idea and not worry about the other grade teachers being upset with me planning something different

Some ECTs had the feeling that they had become too much of a burden through their relying on the support of their mentor. Some ECTs indicated that their mentor had not shared resources with them, and in some cases, that they felt their mentor did not care about them.

Overall, the mentor-mentee relationship, in both formal and informal settings, had a wide-reaching impact on the induction of ECTs into the profession. The combination of positive and negative experiences shared by respondents suggests that individual ECT's differences impact how mentoring support was perceived and received.

Working Environment

A number of items related to the work environment and conditions that provided insight into the daily life of an ECT, and responses can be seen in Table 4. Over 80% of ECTs felt they were expected to engage in professional development, though fewer than half (43%) agreed that the had an opportunity to observe a model of excellent teaching and learning within their own school. Over three-quarters (76%) of ECTs felt that teachers in their school take responsibility to develop and improve their own teaching practice. Almost all respondents agreed that they had taught students from diverse backgrounds (87%), and the majority (71%) also agreed that they felt their school had an inclusive and supportive culture. Over 40% of respondents felt that their working conditions were not appropriate and fewer than half (48%) indicated that their successes were regularly acknowledged. Sixty percent of the respondents agreed that their school administrator shared leadership and promoted a collaborative culture in their school, and close to the same amount (59%) agreed or strongly agreed that overall they felt supported by their school's administrative team (See Table 4).

Table 4: Working Environment

Statement	**SD**	**D**	**D/A**	**A**	**SA**	**N/A**
I am encouraged to question my beliefs about teaching.	6%	16%	26%	34%	11%	7%
My successes are regularly acknowledged.	7%	17%	24%	36%	12%	4%
I am expected to focus on student learning.	1%	2%	9%	56%	29%	3%
I am expected to engage in professional learning and development.	1%	4%	9%	49%	32%	4%
I've had opportunities to observe models of excellent teaching and learning in my current school.	13%	25%	15%	32%	11%	5%
There is informal peer-mentoring (or group mentoring) in my school.	11%	16%	14%	34%	15%	9%
My mentor and I are given adequate time to meet.	15%	18%	15%	13%	6%	33%
In my school, teachers take responsibility to develop and improve their own teaching practice.	1%	5%	13%	55%	21%	5%
At my school, we have professional learning and development that encourages career-long learning.	4%	13%	22%	37%	16%	9%
My school has an inclusive and supportive culture.	3%	7%	15%	45%	26%	4%
In my school, teachers are engaged in decision making processes about matters that affect them.	6%	12%	15%	43%	17%	6%
I have taught students from diverse backgrounds.	0%	6%	6%	38%	49%	1%
I believe my working conditions are appropriate for a beginning teacher.	15%	20%	14%	31%	12%	8%

Statement	SD	D	D/A	A	SA	N/A
My current school administrator shares leadership and promotes a collaborative culture in our school.	8%	10%	15%	36%	24%	7%
As a new teacher, I feel supported by my current school's administrative team.	9%	10%	17%	34%	25%	5%

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A/D = Neither Agree nor Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, N/A = Not Applicable.

Many ECTs reflected on positive aspects of their school environment with the open-ended questions, especially in regard to factors that contributed to their professional growth. ECTs identified three sources of an expectation for them to engage in professional learning and development—*colleagues*, *personal motivation*, and *superordinate sources*. Colleagues were helpful by making explicit recommendations to ECTs in terms of their engagement in professional learning and development. One Ontario teacher share that "it's always available and other colleagues share opportunities they're aware of, so others can take part." Many ECTs identified a personal desire to help students, to grow as an educator, and to stay current as sources of their expectation to engage in professional learning and development. An ECT from Alberta expressed that the desire comes from "myself, I want to be a better teacher. My responsibility [as] a teacher is to learn new ways to help my students learn." ECTs indicated that administration was a source through both pressure and encouragement, and that some expectations came from the school board, established high quality teaching standards, and the provincial governments—all examples of superordinate sources. Specifically, in regard to professional development, an Alberta ECT remarked, "administration encourages collaboration and provides opportunities, suggestions and support to attend and participate in PD opportunities."

ECTs identified examples of *personal ventures* and *external factors* as the best and most effective sources for their own professional development. Personal ventures included the use of social media and online resources. Many ECTs indicated that the best and most effective sources for their professional development were times spent in the classroom with their students and times spent reflecting and focusing on their own personal growth, without any pressure from others to do so. One Alberta teacher summed up this common perspective:

> The classroom. That is it. The failures and successes made in the classroom on a daily basis and the reflection upon them. The formal PD sessions and get-togethers have taken away from my much-needed prep time. I am trying to survive the day to day and learn how to just get through. The essentials are the beginning point and much of what is being discussed and emphasized at PD is going beyond what I am currently capable of and taking time away from the practical in order to get theoretical and abstract when that is not what I currently need.

External factors included other teachers, in cases where ECTs identified observations of and from other teachers, conversations, collaborations, and informal mentorship as effective sources of professional development. An ECT from Saskatchewan viewed colleagues as a valuable source of professional development for a number of reasons, including "having a colleague look at my lessons, assignments, etc. and make suggestions. [Discussing] classroom management techniques with colleagues." Others noted formal, embedded professional development sessions as effective sources of professional development, including conferences, a variety of content sessions, mentorship sessions, school-based professional development, and new teacher programs. Some ECTs indicated

that resource sharing, school district publications, teachers' associations and external learning sessions provided them with effective professional development.

In addition, ECTs reflected on how the intensity and pace of the profession had negatively affected their induction and socialization, and for this they provided both *personal* and *work-related* examples. Wanting more downtime at home, feeling a general sense of fatigue, both physically and mentally, and the negative influence on social life were mentioned by a number of ECTs as personal examples. Others indicated that the profession had affected their family time, made them become introverted over time, and had increased their feelings of isolation. Quite a few ECTs expressed that teachers are not paid enough and easily burnt out, and many also cited a lack of focus on teachers' mental health, including one Saskatchewan teacher that said "I have struggled in my 1st year to work less than 10 hours a day and felt extremely tired and burnt out some days." Others indicated that things had improved over time and overall professional intensification had had no effect on their induction and socialization.

In terms of work-related examples, ECTs emphasized that their working environment had become increasingly busy, that they had no time for extra-curricular activities within the school, and that there were always extra jobs for them to do, including various forms of supervision. Typical concerns and frustrations indicated beliefs that expectations for teachers are too high, that there is a shortage of jobs, that hiring systems are poor and inconsistent, and that class sizes needed to be smaller. Many new teachers expressed frustration about teacher training, feeling that it needs improvement, and many even suggested that the profession should adopt an apprenticeship model for new teachers to ease transition. Some ECTs expressed frustrations with the government policies, specifically with the perceived emphasis on students passing, frequent shifts in education initiatives and focuses, and the introduction of restrictive regulations (e.g., Ontario Regulation 274 that was perceived to limit new teachers' access to full-time jobs). ECTs' frustrations and concerns also related to the lack of opportunity for teachers to specialize in a subject or few subjects, that not enough preparation time is given to teachers, and generally about the difficulties related to dealing with parents. Some ECTs indicated that their social life within the school community had increased; while their personal social life had dwindled, and some even claimed that they no longer had a social life because of the profession. Many felt that work was all consuming and that workload was too intense, especially at certain times of the year (e.g., report card production period). Some ECTs mentioned that they felt staff rooms were zones of negativity, and that they had become more negative because of the profession. One Alberta teacher commented on the negative effect of the pace and intensity of the profession, sharing that "…everyone is just too busy and too stressed. I have learned to avoid staff rooms at most schools as they are often negative energy zones with overworked teachers constantly airing concerns in an unproductive manner." However, many ECTs also indicated that other teachers had become friends because they truly understood the demands of the profession and their influence on personal lives.

In terms of administrator support, we noted both negative (especially about the perceived lack of support), and positive perspectives. Many ECTs believed that their principals not only *espoused* their desire for novices to succeed, but also *demonstrated* their desired intentions. Espoused desires entailed administrators giving ECTs advice, encouragement, and positive feedback. Some ECTs noted that their administrators had explicitly expressed their desire to keep them on staff and many ECTs also noted that administrators were clear about their goals and hopes for ECTs. An ECT from Alberta who had a positive experience with an administrator commented that "she has checked in and asked about my future teaching plans/goals, where do I see myself, encouraging comments about my rapport

with students and teaching style, offered positive and constructive feedback following an interview." Administrators also verbally assured ECTs that it was OK when things did not go as planned in the classroom.

Further, ECTs noted that administrators *demonstrated* their desired intentions for ECTs succeed by providing support, collaborating with them, observing their teaching, and assisting them through the evaluation process. Administrators who demonstrated this desire were available to talk, checked-in regularly, listened to ECTs' concerns, and generally cared about them. Administrators also demonstrated desire by offering a contract, recommending an ECT for work, and covering classes and offering relief time when possible. Administrators gave ECTs opportunities for professional development, pushed and challenged them to improve, trusted them to succeed, and gave them freedom to experiment with their teaching. Some ECTs also reported that administrators wanted them to succeed because they wanted the school and students to succeed.

Career Development

Items from the survey focused on what helped ECTs stay in the profession and develop personally and professionally were considered as career development; these items can be seen in Table 5. Over 70% of the respondents agreed that they had felt integrated into their school, and 80% agreed that other teachers listened to their thoughts and opinions. Over 80% agreed that they had felt respected as a colleague in their school, and over 60% indicated that they felt comfortable talking to their school administrators about problems they were experiencing. Most ECTs (81%) believed that they had earned the trust of their colleagues, and that they had thrived as a teacher (79%). Over 90% agreed that as a teacher they knew their strengths and weaknesses, and 87% agreed that they were proud to tell others that they are a teacher. Unfortunately, over 50% of ECTs were either neutral or disagreed that they had adequate time to reflect on student learning and 71% agreed that their first year of teaching was experienced as "trial by fire." Concerning attrition, and one-third of ECTs strongly disagreed with the statement that they had regularly considered leaving the profession, and an additional 31% disagreed with the statement. Most (92%) agreed that caring for their students was what kept them coming into work each day.

Table 5: Career Development

Statement	SD	D	D/A	A	SA	N/A
I feel I am well integrated into my current school community.	2%	9%	14%	44%	27%	4%
Other teachers listen to my thoughts and opinions.	1%	5%	11%	55%	25%	2%
I feel respected as a colleague in this school.	1%	5%	10%	53%	28%	3%
I feel I have earned the trust of my fellow staff members in this school.	1%	3%	12%	52%	29%	4%
I have adequate time to reflect on student learning.	12%	27%	20%	29%	7%	5%
I have participated in professional development specific to new teachers.	8%	15%	6%	42%	24%	5%
As a teacher, I know my strengths (things I do well).	0%	2%	6%	53%	39%	0%

Statement	SD	D	D/A	A	SA	N/A
As a teacher, I am aware of my weaknesses (things I don't yet do well).	0%	2%	2%	57%	38%	0%
I feel comfortable talking to my school administrator(s) about problems I am experiencing.	10%	12%	11%	38%	25%	5%
In general, I thrive as a teacher.	1%	6%	13%	47%	32%	1%
Teaching experiences in my first years can be described as "trial by fire".	1%	9%	16%	38%	33%	2%
I regularly consider leaving the teaching profession.	33%	31%	14%	15%	8%	1%
I am proud to tell others that I am a teacher.	1%	3%	8%	36%	51%	1%
Caring for students keeps me coming into work each day.	0%	2%	6%	38%	54%	1%

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A/D = Neither Agree nor Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, N/A = Not Applicable.

Factors that had been instrumental in ECTs remaining in the teaching profession emerged as internal and external factors. ECTs noted that self-reflection of practice, reminding oneself of one's own limitations, having a hope that things would improve and change, and having had passion for teaching, a subject area, and/or for helping students were all internal factors. Many ECTs noted that having had a balance between work and life was instrumental in their continuing in the profession. Other internal factors included feeling that teaching was part of their identity, enjoying the lifestyle of both hours and having summers off, and that the job was very rewarding. ECTs also indicated that their enjoyment of the profession, feeling capable within it, and having both a desire to improve and not to give up were instrumental in them remaining as teachers. As one ECT from Alberta noted, "I love kids and I enjoy what I do tremendously. I love the people I work with and am passionate about education in general." Some ECTs also indicated that the challenge of teaching kept them coming back, and others identified their own faith as an instrumental factor that helped them continue within the teaching profession.

ECTs identified support from colleagues, administration, the school community, family, and friends as external factors that were instrumental in their continuing within the teaching profession. A number of ECTs emphasized that the students had been the most instrumental factor in them continuing in the teaching profession. "The daily satisfaction I get from my students," kept an ECT from Alberta in the profession. Other external factors included professional development, counselling, and income as instrumental factors to encourage their remaining within the profession.

ECTs identified personal factors, staff, and structures as examples of what had allowed them to sustain their own well-being and to "flourish" or "thrive" within the profession; though some ECTs indicated that they had not felt they were thriving or flourishing, but merely surviving. Having a balance between work and life, getting a good sleep, engaging in regular physical activity, and faith were all cited as personal factors that had allowed some ECTs to thrive. One Alberta ECT provided some insight into what establishing a healthy work-life balance had provided, stating that "…this is something that I have struggled with since the start of my teaching career. I only recently started to take more time for my life and relationships outside of work. Having the balance helps me feel rejuvenated and gives me the motivation to continue learning and thriving as a teacher." Other ECTs

mentioned having confidence in their abilities, passion for the profession and/or their teaching subject, having perspective and tempering expectations of what was possible as a new teacher, and taking time to reflect. ECTs also indicated that recognizing daily successes, staying organized, having a strong work ethic, and taking time to prepare were reasons they had thrived. Some ECTs indicated that to thrive they needed to work nights (and weeks) to plan their material for teaching.

In terms of staff-related supports, ECTs were able to thrive thanks to staff mentoring, resource sharing, collaborating with others, and feeling generally supported by colleagues. An Alberta ECT provided an extensive list of factors that allowed them to thrive and flourish, including "formal and informal mentoring from teachers on staff, good conversations and encouragement. Regular massage and exercise for balance and a healthy lifestyle …" ECTs also mentioned that being able to ask for help and feeling supported by administrators allowed them to thrive, as did experiencing a positive work environment within the school community. Structures including part-time work, sick days, professional learning time all were mentioned as reasons undergirding ECTs in their thriving. A number of ECTs attributed their thriving to the impact that their students had on them; as one Quebec ECT put it, "[it's due to] my students and seeing their aha moments."

Discussion

Although the majority of the respondents came from three provinces—Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta—we were able to capture perspectives from all parts of Canada. We noted the signs of protracted entry into the profession (Broad & Muhling, 2017), whereas most ECTs had spent time as occasional teachers, and many (particularly in Ontario) noted difficulties with securing permanent position due to limiting legislation. Interestingly, over one third of respondents reported that they were teaching outside of their subject area, and one quarter reported that they were teaching outside of their grade level.

Overall, there were mixed responses regarding whether or not various induction supports had met ECTs' needs. While those who found induction helpful highlighted adequate planning time and a good fit of programmatic offerings with their needs, negative responses emphasized insufficient orientation and professional development, time constraints, and limiting policies regarding access, eligibility, and scope of programs. While first year teachers' needs may be framed by their perceptions of preservice teacher preparation (Beck, Kosnik, & Rowsell, 2007), we also know that variance in need dispositions exists as ECTs spend more in the profession. Professional development was the most prevalent type of induction support, along with informal mentoring. Socialization efforts that are effective often include formal support in structured programs as well as opportunities for informal support as needed (Kane & Francis, 2013; Lovett & Davey, 2009). ECTs appreciated formal supports (when they were effectively implemented) as well as supports from colleagues who boosted their comfort and confidence. Similarly, other studies found that personal confidence and efficacy depend on collegial and supportive relationships that help ECTs with socialization into the teaching profession (Fenwick, 2011; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Long et al., 2012; Tillman, 2005).

A number of respondents indicated that they were ECTs who did not qualify for inclusion within induction programming because of their contract status. These teachers expressed frustration as they recognized that they needed the kind of support that a formal mentor might provide; this points to a noteworthy gap in induction programs for ECTs. Our findings highlighted a significant need for induction programming for all ECTs, even if all elements of induction programs are not feasible or realistic for occasional or temporary teachers. Given that many (especially in Ontario) hold

temporary or occasional positions within the profession before qualifying for a permanent position and the subsequent support of induction programming (Ciampa, 2015); there is an opportunity to consider what could be done to support ECTs who have not yet secured a contract position, but who are transitioning into the profession (Kane, 2010).

It was encouraging to see that most ECTs experienced mentoring support (compared to the findings of Kamanzi, Riopel, and Lessard (2007) which indicated the 71% of Canadian ECTs had no experienced any mentoring). Regarding the type of mentoring, the overwhelming majority of respondents experienced informal mentoring supports, whereas only one quarter received support from a formal mentor. Researchers found that informal mentorship opportunities tend to be more frequently accessed and sometimes deemed more beneficial than formal mentorship (Desimone et al., 2014; James, Rayner, & Bruno, 2015). ECTs shared the importance of the strength of the relationship in mentoring, regardless of whether this developmental relationship was an informal or a formal. This finding confirms that ECTs are more likely to develop informal mentoring relationships if they have opportunities to interact with colleagues within and outside of their immediate work unit in a positive, trustful, open, and stable social environment (Du & Wang, 2017). Moreover, there is evidence that ECTs learn more through observing colleagues and interacting with their informal mentors (Kyndt, Gijbels, Grosemans, & Donche, 2016; Marable & Raimondi, 2007). Many shared struggles with mentoring processes including finding time to meet for collaboration, as well as with mentoring structures related to the nature of the relationship, and how mentors were supporting new teachers. Despite these limitations, which are commonly recognized in mentoring research (Benson, 2008; Johnson & Kardos, 2005), mentoring supports benefitted ECTs both in professional and personal aspects of teaching (Hobson et al., 2009). With the seemingly endless layers within the profession of teaching, informal mentors provided ECTs with advice and guidance on situations and challenges that emerge that might otherwise remain opaque, including failing a student or dealing with plagiarism. Time and resource limitations may not allow induction programs to cover specific and nuanced topics that ECTs may come across and have to deal with before they have enough experience to respond confidently and appropriately, and informal networks of mentors seem to address these gaps in formal support.

Most of the teachers who participated in this study did not believe the working conditions in schools were appropriate for ECTs. Working conditions that availed in effective socialization related to professional growth and development orientation based on personal ventures (self-directed initiatives) and external (colleague and structure) factors. ECTs appreciated availability of professional development opportunities that were specific to their needs as new teachers. When teachers demonstrate a high level of ownership over their own learning, they benefit from purposeful and targeted learning available to them (Admiraal et al., 2016). Having studied educators' professional learning in Canada, Campbell (2017) argued that new learning and co-learning that are embedded in the teacher's needs can contribute to changes in their knowledge, skills, and practices. Similarly, collaboration with colleagues whom they can trust and relate allows ECTs to augment their professional capacity and build critical and long-standing relationships with peers (Anderson & Olsen, 2006; Burke, Aubusson, Schuck, Buchanan, & Prescott, 2015; Nieto, 2003). Despite the evident importance of a supportive school culture to effective induction programming (Kearney, 2014; Long et al., 2012; Wynn et al., 2007), over one-third of the sample felt that not enough was being done to promote a culture of collaboration and support. In this regard, many respondents felt that greater measures could be taken by administration to promote a culture that fosters and facilitates such an environment. School leaders can have an indirect impact on teacher attrition by nurturing supportive

school climate (Catapano & Huisman, 2013; Cherian & Daniel, 2008). The influence that administrators had on the induction processes was felt to be instrumental for the success of novices (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Pogodzinski, 2015), especially if intentions to supports ECTs were not only espoused by also demonstrated. Therefore, it is important for administrators to consider how induction, implemented both formally and informally, might serve a dual purpose in supporting ECTs individually in their teaching development as well as in fostering a culture and environment that is characterized by collaboration and support amongst all members within the school community (Walker & Kutsyuruba, 2019).

Career development factors that helped with retention and professional and personal development were strongly related to the perceived levels of trust, integration, respect, and rapport that existed between ECTs and colleagues and administration. Key to the sustainable career development was awareness of their weaknesses as well as strengths. At the same time, ECTs noted inadequate time afforded them to reflect on student learning. Scholars have argued that in professional settings it is important for ECTs to engage in reflection and inquiry about their practices (Ostorga, 2006), as these relate to student learning. As Eberhard, Reinhardt-Mondragon, and Stottlemyer (2000) posited, a reflective approach to teaching helps ECTs move faster along the learning continuum from survival to thriving. Whereas many ECTs indicated that their first years constituted an extremely trying experience, most of them also indicated that they generally thrived. These findings highlight the importance of reflective practice for teacher resilience and thriving (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011; Leroux & Théorêt, 2014). Interestingly, the majority of responding ECTs did not consider leaving profession, and hoped that their situations would improve, and that their challenges would be overcome. They also commented on both the internal and external factors that had kept them in the profession, including pride in being a teacher and the drive to care for students, although the pace of the profession evidently had taken a toll on their socialization. Internal factors, like passion for teaching, work-life balance, and job satisfaction, and external factors, like supports from colleagues and community, sustained teachers and enabled them to thrive rather than just survive in the profession. Evident were strategies used by ECTs to developing their resilience and maintain wellbeing, that manifested through motivation, and commitment of teachers to meet the challenges in their work lives and thrive professionally (Day & Kington, 2008; Gu & Day, 2007; Hobson & Maxwell, 2017).

Conclusions

The findings from this pan-Canadian survey offered a glimpse into the perceived realities for ECTs across Canada. While studies have examined the structures and systems in place to successfully induct teachers into the profession and retain them, it is equally important to consider how these structures and systems have been received and how their use was perceived by the very persons that these structures and systems were designed to serve. Based on the participating ECTs' feedback and insights about what worked well and what might be improved upon during their first five years, we now wish to conclude with a number of implications for policymakers, academics, school leaders, and practitioners whose work is related to early career teaching.

From this study, we know that isolation and privatization of teaching for ECTs is not helpful, whereas some of the most beneficial efforts of support (as perceived by ECTs) are connected to brokering relationships and providing "just-in-time" and specific supports. These are typically inexpensive gestures but require moving beyond the assumption of needs to asking a modified "golden

rule" question: *What might I do to facilitate the support of our ECTs, as informed by what they think, feel and say would help to support them?* This is an implication that calls upon formal and informal leaders to spend time with and listen to the underlying needs of ECTs.

We know from this research that while event-based supports in the form of orientations and induction events are basic, efficient means for socialization and often useful, these are received with mixed responses from ECTs. Event-based supports add important value but are insufficient in efforts to meet ECT needs. Relationships, ongoing and updated attention to support is vital. We posit that socio-emotional support and encouragement cannot be assumed but rather that personalized care and information (added to programmatic provision) requires energy and attention. As needs change across the span of their early career, we suggest that original pairings with mentors or the provision of beginning information requires continuous monitoring in order to remain beneficial. We heard from ECTs that "everybody's responsibility" to support ECTs can become "nobody's responsibility" if some oversight fails to be exercised. Thus, leadership investment is required and ought to be regularized as part of the system or local culture. Perhaps the implication question for leaders might be: *If not my responsibility to support ECTs, then whose responsibility?*

Evident from this research was that most ECTs deemed informal mentorship (especially), along with professional development and resource sharing with peers, to be beneficial and situated. Therefore, an implied question stemming from this finding might be: *How in this context might encouragement, network introductions, allotting relational time, and sponsoring needs-based professional development and peer resource sharing be set in motion and sustained?* Given that professional development can be underdone or overdone, especially during the orientation or early induction phases, purposeful and targeted professional learning opportunities can ensure ECTs' needs in this regard are adequately met. In the Canadian context, there are large programmatic inconsistencies, inequities, and differential impacts across jurisdictions and local setting with respect to attention to induction, mentorship and support systems for ECT professional growth. One might ask: *To what extend are we making a conscious effort to the adequacy of our reliance and support structures and processes for ECTs, and do we need to look to remediate any of our policies and practices?* Taking into account their contexts, informal and experienced peers and formal leaders might ask: *Are we providing what these ECTs need to be successful in all the facets and throughout the stages of their early professional journeys? Do all of our ECTs have access to support?* As was observed, the ECTs in our sample sought opportunities or passively hoped for more experienced teachers to come alongside. Thus, a question begs to be asked: *What might be done to make space and time for ECTs to "find" more experience colleagues to learn alongside?* Career and lifestyle balance conversations is an example of the kind of mentorship that was identified as being highly appreciated by ECTs. This point is a critical one, as it urges stakeholders to engage in continuous informal supports for ECTs in addition to formally set-up induction and mentoring programs in the initial years. We hope these insights and questions will serve as a guide for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in their design and improvement of policies, initiatives and processes for mentoring, induction, and retention practices for the ECTs in Canada.

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