

Employment-Seeking Behaviours Among Newly Certified Ontario Teachers

Nancy Maynes, Blaine E. Hatt, & Anna-Lisa Mottonen
Nipissing University

Abstract

In Ontario, Canada, the legislation commonly known as Regulation 274, outlines how newly certified teachers in the province are offered employment in the province's schools, and limits their options for immediate full-time employment in teaching. The new 2-year certification teacher preparation program in Ontario, which started in the fall of 2015, produced its first cohort of teachers in spring 2017. The cohort is arguably the best prepared group of teachers ever produced in the province, since they have twice the professional training (both course hours and practicum time) of any previous cohort of teachers in the jurisdiction. However, Regulation 274 continues to limit their access to immediate full-time employment in the profession. The researchers sought to identify the job-seeking behaviours and plans of this new group of teachers and to examine correlations between the group's job seeking behaviours and plans, in the current employment climate of the province, and their level of student debt as they exit the two-year preparation program, as well as other factors that may affect their employment in the profession. Debt and other social factors were found to influence employment decisions of these new teachers.

Keywords: teacher preparation programs, employment of newly certified teachers, Regulation 274, student debt

Policy changes and student demographic changes in recent years in Ontario, Canada have tended to balance and moderate effects on the overall volume of teaching jobs available across the province. Former teachers returning to active service in the province replace some of the workforce losses each year from teachers who leave the profession before taking actual retirement, but the main source of annual demand for new teachers is the volume of teacher retirements (Transition to Teaching, 2015). According to the report, Transition to Teaching, which is produced annually by the Ontario College of Teachers, the trend in supply and demand will favour employment opportunities for Ontario teachers during the next few years, starting in 2016.

Between 2003 and 2007, average annual retirement volumes of teachers in Ontario dropped substantially, and again in 2008 to 2011, while the average annual numbers of newly licensed teachers in Ontario rose substantially over the same periods, with the net result being a provincial teacher surplus. Between 1998 and 2002, the province was certifying approximately 2,000 additional new teachers than were needed in the jurisdiction's schools. Surplus numbers increased to about 6,500 between 1998 and 2002, and further increased between 2008 and 2011, to create an annual surplus of approximately 7,800 new teachers. The supply and demand difference led to two major actions by the Ontario government. First, Bill 274 was

passed in December 2013 and became a provincial regulation. Details of Regulation 274 will be outlined later in this document. Second, the province introduced plans to change the one-year teacher preparation program to a 2-year program.

In the teaching employment context created by these two government actions and the increases in the rate of teacher retirements in the same time period, the picture of employment prospects for newly certified teachers began to change sharply. Perhaps deterred by bleak employment prospects that had been the trend between 1998 and 2011, fewer prospective teachers chose the profession. Ontario graduates from Faculties of Education across the province declined almost 10 percent from 2012 to 2014 when compared to the numbers of graduates in the preceding 4 years (Transition to Teaching, 2015). In this same time period, border colleges, which were certifying Ontario teachers, were graduating 60 percent fewer teachers than in the previous 4-year period.

Further complicating the employment situation for new teacher graduates, Regulation 274 occurred within the context of a set of complex factors: an oversupply of teachers seeking K-12 teaching positions in the province; increases in numbers of entrants into teacher education programs across the province; demographic imbalance of student enrollment (declining enrollments in small urban, rural, and depressed settings in large metropolitan areas contrasted with increasing enrollment

in 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 (Hatt, Maynes & Kmiec, 2015). Additionally, the Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne, was quoted in a Toronto Star newspaper article in September 2013 saying that, “I recognize that there may have been an over-correction in terms of some of the issues that had been brought forward,” during the provincial legislature’s daily question period about Regulation 274. This response was related to the specific questions brought forward by MPP Tim Hudak to represent concerns of Ontario’s Catholic teachers after they complained about nepotism in their boards and the controversial hiring practices that are governed by Regulation 274. However, this regulation is still in place in 2018 and still has a profound impact on new teacher hiring practices in the province.

Changes in enrollment trends to institutions that certified Ontario teachers, and increases in retirement rates of currently employed teachers, brought about a dramatic change in supply and demand trends between 2012 and 2015. During this time, the province saw an average of approximately 450 additional retirements among teachers per year. Supply and demand for newly certified teachers was positively impacted by the increased rate of retirements and the decreased rates of graduates. This impact was further influenced by the introduction, in 2015, of the two-year certification program, resulting in an anticipated high demand for newly certified teach-

ers in 2017 when the first cohort of two-year teacher candidates in the province graduated. Forecasts for teacher retirements of approximately 4,500 annually between 2016 and 2020, are anticipated to cause a further shift in the supply and demand trends in favour of newly certified graduates and may even result in a small shortage of teachers in some areas of expertise between 2016 and 2018 (Transition to Teaching, 2015).

However, this first 2-year program cohort, and future graduates from Ontario 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 the Ontario College of Teachers, first needs to apply and be interviewed for inclusion on a board’s roster of occasional teachers. They then need to have “taught as an occasional teacher in one or more schools of the board (i.e., within the jurisdiction of a single board of education) 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. Under the provisions of Regulation 274, from the time of graduation, a new teacher is likely to need 2 years to complete all the requirements to be offered a permanent contract if other candidates do not have higher seniority than the

applicant. If the teacher is lacking in seniority with the board, it could be an additional 3 or more years before a permanent contract is proffered. The impact of hiring “new” teachers who are 3 to 5 years removed from their preparation program introduces a whole new construct into teacher hiring practices that has yet to be sorted out and raises the question of pedagogical currency (Hatt, Maynes & Kmiec, 2015).

Literature Review

In this employment context, there is very little current literature available about employment plans of teachers across the province of Ontario. In 1998, H. L. Press completed a doctoral study at the University of Toronto (OISE) titled “Changing Teacher Demand Conditions in Canada and the Utilization of Teacher Labour Market Information by Educational Organizations and Teacher Education Students.” While this study did consider the employment sectors where graduating teachers across Canada would plan to examine employment possibilities after graduation (p. 131), the contexts of this study were very different from the context for the current study in 2 key ways. First, the Press study considered teacher candidates from across Canada. Since education employment is a provincially regulated matter in Canada, national studies have limited applicability in the local context, particularly in relation to the provisions in Regulation 274, as this regulation applies only in Ontario. Second, the Press study made no distinction between teacher candidates’ preparation program length (e.g., 1-year vs. 2-year) and employment plans of those candidates.

Additionally, the Press (1998) study was undertaken at

a time when the total number of teachers leaving the profession for a number of reasons was considerably lower than the total number of teachers being newly certified for the profession in Ontario contexts (Transition to Teaching, 2015, p. 3) so there was a surplus of approximately 1,700 newly certified teachers in the province. Between 1998 and 2015, that trend toward the accumulation of surplus certified teachers in Ontario continued with the surplus of recently certified teachers exceeding 7,500 in the period between 2008 and 2011 and again in the period between 2015 and 2016. However, as stated, current projections by the Ontario College of Teachers anticipate a sharp decline in these surpluses from 2016 until 2018, with some projections of teacher shortages in high demand areas of qualification such as French teachers and Intermediate/Senior qualified teachers who can teach subjects such as Science, Technology, Computer Sciences, and Mathematics. The nature of new teacher employment in Ontario has effectively been changed and further complicated since the implementation of Regulation 274 to include a period of contingent labour work in the profession (Pollock, 2015) that can extend for many years.

However, since the Ontario College of Teachers forecasts a substantial increase in retirements of existing contract teachers in the province for the remainder of this decade, projecting an average of 4,500 experienced teacher retirements annually, prospects may be changing rapidly for this new group of professionals. Teacher retirements are the single most influential change in employment demographics (Transition to Teaching 2015, p. 1) that is anticipated to change the employment possibilities for newly

certified teachers across the province, with only 2,800 newly certified graduates expected in 2016, down substantially from the over 12,000 graduates certified annually between 2008 and 2011 (Transition to Teaching, 2015, p. 4).

It may be, however, that the type of work these new teachers acquire initially is substantively different from the demands of the full-time contract employment for which they have been prepared through a 2-year teacher education program. Many newly certified teachers work in contingent arrangements in Ontario's schools. For example, in Ontario in 2011, 11,650 teachers entered the English-speaking teacher workforce (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013). While some of these teachers were able to secure full-time contract teaching positions, many more teachers were unsuccessful, leaving one in every three of the 2012 teacher graduates unemployed or underemployed in the profession for which they were trained (OCT, 2013).

In the Ontario context, the contingent work of new Ontario teacher graduates can involve short-term employment arrangements, "in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a non-systematic manner" (Polivka & Nardone, 1989, p. 11). Additionally, school boards have developed practices to work around some provisions in Regulation 274. For example, a Board can have a need for a long term occasional appointment, but avoid having to actually offer this appointment by assigning an occasional teacher to a position, withdrawing that position one day before it is required to be converted into a long term position, and bringing in another occasional teacher for one day, then reassigning the original occasional teacher on the follow-

ing day (personal communication; December 2016). While this practice is admittedly not intended in the provisions of Regulation 274, it is not an unusual practice to address short-term needs of schools.

Even with the current limitations imposed by Regulation 274 in play, the employment opportunities are more positive than they have been for some time, due to increases in retirements of teachers and decreases in graduation and certification rates. This is a very optimistic picture for newly certified teachers from the new Ontario 2-year certification program. However, it may be that newly certified teachers are either unaware of these newly emerging trends, or not qualified in the areas of teaching shortages that appear to be emerging in the province. It may also be that newly graduated teachers in the province are hampered in their options by their level and sources of student debt. With these possibilities in mind, we have structured this study to examine the trends for seeking employment that are typical of our Faculty of Education's first 2-year program cohort.

Context and Related Research

The current study was designed to examine the job seeking behaviours of newly certified teachers in the jurisdiction and to identify, if possible, any variables that might correlate to the behaviours. We know of no other studies that have taken place in Canada to examine the employment-seeking behaviours and factors such as student loan debt, which may influence job-seeking behaviours of newly certified teachers. However, in recent years, there is a growing body of research that relates to the hiring, supports, and retention practices for new teachers in various Canadian juris-

dictions. These studies have provided some context for the current study.

For example, in Alberta, recent research has explored the complexities of serving remote communities to ensure that excellent teachers are hired for these schools (Brandon, 2015). In Manitoba, research has been ongoing to examine principals' practices and beliefs as they seek to hire new teachers to the profession (Cranston, 2015). Several studies have considered hiring issues and the reliability of addressing these issues with current levels of principals' awareness of their implicit beliefs about teacher effectiveness that may influence their hiring decisions. From this body of research, Cranston (2012) has developed a model that identifies the determinants of teaching effectiveness. The model also explains how a framework of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions can be used in tandem with existing hiring practices to yield better outcomes from the screening and selection process. This research echoes earlier work by the same researcher, and the work of other researchers (Maynes & Hatt, 2017), who have tried to encourage the explicit identification of desirable teacher characteristics to support teacher hiring (Cranston, 2012a, 2012b; Maynes & Hatt, 2013).

Other Canadian researchers have investigated the use of simulations as a means of assessing teacher skills to buttress hiring practices in the British Columbia context. For example, Kaufman and Ireland (2015) have acknowledged that teachers' classroom skills, attitudes, and behaviours are fundamental to excellent teaching but concurrently acknowledge the complexity of determining these qualities in potential employees, recognizing that this is a "logistically difficult, costly, and at

times, controversial task for teacher educators and school administrators" (p. 113).

In the Ontario context, Pollard (2015) used snowball sampling and interview methodology to examine hiring of 13 new teachers who were partially employed as substitute or supply teachers. Pollard concluded that the contingent nature of the substitute teacher role was substantively different from the work of permanent teachers in five critical areas, including: 1) daily preparation; 2) rapport with students; 3) classroom management; 4) lesson content; and (5) teaching strategy implementation. She concluded that the contingent nature of substitute/supply teaching has implications for how we might develop and deliver professional learning for newly hired teachers, and, as we have already addressed, for how these teachers become permanent teachers under Ontario's Regulation 274. Additionally in Ontario, Cantalini-Williams (2015) summarized three studies that were undertaken to examine the role and impacts of alternative practicum placements in preparing teachers for the wide range of demands in the modern workplace, as is typical for teachers. As yet, it is unclear whether new teacher graduates highlight these alternative experiences as professional assets when they start their search for teaching jobs.

Another researcher (Hamm, 2015) examined teacher hiring as an aspect of professional experiences in Alberta and New Brunswick, and examined trends that consistently show the predominance of white, middle-class teacher candidates in teacher preparation programs across Canada and North America (Battiste, 2013; Lund, Bragg, Kaipainen, & Lee, 2014). He concluded that lack of exposure to other cultures

may limit opportunities for teacher candidates to explore their taken-for-granted assumptions and may give them less skill "to serve new immigrant children and understand their family backgrounds, cultures and world views" (Hamm, 2015, p. 41). Such limited exposure may, in turn, make these same new teachers less likely to seek opportunities for recruitment and hiring in diverse communities.

These previous studies have some influence on the focus of the current study. This study took place in a small northern Ontario university that has, since its inception, been well regarded for the quality of its teacher preparation program. In response to new legislation provincially, and fiscal and management constraints within the university, the current program focus is on the development of graduates with teaching certification through the new 2-year program. Earlier foci on various routes to certification through concurrent education options are being phased out by this university and the institution will graduate the last cohort of concurrent education teachers from its campuses in the spring of 2019. The university hosted its first graduation for the initial 2-year program cohort of teachers under Regulation 274 in the spring of 2017. On this campus, there were 184 2-year teacher graduates in this initial cohort, which represents a reduction of nine teacher candidates from the initial registrations at the outset of the program (personal communication, Registrar's Office, February 3, 2017).

Methods

It is anticipated that the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) will continue its practice, started in 1998, of examining actual employ-

Table 1

Employment Seeking and Enrichment Strategies

I will apply to teach on a(n):	Number of respondents who indicated that they will use the strategy before January 2017, or immediately following the completion of their B.Ed. degree, to find employment
occasional basis for the public school board in my home community.	43
occasional basis for the catholic school board in my home community.	7
occasional basis for any school boards close to my home community.	30
contract basis in a public school/board in my home community because I am qualified in areas that are in demand.	21
contract basis in a catholic school/board in my home community because I am qualified in areas that are in demand.	3
occasional basis to Ontario private/independent school(s).	7
occasional basis to private/independent school(s) in Canada but outside of Ontario.	4
full-time contract basis to Ontario private/independent school(s).	6
full-time contract basis to private/independent school(s) in Canada but outside of Ontario.	2
full-time contract basis on a First Nations' reserve in Northern Ontario.	5
First Nations' reserve in Canada but outside of Ontario.	4
I will use the above strategies selected AND the strategies selected below.	39
I will use the above strategies selected OR the strategies selected below.	7
In order to find employment, I will apply for/to be a(n):	Number of respondents who indicated that they will use the strategy in addition to OR instead of the above strategies
tutor.	27
hospitality services or retail roles.	8
teaching in another role or setting not requiring OCT designation.	18
recreation, coaching, or personal training.	15
after school programs.	11
administration, financial services, or clerical roles.	5
ECE and/or childcare.	6
child and youth or special needs worker.	8
management or non-teaching professions.	5
educational assistant.	6
trades, manufacturing, or construction.	3
creative or performing arts.	7
adult education or corporate training.	3
an occasional part-time teaching position outside Canada.	8
a full-time contract teaching position outside Canada.	19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If I take a teaching position outside Canada, I will likely stay in that country for the remainder of my career. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If I take a teaching position outside Canada, I plan to return to Canada when teaching jobs become available and remain in Canada for the remainder of my career. 	32
Professional Growth Plan – I will:	Number of respondents who indicated that they will use the following professional growth strategy
continue my education by pursuing an advanced degree full-time immediately after completing my B.Ed. degree.	5
look for full-time employment immediately after finishing my B.Ed. degree.	53
take employment in a context where I am unlikely to make immediate or regular use of the learning from my B.Ed. degree.	18
will pursue AQs to enrich my B.Ed. degree immediately after completing my B.Ed. degree.	54
will pursue a part-time MEd degree to enrich my B.Ed. degree immediately after completing my B.Ed. degree.	4
Student Debt – I have:	Number of respondents who indicated that the corresponding student financial/debt issue applies to them.
had all educational costs for my B.Ed. degree paid for by another party.	8
paid for my own educational costs for the B.Ed. degree using part-time and/or summer employment funds.	23
accumulated students loans for all educational costs.	33

ment trends of teachers annually. However, the OCT study uses a provincial focus and all data are reported with three key differences from our current study. In the annual OCT study of provincial employment trends, certifying institutions are not identified in the aggregated data; the response rate for the OCT survey is relatively low (19%); and the responses look at actual employment outcomes as compared to employment seeking behaviours which was the focus of our study.

The current research study used survey methodology. Survey methodology was considered to be an appropriate method for our research purposes because this methodology has a number of advantages (Creswell, 2005; Glasow, 2005; Kraemer, 1991; Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993; Salient & Dillman, 1994). By using a survey approach for this study, we could take advantage of software design support for the collection of mixed-methods data. The quantitative data can determine the perception and applicability of the participants' responses, while providing opportunities to seek co-relational trends in the data. The qualitative data can be used to help develop theories and explanations of the impact of the identified issues and opportunities found from the quantitative data. Campbell and Profetto-McGrath (2013) used this approach to determine the skills and attributes required for clinical nurse specialists to promote evidence-based practices. Gibbert et al. (2013) used a similar method to determine the usefulness and potential barriers of a course on evidence-based practices for the public health workforce.

Surveys have both strengths and limitations as research tools. Demographic data are readily collected using surveys (McIntyre,

1999). Additionally, surveys allow researchers to explore several variables in the collected data, support generalizations to comparable populations, and are economical in both time and money, especially when administered through online methods (Bell, 1996). As well, survey methodology can enable insights into attitudes and opinions that may be unavailable through other methodologies (McIntyre, 1999). It is, however, important to recognize the limitations of survey approaches and survey tools to mitigate over-generalization of survey research findings. Among the limitations of survey methodology are the recognitions that: 1) survey data provide estimates, rather than precise measurements related to the target population (Salant & Dillman, 1994) and this may be particularly characteristic when response scales are part of the survey design; 2) biases may be inherent in data if the respondent numbers are low and therefore not representative of the entire target population (Bell, 1996); 3) the accuracy of the responses may be suspect if misreporting is widespread (Glasow, 2005); 4) respondents may be unreliable assessors of their own behaviour as surveys are, by their nature, subjective (Glasow, 2005); or, 5) errors can result from careless administration or analysis of survey data (Creswell, 1994).

Survey Design

To apply effective design methods to avoid or mitigate some of the limitations of survey methodology, survey design includes sample planning and designing procedures for obtaining population estimates, including establishing the desired response rate and criteria for determining accuracy in responses (Glasow, 2005; Levy & Lemeshow,

1999; Salant & Dillman, 1994). Precision in the collected data is a consideration when survey methodology is used, to ensure accuracy in interpreting the data and the level of confidence in the interpretation of the data (i.e., the confidence interval). Both mean and variance can be calculated from the survey data, providing confidence intervals related to each major conclusion that is supported by the survey data (Glasow, 2005). Additionally, survey data allow for a calculation of effect size to guide researchers in their determination of the importance of the results of the research (i.e., the statistical power) (Aron & Aron, 1997).

The survey medium (i.e., the online use of Survey Monkey) was selected in response to the resources, time, and the distribution location of potential respondents (Salant & Dillman, 1994) and to allow respondents personal latitude for when to engage in the survey. In this medium, automated data collection tools were available to ease tabulation and data manipulation (Isaac & Michael, 1997). Questions for the survey were designed to provide “answers that are reliable and valid measures” (Fowler & Floyd, 1995, p. 2) of the employment-seeking behaviours of the group of new teacher candidates who were invited to participate. In addition, questions were worded to use terms that could be expected to be familiar and clear to the intended respondents because they related to their program outcomes (Browne & Keeley, 1998; Fowler & Floyd, 1995; McIntyre, 1999; Salant & Dillman, 1994) and to provide a survey of reasonable length (McIntyre, 1999), using neutral, unbiased wording (Salant & Dillman, 1994; Tourangeau, 1999).

The online survey for this study (see Appendix 2) was devel-

oped to provide the qualitative/demographic data and quantitative data that we deemed appropriate for the focal research question of this study. This survey was designed to look at trends in employment-seeking behaviour of newly certified teachers and to examine factors that may influence those trends (Spain, Priest, & Murphy, 2012). In addition, the survey needed to be sustainable and have the capability to continue its use for a significant period across years as we also plan to examine longitudinal trends; and provide quality indicators to improve practices (Hudson, Skamp, & Brooks, 2005; Narayan, Whicker, Staples, Bookman, Bartlett, & McGann, 2014). This survey tool incorporated questions related to the likely range of employment seeking behaviours of the current participant group and the potentially related limitations of their choices (Ennis & Hooper, 1988; Gibbert, et al., 2013; Hudson, Skamp, & Brooks, 2005; Owen, 2007; Tepper, Shaffer, & Tepper, 1996).

The survey for this study was posted to existing in-house emails for all second year consecutive education students immediately after they left the campus to complete the practicum aspect that concluded their program (e.g., on February 17, 2017). These emails were unavailable to the researchers but the support of the Registrar’s Office and Student Services was enlisted to make the initial contact with potential participants. A scripted email communication (see Appendix 1) was sent to invite participation in the study. This email was sent to all second-year teacher candidates (N=184 students in Year 2 courses). Five study reminders were emailed to all potential participants bi-weekly between March 2017 and the end of May 2017 to correspond to vari-

ations in timing of hiring practices within local school boards across the province, and in hiring cycles for non-Canadian agencies.

Data and Results

Sixty-three pre-service teacher candidates from this group responded to the invitation to be involved in this study. This represents a response rate of 34.2%, which is an acceptable response rate and slightly stronger than the minimal response rate of 30% that most researchers require for analysis (Dillman, 2000; Malaney, 2002). Data were analyzed using two approaches: first, discrete questions were analyzed for trends in responses; second, data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 to allow us to examine relationships between variables and group differences across the set of data.

Discrete Question Trends

Through analysis of the discrete questions, the following trends were found among this group of newly accredited teachers in regard to their employment-seeking behaviours.

High demand qualifications. Of this group of participants, 21 (33%) feel that they are qualified to apply now for contract positions because their qualifications are in high needs grades/subjects (perceived as being French and Math). There are provisions in Regulation 274 to allow school boards to adapt hiring practices to fill vacancies in high demand teaching areas without the usual requirement for these teachers to first engage in occasional teaching, and acquire long-term occasional positions before being eligible to apply for full

time contract positions. Interestingly, public school teacher applicants seem to be more confident and/or strategic about applying for contract positions immediately than their separate school cohort members (21 or 33% vs. 3 or 4.76 %) but this trend is not out of proportion to the number of respondents applying only to one board affiliation. All responses are displayed in Table 1.

Location of applications. It is notable that nine of these accredited teachers planned to apply for teaching positions only in their own home community. This represents 14% of the respondents and is a finding that is worthy of further investigation to determine factors that may be influencing this trend. It may be that these new teachers have some circumstances related to family commitments, personal relationships, or contingent employment in local contexts that provide social and economic security during the time between certification and full time employment. This group of participants may see the location of future employment as a non-negotiable condition as they enter the profession.

Applications in Indigenous communities. A recent focus of the university where this professional preparation program was offered is on the preparation of teachers to engage in teaching on reserves for Indigenous populations in various parts of the province. In fact, the university has many opportunities during each academic year to partner with principals in Indigenous education environments to seek new teachers for their schools and frequently posts advertisements to qualified or soon-to-be-qualified teachers to entice them to consider employment on reserves, often in

northern parts of Ontario or in the northern territories of the country. Six of the participants who responded to this survey planned to apply for teaching positions on reserves that serve Indigenous students, with four of those teachers planning to apply outside of Ontario. This trend may highlight the need to focus further attention on preparing Indigenous teachers to teach in Indigenous reserve contexts as a full compliment of teachers could not be acquired for these schools with the level of uptake indicated by these data.

Applications to independent schools. Similarly, the number of participants in this sample who planned to pursue employment by applying to teach in Ontario’s independent schools was relatively small. Only eight (12.7%) of the participants showed intentions to apply to any of Ontario’s independent schools and only two (3%) intended to apply to an independent school outside of Ontario. It may be that the university would benefit from making more formal overtures to these schools to have them advertise teaching positions within the university’s usual communication platforms to make their needs known more broadly to potential applicants.

Contingent employment plans. It was very evident from these data that this group of teachers understood the contingent nature of early career employment in teaching in Ontario under Regulation 274. Fully 62% (N=39) of the respondents planned to back up school employment applications by also applying to other venues. Only seven (11%) respondents planned to apply to non-educational employment if plans for educational employment

with school boards did not materialize. Tutoring, teaching in a non-accredited context, or coaching were the most frequently sought non-accredited forms of employment. This should be a cause for broad concern in the teaching profession. Effectively, provincial legislation has become discriminatory in impact with these newly certified teachers. In the provincial context, these new teachers are the most highly trained group of teachers ever produced through our professional programs (as indicated by additional courses and additional practicum experiences) yet they have little choice but to enter into a holding pattern after graduation that is unlike any other professional limitation that we are aware of; the provisions of Regulation 274 force these new graduates to wait for full employment even though they are fully qualified for available positions. This trend is particularly concerning since these teachers are provincially subsidized during their training program. At this university, pre-service teachers paid a 2-year tuition fee of \$13,868.80, which was supplemented by a total 2-year grant revenue of \$11,320.00. Therefore, the provincial subsidy of total teacher preparation costs was 45%. It may be of concern from a taxpayer perspective when such heavily subsidized human capital is underemployed, or is forced by legislation and loan debt to seek employment in other jurisdictions outside of the province.

Plans to upgrade basic teaching qualifications. While the divisional qualifications of respondents was relatively similar across the three groups (Primary/Junior = 18; Junior/Intermediate = 17 and Intermediate/Senior = 21), a large number of respondents (54 out of 63 or 84%) indicated that they intended

to become qualified in more than one division, before they acquired full-time employment. In the provincial context, newly certified and fully employed teachers have equal access to courses that allow them to extend their initial qualifications in one division by taking an additional qualification course (AQ) that provides government approval to apply for jobs in an additional contiguous division. These AQ courses are normally only open to teachers after they are certified. It is common wisdom in the professional context that extending one's qualifications into an additional division provides a new teacher an employment advantage. Schools may see broadly qualified teachers as being of more value to their schools than those with limits to their qualifications to the usual two divisions that are available during initial certification (P/J, J/I, or I/S). It is also interesting to note that the Ontario College of Teachers' report, *Transition to Teaching, 2015*, cites projections of teacher shortages in some areas across the province, and initial indications from these data show that this cohort of new teachers was responsive to these projections based on decisions they made about ways to enrich their initial qualifications. However, it may be that the costs of these courses are prohibitive for some of these newly certified teachers. Additionally some new graduates may still be unaware of how prospective employers view these additional qualifications during the application and interview process. They may also be unaware of the value of these additional qualifications in the context of supply teaching calls from school boards.

As well, a surprisingly high proportion of these respondents indicated an interest in pursuing an advanced degree. Nine (14%) respondents indicated that they intended

to pursue an advanced degree either full time (5 or 8%) or part time (4 or 6%) immediately after accreditation. It would be of value to consider further research into the longer-term career goals of this group within the larger study population to ascertain possible connections between the pursuit of an advanced degree and career projection plans.

Pursuing teaching outside of Canada. Of particular concern with this cohort of respondents, was the finding that 21 respondents (33%) planned to teach immediately outside of Canada with either full-time contract positions (19 or 30%) or with only part-time work (8 or 12.7%) in this international context. The preferred countries for seeking international employment included: China, England, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, the USA, and Australia. Clearly, international employment is serving as another form of holding pattern for newly qualified Ontario teachers, in anticipation of more favourable employment opportunities in Ontario. Most of those who planned to teach outside of Canada indicated that they would plan to return to teach in Canada within one to five years, while only one respondent in this group felt likely to stay in the chosen country for the remainder of his/her career. The connection between this trend and levels of student debt will be examined further in the correlational analyses. While it can be argued that global teaching experience is enriching for any teacher candidate, it would seem that many of this cohort selected global teaching experiences as a direct result of not being able to find immediate full time employment because of provincial legislation.

Pursuing full time employment. A fairly high number of these respondents felt that they must work full-time (53 or 84%), even though many expected they would not be able to acquire work in their chosen profession immediately upon being certified. In this group, 18 (28.6%) participants expected that they would need to accept immediate employment after accreditation that would not allow them to make use of the professional qualification that they had just acquired. This trend causes concern in a context where provincial teacher certification programs are subsidized, as underemployment is not an ideal method of maximizing the provincial investment in these human resources. This trend is also concerning in light of the strong confidence and expressions of being ready to teach that were evident in this survey (Table 2).

Readiness to teach. Readiness to teach was a focus in a series of questions. These questions were responded to on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). In this group, 46 respondents (73%) felt that they had built a strong theoretical background about teaching through their professional preparation, as indicated by their endorsement of either the Agree or Strongly Agree response options, while 55 participants (87%) felt that they had built a strong practical background about teaching in their program. These strong feelings about the value of their program may indicate that these teachers are very confident as they face the challenges and opportunities of their new profession. However, participants were almost equally divided about their feelings that their preparation program pace and workload were comparable to

the pace and workload they could expect in the profession, with 30 (47.6%) selecting Disagree/Strongly Disagree, and 19 (30%) selecting Agree/Strongly Agree. As well, the majority of participants (40 or 63.5%) felt they had opportunities in the preparation programs to enrich their qualifications by acquiring additional skills and certificates (e.g., Tattered Teddies, Suicide Prevention, Bullying Prevention, technology and software enrichment).

Typically, acquiring a new teaching position, either through occasional teaching or through a full-time position in other contexts or in highly sought after Ontario positions (e.g., French, Math) involves an interview. Of these participants, 45 (71.4%) felt that they had help to prepare documents to support their applications for teaching jobs and 51 participants (81%) felt that they had support to prepare for teaching job interviews. It may be that scheduled times for some of these critical components of preparation to acquire a job for which the respondents are qualified are inconvenient for some respondents (i.e., in conflict with work schedules or classes). It would be advantageous for these workshops to be repeated and broadly available for every pre-service teacher, or to be embedded in an appropriate course.

Enriching qualifications with community leadership experience. One aspect of the teacher preparation program at this university was that the second year pre-service teachers arranged a three-week placement with a range of community services in order to gain knowledge or skills. They sought placements and useful but not required (e.g., museums, science shows, labs, police community liaisons, special needs children's

organizations). A major purpose of these placements was to allow the pre-service teachers to consider any work related to their field of interest but not within an established school system. This exposure may provide other employment options for these new teachers during a transition into full time teaching employment. However, it is also unlikely that this population of new teachers would be content with such alternate employment in the longer term as such placements may not incentivize them for the additional degree they have.

Choosing not to teach.

Another interesting anomaly in the data from this study was that two participants reported recognizing that they were unlikely to be content with teaching in a regular classroom context at some point during their program but also decided to continue and complete their program. This decision may reflect the relatively heavy time and financial investments these participants had in their decisions to seek accreditation in a two-year program.

Student debt impacts on employment seeking. In a related finding, student debt was examined through this survey, as we felt that it may be a consideration that could influence ways of seeking employment immediately after accreditation. This possibility was considered because each researcher had experienced several informal conversations with Year 2 candidates over their final term about financial shortages and concerns. Forty-eight participants (76%) indicated that they had at least some student debt to address after their accreditation, with the range of debt being between 25 and 100% of total money spent on educational costs. The av-

erage student debt still owed by this group was \$33,809.74, based on the 53 participants who replied to this question. One third of participants (33.3%) personally paid for the educational costs for their teacher accreditation educational program with 23 (36.5%) participants stating that they had paid for some of their accreditation costs through part-time or summer work. In addition, 33 (52.4%) participants reported that they had accumulated student loans for all related educational costs to acquire a B.Ed. degree, with 84.1% of participants saying they had some or all debt accumulated as student loans. The level of imminently repayable debt is a serious consideration for new teacher graduates who may elect to seek alternate employment while at least some debt is retired rather than engaging in the relatively precarious income of occasional teaching employment. With this hypothesis in mind, we considered some correlations between trends in job seeking behaviours and student debt.

Correlational and Group Difference Analysis Across Variables

Using statistical analysis, we examined correlations between variables that we hypothesized may have some impact on the decisions about immediate employment made by this group of new teachers. Three correlational questions were considered. These included:

- Is there any connection between student debt (both presence of and amount) and a tendency in plans to leave Canada to get immediate employment?
- Is there any connection between student debt (both presence and amount) and plans to seek em-

Table 2

Readiness to Teach and Preparation for Employment Acquisition

Readiness to Teach	
The 2-year B.Ed. program has given me a solid theoretical background to assume employment as a teacher.	
Strongly Disagree	0
Disagree	6
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	11
Agree	36
Strongly Agree	10
The 2-year B.Ed. program has given me a solid practical background to assume employment as a teacher.	
Strongly Disagree	0
Disagree	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	6
Agree	26
Strongly Agree	29
It was useful to have each practicum experience focused on different sets of professional skills that were gradually developed through each term of the program.	
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	17
Agree	24
Strongly Agree	19
Preparation for Employment Acquisition	
I think the pace and workload of the 2-year B.Ed. program is comparable to the pace and workload I can expect in a full-time teaching job.	
Strongly Disagree	6
Disagree	24
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	14
Agree	16
Strongly Agree	3
I had opportunities during the last 2 years to enrich my teaching qualifications by acquiring additional skills and certificates.	
Strongly Disagree	2
Disagree	7
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	14
Agree	34
Strongly Agree	6
I had guidance during the last 2 years to help me prepare documents for teaching job applications.	
Strongly Disagree	5
Disagree	9
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4
Agree	30
Strongly Agree	15
I had guidance during the last 2 years to help me prepare for a teaching job interview.	
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	7
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4
Agree	36
Strongly Agree	15
I had an opportunity during my Year 2 Community Leadership placement to consider applying my B.Ed. qualifications to employment outside of traditional school classrooms.	
Strongly Disagree	0
Disagree	3
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	15
Agree	34
Strongly Agree	11
I realized at some point during the 2-year program that classroom teaching was not for me but I decided to complete the degree before focusing on another career.	
Strongly Disagree	39
Disagree	16
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	6
Agree	1
Strongly Agree	1

ployment for which these new teachers may be overqualified?

- Is there any connection between plans to stay close to home for employment and debt load?

Interestingly, despite our hypotheses, which were prompted by our ongoing observations of the stress that debt causes for these students, no significant differences were found on any of these variables. That is, there was no significant relationship between the intentions to find part time or full time employment in teaching outside of Canada and whether loans had been accumulated for all, or for a percentage of, educational costs. Similarly, there were no significant differences between those who intended to apply for part-time or full-time teaching positions outside of Canada and those who did not, in terms of either the amount of student and personal loan debt accumulated by the end of the 2-year B.Ed. degree or the amount personally paid in educational costs for the B.Ed. degree. This might indicate that these newly certified teachers are motivated by a professional or personal need to seek a way to use their new qualifications immediately rather than by debt levels.

In relation to connections between student debt and possible plans to take employment for which these new teachers may be overqualified, there were no significant differences between new teachers who intended to seek employment opportunities for which they might be overqualified and those who did not in terms of either the amount or source of student and personal loan debt by the end of the 2-year B.Ed. degree. Nor was there any connection between the amount personally paid in educational costs for the B.Ed. degree and the choice to seek

alternative employment options (e.g., tutoring). These alternative employment options may represent positions new teachers are overqualified for, or simply not specifically trained to do. There were no significant differences between those who intended to look for full-time employment immediately after completing the B.Ed. degree and those who did not in terms of the amount they personally paid in educational costs for the B.Ed. degree or the amount of their student and personal loan debt accumulated by the end of their 2-year B.Ed. degree. This finding was somewhat surprising, as one might expect that those with more debt would be more eager to acquire full time employment immediately following graduation. However, as suggested previously, employment motivations may be related to professional and personal needs rather than to debt that needs to be paid.

Further to this trend, there were no significant differences between participants who reported that they would take employment in a context where they are unlikely to make immediate or regular use of the learning from their B.Ed. degree and those who did not in terms of the amount they personally paid in educational costs for this degree or the amount of student and personal loan debt accumulated by the end of their 2-year B.Ed. degree. This is contrary to what we as researchers might anticipate, as respondents with larger debt could be expected to feel additional pressure to accept any available employment, even that which may not fully utilize their B.Ed. degree training. However, there was no significant relationship between whether respondents indicated that they had accumulated loans for all of their educational costs and whether they intended to

pursue any alternative employment options.

Related to total student debt or sources of debt there were no significant differences between those who expressed an intent to apply to a school board in/close to their home community compared to those who did not. It seems that the choice to return to teach in the student's home community was influenced by social factors rather than by economic ones. This finding remained true, even when all costs were accumulated as student loan debt.

These findings imply that these new teachers were relatively optimistic about getting a teaching position in Ontario, in their chosen areas, within a reasonable amount of time. However, these new graduates also seemed to be aware that this may take some time to achieve within the confines of Regulation 274 so the majority of them intend to buttress teaching employment with other forms of short-term employment.

Conclusions and Discussion

Our results indicated some interesting trends in the employment seeking behaviours of newly graduated teachers from Ontario's new two-year teacher accreditation program. It appears that there are factors that are mitigating these new teachers' decisions to move to other employment situations rather than seek employment in their home school board context. However, a large majority of these new teachers intended to seek teaching positions within the province, despite the extended process of finding full time employment in their profession under the legislation of Regulation 274. While we can trace a tendency for some new graduates to seek employment that will get them

optimal income as soon as they can, this group was a relatively small proportion of this population and the employment being sought seems to be compatible with being available for part time teaching jobs.

While we did not find this to be a dominant trend, some new teachers who are accredited in Ontario leave the province, and sometimes leave the country to seek employment. This may speak to the relative confidence that these young teachers see the world as a potential opportunity. In an article in the professional journal Marginson, (2017), made several observations about the relative mobility of highly educated workers, claiming that “higher education serves national objectives” and “mobility is a human right” (p. 26). In his work with international mobility, Marginson has found that mobility is “economically driven and it furthers the economic advantages of those already advantaged” (p. 25).

Interestingly, among Marginson’s (2017) other conclusions are the following observations about mobility and employment trends:

At a given level of income, those with degrees are much more mobile than those without degrees. In other words, higher education helps to democratize mobility, providing you can get higher education in the first place. Second, for those with degrees, above a modest threshold of income there is little change in potential mobility. This suggests that because higher education helps graduates to achieve greater personal agency, it reduces the limits set by economic determination and class, constituting greater personal freedom in its own right. Conversely,

those who lack higher education have less freedom... (p. 25)

However, Marginson’s hypothesis does not seem to hold true for this group of new teachers. This trend may indicate that these new graduates received enough details about job opportunities within the province to make them optimistic about biding their time and positioning themselves within their chosen region of the province and working within the systematic process that is legislated for teachers in this jurisdiction to acquire full time contract teaching positions. It may be that the current practice of placing these teachers in practicum situations over their two-year program in the same school board serves as a support network that builds confidence for these new graduates. They may feel that the benefits of maintaining an active profile in their chosen board were preferable to the relative risk of short term full employment in other jurisdictions. If these new teachers remain in local boards they may maintain contacts with people employed in their target board(s), and therefore may be able to acquire references and information about opportunities for them. These contacts may be broken by distance or lack of daily contact if these new teachers accept other non-school employment.

In a public announcement in 2013, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne described Regulation 274 as an “overcorrection” implemented by the government in response to a large teacher surplus caused by the convergence of a number of complex factors. This regulation requires new teacher graduates to engage in an extended process of employment seeking prior to being offered full time employment in provincial schools that are governed by the

Ontario College of Teachers. Our study demonstrates that new teacher graduates, who are leaving a two-year certification program with considerable debt, are, in large numbers, nonetheless willing to engage in the extended process of seeking full time employment in teaching within Ontario. However, times change and the circumstances that converged and brought about the enactment of Regulation 274 no longer exist. The first cohort of two-year graduates in the province was ready for teaching and felt both confident and knowledgeable about their profession. Therefore, it may be time to retract Regulation 274 to allow new teacher graduates in the province to compete freely for new full time contract teaching positions. Current practices of hiring occasional teachers within boards in patterns that are creatively compliant with the regulation and of using emergency supply teachers, which are not governed by any provisions in Regulation 274, seem to indicate that school boards have already created paths around some provisions of this restrictive legislation. It would seem that these boards are likely to concur that the regulation has outlived its original purpose.

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Appendix 1 – Email Invitation sent to Year 2 Consecutive Education Students

The email that was sent to students is as follows:

Dear Year 2 Consecutive Education students:

Drs. XX and YY are beginning a research project to examine the job seeking behaviours of newly graduated teacher candidates in the first cohort of Institution's Faculty of Education teacher candidates. This study will also look at factors that may correlate to some of the job seeking behaviours.

This email is to invite you to participate in this study. The study is brief and is being conducted through an online survey. The survey is preceded by a Letter of Informed Consent, which explains the study in further detail and which outlines your rights as a potential participant, including your right to decline participation and to withdraw from the study at any time. The link to this study is XXXXXX. This study has no relationship to any of your courses and you are being contacted by the Registrar's Office who had emails we have used to communicate with you. When/if you respond to the link below to participate in the survey, there is no way for the researchers to connect your responses to any courses you have taken.

Access to this online survey opens today (February 17, 2017). It will remain open until May 30, 2017.

Thank you for considering this request to participate.

Appendix 2 - Employment Seeking and Enrichment Strategies of New Teacher Education

Graduates From a 2-Year Ontario Certification Program

Section A - Please check the descriptor(s) that most readily apply to you.

What strategies will you use before January 2017, or, immediately following the completion of your B.Ed. degree, to find employment?

I will apply to teach on an occasional basis for the public school board in my home community.

I will apply to teach on an occasional basis for the Catholic school board in my home community.

I will apply to teach on an occasional basis for any school boards close to my home community.

I will apply to teach on a contract basis in a public school /public board in my home community because I am qualified in areas that are in high demand (e.g., French, Intermediate/Senior Sciences, Intermediate/Senior Math, Computer Studies, technological education, etc.).

My in-demand qualification (e.g., French, Intermediate/Senior Sciences, Intermediate/Senior Math, Computer Studies, technological education) is in _____.

I will apply to teach on a contract basis in a Catholic school/ Catholic board in my home community because I am qualified in areas that are in demand. My in-demand qualification (e.g., French, French, Intermediate/Senior Sciences, Intermediate/Senior Math, Computer Studies, technological education) is in _____.

I will apply to Ontario private/independent school(s) to teach on an occasional basis.

I will apply to private/independent school(s) in Canada outside of Ontario to teach on an occasional basis.

I will apply to Ontario private/independent school(s) to teach on a full time contract basis.

I will apply to private/independent school(s) in Canada but outside of Ontario to teach on a full time contract basis.

I am applying to teach on a First Nations' Reserve in Northern Ontario on a full time contract basis.

I am applying to teach on a First Nations' Reserve in Canada but outside of Ontario.

OR

- I plan to apply for employment in:
 - Tutoring
 - Hospitality, service or retail roles
 - Teaching in another role or setting not requiring OCT designation
 - Recreation, coaching, or personal training
 - After school programming
 - Administrative, financial services, or clerical
 - ECE, childcare
 - Child and youth or special needs work
 - Managerial or non-teacher professional
 - Education assistant
 - Trades, manufacturing or construction
 - Creative or performing arts
 - Adult education or corporate training

- When I apply to teach in the fall of 2017, I will be qualified to teach in the following division(s):
Please tick all that apply.
 - Primary/Junior
 - Junior/ Intermediate
 - Intermediate/Senior

Section B – Teaching Opportunities Outside of Canada

Please check the descriptor(s) that most readily apply to you.

- I will apply for an occasional/part-time teaching position outside of Canada.
 Country/countries _____
- I will apply for a full time/contract teaching position outside of Canada.
 Country/countries _____

Which of the following is true for you? (please check)

- If I take a teaching position outside of Canada, I will likely stay in that country for the remainder of my career.
- Or
- If I take a teaching position outside of Canada, I plan to return to Canada when there are more teaching jobs available and stay in Canada for the remainder of my teaching career.

Please indicate the number of years on the line provided following this prompt:

- If you take a teaching position outside of Canada in your first year of teaching, how long do you plan to continue teaching outside of Canada? _____ years

Section C - Professional Growth Plan

Please check the statement(s) that apply(ies) to you:

- I will continue my education by pursuing an advanced degree (e.g., M.Ed., MBA, M.Sc., M.A., Ph.D., etc.) full time, immediately after completing my B.Ed. degree.
- I will look for full time employment immediately after finishing my B.Ed. degree.
- I will take employment in a context where I am unlikely to make immediate or regular use of the learning from my B.Ed. degree.
- I will pursue Additional Qualifications to enrich my B.Ed. degree immediately after completing the B.Ed. degree.
- I will pursue a part-time M.Ed. degree to enrich my B.Ed. degree immediately after completing the B.Ed. degree.

Section D – Readiness to Teach

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 equals “weak impact” and 5 equals “strong impact”, indicate your feelings about each of the following prompts:

1. The 2-year B.Ed. program has given me a solid theoretical background to assume employment as a teacher.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The 2-year B.Ed. program has given me a solid practical background to assume employment as a teacher.

1 2 3 4 5

3. It was useful to have each practicum experience focused on different sets of professional skills that were gradually developed through each term of the program.

1 2 3 4 5

Section E – Preparation for Employment Acquisition

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 equals “strongly disagree” and 5 equals “strongly agree”, indicate your feelings about each of the following prompts:

1. I think the pace and workload of the 2-year B.Ed. program is comparable to the pace and workload I can expect in a full-time teaching job.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I had opportunities during the last 2 years to enrich my teaching qualifications by acquiring additional skills and certificates.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I had guidance during the last 2 years to help me prepare documents for teaching job applications.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I had guidance during the last 2 years to help me prepare for a teaching job interview.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I had an opportunity during my Year 2 Community Leadership placement to consider applying my B.Ed. qualifications to employment outside of traditional school classrooms.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I realized at some point during the 2-year program that classroom teaching was not for me but I decided to complete the degree before focusing on another career.

1 2 3 4 5

Section F – Student Debt

Please check each of the following that apply to you:

- I have had all educational costs for my B.Ed. paid for by another party (e.g., parents or others).
- This other party(ies) paid approximately _____ % of my B.Ed. degree costs.
- I have paid for my own educational costs for the B.Ed. degree using part-time and/or summer employment funds.
- I have personally paid approximately _____ % of my B.Ed. degree costs.
- I have accumulated student loans for all educational costs.
- I have accumulated student loans for _____ % of my educational costs.

1. My total student loan and personal loan debt estimate by the end of this degree (2-year B.Ed.) is approximately \$ _____.
2. I have personally paid approximately \$ _____ in educational costs for the B.Ed. degree.

Thank you for participating in this survey!