Teacher Identities and Professionalism Research

Ontario

Healthy Teacher Identities and Professionalism Research

System governed through working in partnership

- A range of provincial and local organisations hold responsibilities for different aspects of the education system, overseen by the Ministry of Education.
- District school boards and school councils provide governance at a local level.
- Publicly funded Ontario schools are members of a teachers’ union.

A desirable profession

- Teaching is a highly regarded career path, and new teachers are committed to their profession.
- Low attrition rates among teachers and an increase in graduates have led to an oversupply of trained teachers in the competitive market.
- Close to 1 in 3 teacher education graduates in 2010 were unemployed during their first year.

Commitment to supporting & building capacity for CPDL

- A variety of professional development opportunities are available, including additional qualifications, self-selected professional learning, and school- and system-directed professional development.
- The Ontario Teachers’ Federation, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Federation, and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Federation provide recommendations on school programmes for enhancing public confidence in the school system.

Headline Findings

Teacher Status and Autonomy

- According to a public opinion survey conducted every 3 years by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the teaching profession is highly regarded among parents, satisfaction rates for teacher quality are shown to be close to 80%, and entering into teaching remains a desirable career.
- All teachers in Ontario’s publicly funded schools are required to be members of the Ontario Teachers’ Federation (OTF). The core objectives of the OTF are: to promote and advance the cause of education; to raise the status of the teaching profession; to advance and promote the interests of teachers and to secure conditions that will make possible the best professional service; to assure and increase public interest in educational affairs; to cooperate with other teachers’ organizations throughout the world; and to represent all members of the pension plan.

Ontario is one of Canada’s most populous province, with a population of over 13.5m. According to the 2011 census, 28.5% of the population were born outside of Canada. English is the official language, French language rights have been extended to legal and educational systems.

The student population of Ontario is diverse, around 27% were born outside of Canada. According to the 2011 Census, the 6 languages most commonly spoken at home for 15-19 year olds are English, French, Punjabi, Urdu, Spanish & Arabic.

Ontario is recognised as having high levels of both academic achievement and equity. In PISA 2012, Ontario’s results were considerably above the OECD average, and displayed a lower than average impact of socioeconomic status on educational outcomes.

There are around 5,000 schools in Ontario, and the majority of students (95%) attend publicly funded education systems.

The Ministry of Education’s vision for Achieving Excellence has four priority goals: Achieving Excellence, Ensuring Well-Being, Promoting Positive Learning, and Enhancing Public Confidence.

The 'Share the Learning Summit' at the end of the project year

Leading Accountability and Assessment

- The Teacher Learning and Leadership Programme (TLLP) was launched in 2007, in partnership between the Ministry of Education, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Federation (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA), and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSFT). These organizations represent teachers’ voice in educational policy and provide local governance for the implementation of Ministry policies, including decisions on how to spend funds; promoting student achievement and subject, which include the standard for the knowledge and skills students are expected to develop in each subject at each grade level; there are also a range of supporting resources and materials. The Curriculum Council, comprising a community leaders and education experts, provides strategic policy advice to the Ministry.

In Ontario, teacher time is required to be no less than 5 hours a day, in primary and junior schools, this is generally divided into blocks depending on subject matter; students

Professional development, Teaching and Learning

- Professional development is open to teachers, and the government introduced Regulation 274/12 which resulted in more of a balance between retirements, Teacher Education, supply and places for teachers is oriented towards having a pool of teacher supply and ensuring that there is a balance between supply and demand.
- The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Federation (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA), and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSFT) have co-developed a new policy on ways of working together – ‘Collaborative Professionalism’ – which values all voices and is consistent with our shared responsibility to transform culture and provide equitable access to learning for all.
- The Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group (2014) indicates that 52% of first year teachers were in their first year of teaching, particularly in grades K-3, junior (grades 4-6), intermediate (grades 7-10) and senior (grades 11-12). Full-time kindergarten is also provided.

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teaching certificate) to $96,000 per annum (10 years' experience with additional qualification courses). In addition to their salary, teachers can also receive allowances for holding additional responsibilities or credentials, such as being a head of subject department.

Working conditions and teacher workload are areas of concern, in spite of additional financial and human resources which have been allocated to the education system in recent years in an attempt to allay this. According to a large scale study by the Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group in 2014, of 3,000 teachers surveyed, the average teacher dedicates close to 25 hours to non-teaching tasks per week, in addition to their 25 hours of classroom teaching.

In Ontario, teaching occurs throughout the school year, including maths, language, arts, science, social studies, music, French and health and physical education. By comparison, many intermediate and secondary schools are semesterised; students take one block of four subjects in the first half of the school year, and another block of four for the second half.

The Teacher Performance Appraisal system (TPA) was introduced as a legislative requirement in 2002, and revised in 2007. It is intended to provide teachers with meaningful appraisals which encourage professional growth and identify opportunities for additional support where required. The key components of the TPA are:

- Classroom observation
- Pre- and post-observation meetings
- A summative report

School principals are responsible for the appraisals of their staff, which take place twice in the first year for new teachers and then once every five years for experienced teachers. Teachers are also required to produce an annual learning plan, to outline their plans for professional growth.