



**Teacher 2001 Project: The Canadian Study of Teacher
Satisfaction, Motivation, and Health.**

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Abstract

This is a progress report on the Canadian Teacher 2001 Project: The Canadian study of teacher

satisfaction, motivation, and health. This study is part of an international study of teachers in which our data and analyses will be compared to those of colleagues in New Zealand, U.S.A., England, Australia, and Malta. A team of five from the University of Regina's Faculty of Education has undertaken to conduct the Canadian portion of this investigation. We anticipate collecting several thousand surveys and intend to report on the full sample of responses and to compare these with sub-samples drawn to reflect the makeup by province of characteristics such as gender, grade level taught, public and other schools, linguistic grouping, and provincial jurisdiction. In addition to using a common set of questions for the basic survey, we have included questions submitted by our research partners from the profession of teaching. This study is presently being conducted via a website in Canada. Problems with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and our own server caused some of our early respondents to be frustrated by completing the questionnaire and not being able to submit it. We have changed the design of the website to assign an identification number to an individual logging on. The individual may then exit the website and re-enter, using their identification number to complete their responses. The short-answer portion of the questionnaire takes only about a half hour to complete but the longer written commentary on the open-ended questions may extend the time necessary to complete the survey.

Teacher 2001 Project: The Canadian Study of Teacher

Satisfaction, Motivation, and Health.

This study is part of an international study of teachers in which our data and analyses will be compared to those of colleagues in New Zealand, U.S.A., England, Australia, and Malta. A team of five from the University of Regina's Faculty of Education has undertaken to conduct the Canadian investigation of teacher job satisfaction, motivation and health. The principal researcher for this project (Ryan) was one of five researchers for the New Zealand study, out of which came strong indicators of factors influencing teacher and student performance (*Teacher 2000 Project: An International Study of Teacher Satisfaction, Motivation, and Health. The New Zealand Report, 1998*).

The research literature indicates that social contexts surrounding today's schools are having powerful and worrisome effects on teachers and the opportunities provided for children to develop their potential. The study encompasses a detailed two-year quantitative and qualitative analysis of teachers' perceptions of the impact of their teaching role on their general satisfaction and well being. Interpretations and discussion will be based upon feedback from an internationally tested survey instrument in 2001 and follow-up interviews to delineate the issues and their implications in 2002. In 2003, a purposive sampling of teachers working within schools not sampled in the 2001 public school sample will be carried out. The sample to be included will be representative of the population of those teachers serving the elementary to senior high school student population across Canada. Team members include: Dr. Heather Ryan, Dr. Jonathan Bayley, Dr. Patrick Douaud, Dr. Peter Hemingway, Dr. Kathleen O'Reilly-Scanlon.

Objectives

The research being reported on here seeks to:

1. Build upon and validate understandings of teacher satisfaction, orientation to teaching, values and health, revealed by prior research both in Canada and overseas;
2. Provide critical evaluation of this method of electronic data collection and collaborative research with a diverse community of educators.
3. Work closely with colleagues in other countries who are conducting similar research. This involves the use of an agreed upon questionnaire content to facilitate international comparisons with teachers in New South Wales, New Zealand, the USA, England and Malta;
4. Share all aspects of this project among the research team to provide increased reliability in interpretation and reporting of research literature, and of our findings to the general public, the teaching and the research communities;
5. Provide training and support from faculty team members for graduate students to develop critical skills in conducting surveys and interviews; in analysis of quantitative and qualitative data; in preparing reports for academic and professional journals, and in participation in conference and public presentations of the findings;
6. Disseminate our findings for discussion to teachers, administrators, policy makers, and to the general public through presentations to raise awareness of the issues and provide recommendations that will encourage discussion appropriate to the concerns identified; and
7. Obtain benchmark information on teacher well being that may inform teacher hiring, planning, market prediction and policy creation across Canada and internationally.

Context

Although "people are always wanting teachers to change" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 5), the pressure for and pace of educational change have increased considerably over the last decade. As a result, education systems have experienced change in the areas of teaching practice and curricula; greater involvement of parents in education; attempts to 'reform' educational bureaucracies with a greater emphasis upon accountability, rationality and self-management, with the implicit criticism these words connote (Norris, 1999).

In an era of restructuring of national economies in the hope of greater international competitiveness, unresolved social problems of unemployment, family break-up, crime, poverty, and poor health for many, schools have been looked to for solutions, with the result that they have become the "wastebaskets of society" (Halsey, cited by Hargreaves, 1994, p. 5). Schools are being expected to solve the problems with which society appears unwilling or unable to deal (Dinham, 1994).

According to Campaign 2000 (2000), in Canada one child in five is living in poverty. This represents an increase of 49% since 1989 (Campaign 2000, 2000). This increase in children living in poverty has an impact on teachers and on classrooms. McClelland (2001) reported the Canadian Council on Social Development's conclusion that children in families whose incomes are below the Statistics Canada low income cut-off suffer poorer health, have more behavioural problems and worse grades in school than children from higher income families. Adler and Fisher (1999) concluded from a study of the reading performance of impoverished students that reading performance decreased as student poverty increased. Children from low-income families experience problems with nutrition, stress and health; they experience more frequent changes of address and schools as their families attempt to adapt to changes in family income (Ross, Scott & Kelly, 1996). As a result, schools are finding it more and

more difficult to meet the needs of students on their own because they simply do not have the resources, the specialized staff, or the time to "be all things to all people" (Saskatchewan Education, 1998; Tymchak, 2000).

To compound matters, in many western nations demographic changes are occurring due to the twin effects of longer life expectancy and falling birth rates. In Australia, for example, the average age of teachers now exceeds 45 (Baumgart, 1995). Concerns identified by Harker, Gibbs, Ryan, Weir, and Adams (1998) included a poor public perception of teachers, lack of adequate resources for teacher training or schools, an aging teacher population, workload and the demands placed upon teachers in serving increasingly diverse student populations. In Canada, resignation rates have fallen since World War II, while retirement rates are expected to rise considerably over the next decade. Projected growth in student numbers is "flat" over the next decade, despite immigration. In the annual report (1999) of the Ontario College of Teachers, Margaret Wilson, Registrar, reported that "in an attempt to offset a substantial number of retirements, the College mailed a letter in February to 11,000 recently retired teachers encouraging them to work as occasional teachers even if just for a few hours a week" (p.4). In addition, teacher mobility in educational systems has declined markedly, fewer males are entering teaching, and there is concern over the "quality" of those entering teacher training (Dinham, 1996). In Canada, issues including the effects of diversity in student populations, levels of public funding of schools, cultural and language support and changing curriculum are currently of concern to educators. One such example is Saskatchewan's *Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School* (Tymchak, 2000). There has, however, been little research into these national issues. The Canadian Teachers' Federation held a national conference on teacher demographics to deal with the question of whether Canada is facing a teacher shortage and other related issues.

In New Zealand, under a complex political agenda of globalisation, deregulation, and fiscal constraint reforms in education have produced a shortage of teachers and increased pressure on teacher education programmes (Jesson, Gibbs, Lang, & Windross, 1997). In response, the government pressed for a greater number of cost-saving or field-based preservice teacher education experiences within a tightly constrained regulatory environment. The preparation of quality teachers remains a central concern for teacher educators. Curriculum initiatives, among other factors, have placed new expectations on teachers to be effective; therefore, it is no surprise to find that reforms in education have had a strong impact on teachers (Harker, et. al., 1998). In Newfoundland and Labrador, Crocker (1998) claimed that there were major concerns heralded with respect to teacher supply and demand, with over two-thirds of the current teaching force expected to retire by the end of 2010-2011. A majority of teacher retirements are expected to occur at eligibility, with almost 80 percent of the full-time public teaching force in 1995-96 to be replaced by 2008-9 and a falling number of teachers being certified in the face of expected falling enrolments. The *Time-Use Study of Nova Scotia Teachers* (2000) reports teachers spend 52.5 hours per week on teaching-related activities, with one third spent on class instruction. The St. Mary's University researchers concluded that there was insufficient time allowed for planning, reflection and collaboration, with consequences for teachers of this chronic lack of time being increased levels of stress and feelings of despair. As in New Zealand, traditional professional ideologies of teachers based on high trust collegiality have been undermined. In the New Zealand primary sector, teachers' workloads have risen. Livingston (1994) reported that 79% of teachers attributed the declines in their family life, friendships, leisure activities and health to their increased work demands. Thirty-eight percent of Livingston's sample indicated that if they had the choice they would leave teaching because of these coping demands. An American study by Littrel (1994) suggested that specific types of principal support were significant predictors of job satisfaction, school commitment, and personal health.

For secondary teachers, a recent study using a stratified random sample of 556 New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers' Association members from throughout New Zealand (Bloor & Harker, 1995) found that the average working week on school-related activities was 54.3 hours during term time. This figure was significantly higher than time considered as generally reasonable for the teaching profession (40.3 hours). There was considerable variation in the total time spent on work among teachers in different positions within the school. The management team worked an average of 59.8 hours during term, the equivalent of an extra two hours per day than normally considered reasonable. Those who held positions of responsibility such as departmental heads worked an average of 55.0 hours per week during term, an additional two-and-a-half hours a day more than was considered appropriate. Teaching assistants spent an average of 47.5 hours on work-related activities, an hour a day more than was thought reasonable for people in their position.

Compared to their counterparts of 15 years ago (Department of Education, 1983) the management team in the 1995 survey worked an extra ten hours per week, middle management an extra eight hours per week, and assistant teachers an additional four hours. It was found further that teachers undertake a wide range of duties, with slightly more than only one third actually devoted to classroom teaching. Workloads were perceived by the participants to have increased steadily in recent years, from what they regarded as 'moderate' in 1991 to what they regarded as 'extremely heavy' in 1995. Middle management experienced the greatest increase in perceived workload, where the major reasons for increase are extra work required for curriculum development and changes in assessment practices. These new pressures are seen to have a heavy impact on the quality of classroom teaching and preparation, and have had a negative effect on involvement in school-based extra-curricular activities.

Harker et al (1998) also found that reported increases in workload have had an adverse effect on personal health and well-being. These data clearly supported the 1995 study's findings that over two-thirds of the sample linked increases in levels of emotional stress, declining physical health, strained friendships and decreases in the quality of family life and leisure activities, to the increased demands that teaching now makes of their time and commitment. In both studies, many novice and experienced teachers indicated that, if free from financial and family responsibilities, they would leave the teaching profession. Is this true of Canadian contexts?

It is all very well to initiate new policies and practices, however their successful implementation requires the commitment and goodwill of a professionally well-prepared and competent group of teachers. How they see their job, the conditions under which they work and the prospects for the future are vital components in any review of the current climate in schools, and should constitute the outcome variables in any assessment of educational change or efficacy.

September 11, 2001 terrorist actions in the United States have demanded the solidarity of Canadians in opposing terrorism and tightening up our borders and immigration laws. What this new focus on security and our contribution to a worldwide hunt for those responsible will cost the Canadian economy remains to be seen. Some jurisdictions in Canada have already announced that the increased costs of security provisions will affect finances available to education and the provision of services to special needs students. These acknowledgements of world events demonstrate that happenings in the world affect the lives of teachers as well as others. This research project will help us to find out what effects world, national, and provincial events have on teachers and teaching.

Method

The pilot year of the study (2001) is focused on collection, analysis and interpretation of teacher's perceptions from across Canada by means of a survey. In the process of soliciting cooperation from Teachers' organizations in promoting and conducting the study, we offered to share anonymous data with our research partners. Several organizations were enthusiastic about the prospects of such a study and requested that we include questions of particular interest to their membership. In addition to using a common set of questions for the basic survey, we have included questions submitted by our research partners from the profession of teaching. Some of these addressed issues we had not considered. One jurisdiction was particularly concerned about the small number of male teachers in elementary schools and what might be done to change that situation. The issue of opinions about methods of fundraising for schools was raised by one of our research partners. Issues concerning teachers' perceptions concerning the appropriateness of teaching assignments, social justice issues, standardized testing, and technology were added to the survey in response to questions suggested by our research partners from the teaching profession. There have been a number of issues concerning teaching associations/unions and their representation of teachers' interests.

The development of the original survey questionnaire (before questions were added by our Canadian research partners) and the overall coordination of the international data comparisons are the responsibility of Dinham and Scott of the University of Western Sydney (Nepean).

The Canadian survey questionnaire is provided on a secure website and the responses are automatically coded and recorded. Paper surveys are supplied to those who request them. Minor changes were made to account for differences in the idiom and relevant education system, but the research intent remained constant. This ensures that not only will the data be useful for Canadian purposes, they will be directly comparable from an international perspective. The questionnaire gathers information about demographic items, orientation to teaching, satisfaction versus dissatisfaction with teaching, proportion of time devoted to teaching tasks, motivation and commitment, general health, and open-ended comments. Teacher characteristics examined include age, gender, level of training, level of responsibility, perceptions of the nature of their student populations, linguistic grouping, and provincial jurisdiction. This study is presently being conducted via a website in Canada. Problems with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and our own server caused some of our early respondents to be frustrated by completing the questionnaire and not being able to submit it. We have changed the design of the website to assign an identification number to an individual logging on. The individual may then exit the website and re-enter, using their identification number to complete their responses. The short-answer portion of the questionnaire takes only about a half hour to complete but the longer written commentary on the open-ended questions may extend the time necessary to complete the survey.

The quantitative phase allows us to solicit the cooperation of individuals who volunteer, in the pilot phase, to participate. It also allows us to examine the relationships between interesting factors suggested by the literature review and unique aspects that call for further examination in the focused qualitative investigations. These qualitative interviews will be conducted by a combination of face-to-face meetings and telephone interviews to deal with the large-scale issues in Canada.

There have been a number of comments about lack of time to address important issues. These comments have to do with the imposition of split grades in order to increase the student-teacher ratios and to help justify inadequate financial resources. The terrorist actions of September, 2001 in the United States have demanded the solidarity of Canadians in

opposing terrorism and tightening up our borders and immigration laws. Historically, when belts have had to be tightened to meet major crises, social programs such as education have endured constraints. Some jurisdictions in Canada have already announced that the increased costs of security provisions will affect finances available to education and the provision of services to special needs students. In addition, in this survey, there have been a number of comments about the deplorable state of repair of schools, presumably one of the outcomes of past budget cuts.

Theory Informed by Research Partnerships

Models of job satisfaction post-Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) were confirmed by Sergiovanni (1967). These models have generally presented two mutually exclusive domains of satisfaction/dissatisfaction: intrinsic satisfiers grounded in the actual 'work' ('motivators'), and extrinsic dissatisfiers ('hygienes') grounded in the 'conditions of work', usually employment situation based. A survey with 2000 teachers and school executives in England, New Zealand and Australia (Dinham & Scott, 1998) provided evidence for a third domain of teacher satisfaction /dissatisfaction grounded in the wider environment surrounding the school, a domain which has grown in importance and influence and which teachers and school executives find uniformly dissatisfying. Further, this outer domain has acted to erode overall teacher satisfaction in contravention of the general principles of 'two factor' theories of job satisfaction. Educational systems and governments may need to look within the outer domain of teacher satisfaction for answers to the problems currently facing teachers, schools and society.

While the content of traditional surveys has often been the sole undertaking of researchers, with little or no design input or content from potential participants, we invited educational associations, such as the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and provincial and territorial teacher organizations, to partner with us in this joint research endeavour. These partnerships help us to: connect with individuals willing to serve as advisors regarding local contexts, sensitivities and issues of school access; ensure that survey questions were appropriate to particular contexts and situations; promote the involvement of the study among teachers across Canada; and provide necessary funding.

This study will identify how both the research structure and process were shaped by these partnerships in a widespread, culturally diverse, officially bilingual population. Participants had the opportunity to respond to questions in either of Canada's two official languages – French and English. Traditionally, survey research has involved designing, field-testing and distributing a paper survey to a select population. Due to Canada's vast geographic size and relatively large population, we dealt in our pilot study with issues surrounding the creation of a website to facilitate accessibility and generate an adequate response rate. Although hard copy surveys were made available to those who required them, this represented a different mode of delivery from that of the *Teacher 2000* researchers.

We will describe issues that arose when doing this study with teacher associations, school boards, ministries of education and the academic community. We expect these data will differ from the smaller sampling of approximately 700 teachers per country by international colleagues in the *Teacher 2000 Study*, considering that all interested teachers were able to participate with encouragement from their professional organizations. Factors found commonly in teacher practice and experience across Canada, as well as those idiosyncratic to particular environments, allow comparison between provinces, territories and the international findings in Australia, England, New Zealand, Malta and the United States. The collaborators seek understandings of teacher experience that may guide improvements to policy, professional development and support for teachers. The researchers expect to inform the academic community of pitfalls in electronic and collaborative research with the

community and of strategies developed to make such work effective. We expect that our findings and experience offer opportunities to advance the field in these growing areas of research interest.

When the pilot phase is completed, samples can be drawn that will be stratified so as to represent jurisdictions, primary, junior high or middle years and secondary teachers in proportion to their actual numbers in the country. A stratified random sample is a useful blend of selecting the characteristics of the population that must be sampled and of categorizing the population into unique groups or strata that must be sampled. For example, the teaching populations of men and women in the ten provinces and three territories across the three age levels of schools must all be sampled to represent the wider public school teaching population across Canada. This technique allows both a quantitative and a qualitative piece of research to be simultaneously conducted. The quantitative phase allows use of analytical and inferential statistics and allows us to identify individuals who volunteer to participate in phase two. It also allows us to compute correlations between interesting factors suggested by the literature review and unique aspects that call for further examination in the focused qualitative investigations.

Redundant approaches were made to introduce the project and seek the co-operation of teachers. Information about access to the website, the purposes of the study, the voluntary nature of participation and other relevant information was distributed to organizations and groups representing teachers. This procedure was designed to maximise the response rate.

The second year of the study (following the pilot year) will involve all team members and graduate students in conducting semi-structured interviews with a sample of those who expressed interest in being interviewed when they submitted their survey responses. The interviews will examine the issues and themes emerging from the national and regional data of the pilot phase as well as any other issues that may be raised by the interview participants.

The third year will be dedicated to collecting additional data from schools omitted from the original survey. Graduate students will prepare, deliver, and collect some of the survey materials, as well as assist with coding and analysis of returns. The tasks involved in year three of the project would centre on consolidation to bring all aspects of the study together into a final interpretive report or reports and disseminating the findings. Canada is a big country. We will be making field visits for interviews, but we will probably be forced to conduct some of the follow-up interviews by telephone, making use of recordings to maintain a record and using a pre-constructed interview guide to try to solicit opinions on aspects of teacher satisfaction, motivation, and health demonstrated in the open-ended responses on the surveys in the pilot phase.

Partners in Research

The Canadian Teacher 2001 team has been bolstered by advisors who provide depth of knowledge of local contexts and familiarity with the social and political environment in which teachers are working and living. Their advice and insights will assist us to realistically evaluate the issues impacting upon teachers' personal lives that are related to their professional practice and work environments. These advisors include:

- Harvey Weiner, Deputy Secretary General, Canadian Teachers' Federation
- Mary Morison, Coordinator - Strategic Services, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
- Nicole Dupéré, Directrice de l'information, Association des enseignants francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick

- Larry Jamieson, Director of Communication and Research, New Brunswick Teachers' Association
- Miles Ellis, General Secretary, Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation
- Anne Rodrigue, Nova Scotia Teachers' Union
- Peter Kilabuk, Minister of Education, Nunavut
- Wally Seipp, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, Yukon
- Bruce Karlenzig, Research & Policy Analyst, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
- Valerie Pierre-Pierre, Research Officer, Canadian Education Association
- Penny Ballantyne, Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment, Northwest Territories
- Teacher Welfare Officer, Alberta Teachers' Association, and
- Ron Silverstone, Executive Director, Association of Administrators of English Schools in Quebec

Communication of Results

Within the academic community, presenting results at international conferences will be a logical way of accomplishing dissemination. It is reasonable to assume that such presentations will take place in Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, and the United States at national and international conferences (AARE, NZARE, AERA).

Outside the academic community, we expect to develop a website for dissemination of results to the community of teachers in Canada. Results will be returned to provincial organisations. We intend to make use of mass media to raise awareness of issues identified and disseminate information to the general public. The use of a website for collecting teachers' opinions will make it impossible to allow team members to provide unique information to each school participating in the sample. We have undertaken to return the results from their respective provinces, as well as the aggregated results from the total sample. At a later date, results from international comparisons will be made available to the participating schools. We anticipate that our promise to "give back" results should contribute to a higher rate of return.

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