

Kutsyuruba, B., & Walker, K.D. (Eds.). (2017). The bliss and blisters of early career teaching: A pan-Canadian perspective. Burlington, CA: Word and Deed Publishing, Inc.

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As educators across the globe lament the departure of countless new teachers from the profession each year, this book provides a welcome analysis of the experiences of new teachers and strategies to prevent the exodus. The volume is framed by Kutsyuruba and Walker's SSHRC funded study which included several major components:

- A document analysis of all publicly available policy and program documents regarding new teacher supports from provincial authorities, teacher associations/federations, teacher unions, and individual school board websites in Canada.
- An international literature review summarizing how induction programs address specific contextual factors affecting new teachers in various countries.
- An online survey of over 1,300 new teachers from all provinces and territories in Canada.
- Telephone interviews with 36 new teachers representing all territories and all but one province.

Their research is centred in Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model that shows how individuals are shaped by their context and the interactions of the factors within that context – in this case by the provincial context, school board initiatives, and the interactions of individuals at the school level who work within the broader context.

In fall 2016, the editors brought together scholars, practitioners, and policy makers from eight different provinces in a forum to examine new teacher induction and mentoring. That many of the authors were able to participate in this forum lends credibility to the book because peers surely provided feedback on ideas that were still under construction; this subsequent volume ensures that the ideas reach a broader audience. The editors also created a website of resources including a repository of presentations from the forum. Perusing the repository of presentations helps readers to understand why the book included not only research studies but also program overviews from ministry and school district personnel and first-hand accounts of new teachers and administrators – those who were participants in the panel discussions at the forum.

The chapters vary significantly in their format, type of research undertaken, and rigour of background research considered. At times, the book reminded me of a Prezi, presentation software that provides a broader view of an image then zooms in to examine more closely some aspect of the image (e.g., a tree then specific branches of that tree). Kutsyuruba and Walker's large-scale studies of new teachers in Canada as well as international literature reviews provide this broad view while specific chapters zoom in to examine details in individual provinces or specific aspects of new teachers' experiences (e.g., social class, new teacher knowledge of assessment practices, principals' roles in new teacher induction).

Part I entitled *The Voices of Early Career Teachers* uses various approaches to capture teachers' voices. Chapter 2 maps out the findings from the pan-Canadian new teacher survey and summarizes their perceptions of induction and mentorship programs, administration, work environments, and professional development. Chapters 3 and 6 provide detailed windows into two new teachers' experiences: one through a qualitative case study and one in a first hand account that reads much like an interview. Chapters 4, 5, and 8 provide creative windows into new teachers' passions and frustrations, first through poems and then through comics. In Chapter 7, readers are able to pan out to see once again a broader view of new teachers' experiences across the country through research interviews with 36 new teachers. I found this chapter to

be one of the most meaningful because of the common trends experienced by these teachers and also the authors' corroboration with related research. Chapter 9 is somewhat similar to chapter 7 in its qualitative analysis of new teachers' experiences, in this case focusing upon the unique circumstances faced by Ontario teachers who, as a result of teacher surplus and policy regulations, often face lengthy periods of occasional teaching and precarious employment before feeling secure in the profession.

Part II shifts from the experiences of new teachers to the programmatic supports provided to them across the country. Providing the pan-Canadian perspective, chapter 10 summarizes the programs available throughout the country based upon a systematic review of publicly available documents. After a few paragraphs describing the initiatives in each province, the authors provide helpful tables which show the jurisdictions that have provincially mandated programs with ministry level support (only Ontario, NWT, and Nunavut) and which others have union level support, school district support, or some hybrid of these. Chapter 11, written in French, provides data from two large SSHRC funded studies regarding the challenges facing new teachers in Quebec including job insecurity, feelings of incompetence, and teaching outside their areas of speciality; the authors argue that supports for new teachers must be catered to their specific needs which often vary depending upon context. Chapter 12 also emerges from Quebec, focusing specifically on a robust mentorship program in one English school board that includes a rubric for observation adapted for Quebec's 12 Professional Competencies. New teachers' competence in assessment and their preparation for assessment through teacher education and induction in Quebec and Ontario provides a particular focus for Chapter 13; the authors argue that both teacher educators and those responsible for new teacher induction bear responsibility to enhance competence in this critical area of practice in which new teachers often feel unprepared. While many of the chapters in this volume are research studies prepared by academics, the Ministry of Education colleagues author chapter 14 and they provide the vision undergirding Ontario's New Teacher Induction Program. They are transparent in discussing the program's growth areas described as the "stones in our shoe" and ways to address these issues. Recommendations for improving the Ontario new teacher induction program are also included in Chapter 15 where readers are invited to look beyond the Canadian context to learn from a mentorship program in Israel where mentors engage in significant professional development. Chapter 16 describes a board level induction and mentorship program based in Winnipeg including survey feedback from both mentors and mentees. The next chapter focuses upon the unique challenges of mentorship in rural Saskatchewan schools where proximity to mentors and diverse teaching assignments complicate the experiences of new teachers. Heading further west to Alberta, Chapter 18 is based upon a longitudinal study involving over 100 teachers and spanned 5 years. Surveys and telephone interviews pointed to the changing nature of teachers' needs during the first five years of their careers; in the early years their needs were practical (finding resources, planning, urgent advice) and affective (feeling like they belonged and had a legitimate place in their school community). The authors argue:

While the importance of reflection should not be discounted within the overall program of induction, its overemphasis very early in practice may lead program designers to downplay the significance of "learning by doing" for beginners, and thus neglect the significance of concrete, practical supports, resources, and skill development. (p. 342)

The final chapters in Part II emerge from British Columbia. The first documents the new teacher mentorship program currently in research phase and points readers to their website including resources to build a local mentorship program. The second describes Delta's story – a mentorship program that places a strong emphasis on innovative teaching and includes mentorship teams each responsible for several new teachers. Chapters 18-20 leave readers with some puzzles: Does a program that promotes innovative teaching and alignment with board vision march too quickly ahead of the needs of new teachers still in survival mode? On the other hand, is a program that responds to new teachers' immediate needs "vulnerable to charges of vagueness and toothlessness in a policy culture that demands system-wide alignment and measurable indicators linking mentorship initiatives with improvements in both student achievement and teacher performance" (p. 361)? Servage et al. (Chapter 18) suggest that induction experiences must gradually transition new teachers into more advanced professional learning – a transition that requires the support of mentors who recognize the individual and collective needs of those new teachers.

After hearing the voices of new teachers in Part I, and learning about programmatic supports across the country in Part II, Part III focuses upon supports at the school and school system level. The editors' research provides an international review of induction programs and how the programs address the spe-

cific needs of local contexts. The influence of principals on new teachers' motivation to participate in professional development is the focus of Chapter 22 while Chapter 23 provides a firsthand account of one principal's struggle to become a supportive administrator for new teachers (creatively framed through the lens of Tragically Hip song lyrics). Using a "roadside assistance" metaphor, the final research study in the book is based upon interviews with 12 principals describing the role they may play in supporting new teachers such as finding appropriate supports and professional learning opportunities while acknowledging principals' own demanding workload.

The editors conclude the book with a hopeful epilogue and an affirmation that new teachers are not doomed to "sink-or-swim" but rather:

If we can better understand the challenges and find tailor-made, and even routinized, ways to encourage, exhort, and equip beginning teachers to live into their chosen profession in ways that might be described as flourishing, then everyone in the learning community will be better for it. (p. 461)

Fortunately, there is significant research to show that strong induction and mentoring programs improve teacher effectiveness, satisfaction, commitment, quality instruction, student achievement, and ultimately improve teacher retention. This volume has surely contributed to that body of research and the Canadian context.

Few of the chapters bring the academic rigour and scope that Kutsyuruba and Walker bring to the work. However, the editors' initiative in drawing together researchers and practitioners with a common interest in early career teachers is to be commended. In provinces or school divisions where new teacher support is underfunded or inconsistent, this volume provides advocates with the rationale, strong research foundation, and possible models that might be advanced in their own jurisdictions.

References

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