Building New Teacher Confidence through Connection

Ontario Elementary Principals
Supporting Early Career Teachers

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New teachers benefit from support for a range of professional learning needs
-some needs are anticipated, others are not

Some teachers may have some resources available through personal connection or previous experience, while others do not

Each school has a unique demographic and set of strengths and needs. Principals are responsible for operational and instructional leadership within the school.
Problem of Practice

Early career teachers have a range of needs as they transition from pre-service education to in-service teaching.

NTIP new teachers are often not identified as “new teachers”

What are principals in Ontario elementary schools doing to support early career teachers in their first five years of teaching following the completing of a university pre-service education program?
Research Question

What work with respect to new teacher supports do elementary school principals do to support early career teachers in Ontario?

Sub-questions

1. How do elementary school principals understand early career teacher supports?

2. What strategies do elementary school principals engage in to support early career teachers?

3. How does policy influence the work of principals in supporting early career teachers?

4. What challenges do elementary principals encounter when supporting early career teachers?
Method and Methodology

*Ontario based study

*qualitative study (12 participants)

*semi-structured interviews

*interpretivist approach

*recruitment through the Ontario Principal Council (OPC)
Sample

12 elementary principals

Publicly-funded schools

English speaking schools

Southern Ontario, Canada
Work
Type, Volume, Quality,
Influenced by nature of other work

Support
Type - Emotional, Physical,
Instructional, Institutional
Formal (policy) or Informal
(without policy)

Policy
Provincial
District

Nature of work
(P and NT) influences availability,
type and duration of support

How principals understand ECT supports
Policy has guidelines, funding,
Inclusion criteria

Policy guides work
Policy creates priority
Findings

Principals identify their work in supporting ECTs as meaningful.

Principals identify the value of supporting new teachers.

Principals identify themselves as important in developing supports.

Principals are empathetic of new teachers entering teaching.

Principals identify as facilitators of supports, not direct mentors.

While they see their work with developing and facilitating new teacher supports as important, they identify their overall work as intensifying...
Findings

Ontario elementary principals have many roles and responsibilities

Time is needed to develop relationships with new teachers

Influences the type and duration of new teacher supports

Formal or Informal Supports
Principals as School Leaders: Paying it forward

Principal leadership with connecting the early career teachers in their school with Supports makes a positive difference for the early career teacher, for the students that they teach, for the early career teacher’s career and for the school/district
Discussion

Principals connect people and supports

Principals have an important role in developing and facilitating early career teacher supports

Engage the School Collaborative Culture in their development and facilitation of ECT supports
Principals spin a web of support for early career teachers by engaging the school’s collaborative learning community.

- Working with experienced teacher colleagues at the school and from professional networks (informal mentoring).
- Working with school district personnel (learning co-ordinators, coaches).
- Professional texts, access to tech in the school.
- Ontario NTIP program (engage policy).

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Discussion

Early Career Teacher Supports as an Investment

Individual - investment in early career teachers

Profession - early career teacher investment in teaching

School - early career teacher an investment in school
Discussion

Principals have an **intensifying workload** which creates challenges in their development and facilitation of early career teacher supports.

Principals experience **challenges with developing open, trusting relationships** as they supervise early career teachers, so they facilitate rather than directly provide supports.
Conclusions

Principals Identified:

Challenge in reaching supports to the newest teachers in daily occasional work

Different supports are required for short-term and long-term early career teaching work
Principals develop and facilitate supports on the road of new teacher transition into practice. If all principals are busy or cannot reach all new teachers on the road, who can develop and facilitate support?

**WITH SUPPORT**

Early career teacher taking the road with access to supports

**WITHOUT SUPPORT**

Early career teacher managing the road alone

PUBLICATIONS


Supporting New Teachers on the Road of Teaching
Jenny Gonyou-Brown and Katina Pollock
Chapter 24 In The Bliss and Blisters of Early Career Teaching in Canada eds. Ben Kutsyurubaa and Keith Walker

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