

Second Career Teachers: The Transition of Eight Students from the Teacher Education Program

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Problem of teacher shortage

- Retirement of Babyboomers;
- Teacher attrition;
- Young teacher drop out;
- Stress associated with the growing number of students with special needs.

The Professional Transition: a Vast Process of Change

- Feelings of lack of professional satisfaction leads to questioning;
- Personal projects are redefined;
- New priorities are established;
- New significance is given to professional life.

(Teixeira & Gomes, 2000)

A New Category of Teachers

Motivated by the possibility:

- To make a difference in the lives of young people;
- To contribute socially;
- To accomplish a job which has direction;

and

- To teach a particular subject;
- To feel a form of professional satisfaction;
- To express creativity;
- To have employment security.

(Chambers, 2002; Lerner and Zittleman, 2002; Powers, 2002)

Purpose of the Study

- To understand the process by which adults experiencing a professional transition choose teaching at the elementary level as a second career.
- To describe the profile of these adults experiencing a professional transition.

Methodology: Sample Choice

- Having previously exercised a profession other than teaching;
- Being registered at the University of Ottawa teacher education program (primary/junior cycle) during the 2004-2005 school year;
- Having experienced a professional transition which conducted towards the registration in this program;
- Having the status of Canadian citizen and having practiced the first profession in Canada.

Methodology: Data & Analysis

- Qualitative method;
- Eight participants; ages ranged from 26 to 49 (m=38);
- Semi-directed interviews;
- Grounded theory methodology for data analysis.

(Strauss & Corbin, 1990)

No Profile 'Type' (1)

- Five female and three male;
- Ages spread over a period of 23 years;
- As many singles as people living as couples;
- As many parents as non-parents;

No Profile 'Type' (2)

- As many residents of the Ottawa-Gatineau region as non-residents;
- As many who had experienced work in the school environment as those who had not;
- First university diplomas received in domains as diversified as physiotherapy, translation, graphic design, mathematics, psycho-education, and industrial or administrative relations (2).

First Conceptual Category: The Transitional Process

- Choosing a first career and experiencing doubt;
- Transition;
- Choosing teaching among other careers.

Second Conceptual Category: The Complexity of Teaching

- Self-doubt;
- The need for professional support;
- The personal and professional self .

Discussion

- Motivation oriented towards personal or professional development (more than oriented toward social contribution);
- Doubts regarding teaching competencies;
- Enthusiasm for teaching and desire to share experiences with colleagues;
- Request for mentoring;
- Difficulty to identify transferable professional competencies.