

A Study of Existing Professional Insertion Training Programs for Newly-Immigrated Teachers in
the Québec School System

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ABSTRACT

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The education system in Quebec is currently faced with a paradigm shift. One of these shifts is that the teaching profession attracts less and less people due to several factors; another one is that as the cultural make – up of Quebec society is changing, with more and more students from varied cultural backgrounds attending the schools. One way the Ministry of Education can address both these problems is through the hiring of immigrant teachers – either those with plenty of experience already, or people new to the profession. However, for all the interest shown by immigrant teachers to integrate the Quebec education system, there still seem to be unique obstacles and barriers faced by these willing and ready teachers.

The interpretive phenomenological approach used in this study gives a voice to those people who live the situation under investigation. Through interviews conducted with participants from school centers across the Greater Montreal Region, this study aims to do just that – allow immigrant teachers to tell their own stories and relate their experiences accessing and participating in Professional Insertion Programs in the Quebec school system.

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this Thesis to the memory of my father,
and
To Christian, for his invaluable help along the way.

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Chapter One: Establishing the Context

Introduction

From my vantage point in the university halls as a student in education, and from my identity as an immigrant, it always felt strange to hear of the teacher shortage in Quebec. Not only were my classes always full of bright young students working towards becoming teachers themselves, but within the immigrant communities there were plenty of not only qualified, but also experienced teachers who – like me – had a wealth of experience teaching in their home countries, or sometimes even as immigrant teachers in other countries. Still, we heard of shortages, and stories would filter back from others like us who were further ahead on their path and kept encountering difficulties in becoming full fledged teachers.

This created a dissonance - to constantly hear the Government both lament the shortage of teachers in the system, while at the same time throwing up barrier after barrier to immigrant teachers' access. It's difficult to imagine the message as being anything other than "we want new teachers, just not you", which can understandably be extremely demoralizing.

Beyond the strange paradox of this message was the path to follow, one filled with bureaucratic pit traps, lengthy waiting periods, and usually dispiriting outcomes. Obviously, the path is not just difficult for immigrant teachers; plenty of Quebec-born teachers also face complex obstacles in joining the profession they have chosen. It is much more onerous to become a teacher in Quebec than in most other provinces, where attending a relatively short certification program is enough to get you most of the way to certification. For example, in Ontario, in order to obtain a Teacher's College Certified, a teacher only needs to "have completed a minimum three-year postsecondary degree from an acceptable postsecondary

institution [and] have successfully completed a four-semester teacher education program”
(<https://www.oct.ca/becoming-a-teacher>).

But the teaching profession is one that calls to many people still, people who, for the most part, possess a sense of duty, compassion and interest in the well being of others strong enough to make them walk the path, regardless of obstacles, long hours, overcrowded classrooms, lack of support and little enough compensation. It is a calling, and this is both a blessing and a curse: it is a blessing because it can bring one a deep sense of fulfillment to perform the duty, and a curse because this very sense of duty is often used to shortchange both teachers and students by administrators, managers, and ministers eager to save a few dollars or toe a political line.

Regardless, many still turn up at the gates eager to be let in, eager to help prepare future generations to face the increasingly treacherous demands of tomorrow. The question then becomes how well-prepared and supported are these bright hopefuls to fulfill their full duty to the students, and take their first steps into the school systems of Quebec? And what of those who may be new to Canada, to Quebec but who also have a wealth of experience and knowledge about teaching? How do these different people, united mainly in their desire to teach, but different in terms of experience, background, and culture come together?

I have a deep interest in the topic of the professional insertion of immigrant teachers in the Québec school system largely because I am also an immigrant. I see reflected in their journeys some of my experiences. Being an immigrant teacher holding a valid teaching permit in my country of origin, Tunisia, I opted to begin anew my education and certification in Québec, and to undertake a four-year bachelor's degree in education in a Canadian university.

Even though I have a bachelor's degree from a Canadian university, and I did my four stages in the Québec school system, the transition from university to school settings was extremely difficult. I was the only ESL teacher at the two schools, and being isolated from other ESL teachers, I did not have colleagues with whom to exchange ideas or feedback. Thus, in addition to the difficulties experienced by novice teachers I, like most immigrant teachers, faced difficulties stemming from the very act of social integration.

All of this made me realize how vulnerable immigrant teachers might feel when they work in the Québec school system for the first time. This vulnerability may be due to a transition into an unknown professional environment, including school cultures, pedagogical practices, and other challenges. Looking back on my journey now, I can say that I feel certain I would not have been adequately prepared to integrate fully into the Québec Education System if I had not followed the path I did; that is to say that I believe it may be prohibitively difficult for many immigrant teachers to successfully integrate directly from their home country's education system.

Research Question

How effective are the Professional Insertion programs (PISs) specifically designed and put in place in 1993 by the Ministry of Education to help new teachers acclimate to the realities of the Quebec classroom? It is worth mentioning that while most private and public-school boards and school centers have put such programs in place, teacher participation in these programs remain, perhaps surprisingly, completely voluntary.

As mentioned above, immigrant teachers in the Québec school system seem to face professional integration challenges that may, in part, have to do with the lack of coherent

strategies that support them throughout their professional insertion process. My goal, then, is to investigate, through interviews with immigrant teachers having benefitted from various components of the Professional Insertion Programs (PIPs) in the school centers in the Greater Montreal Area.

- What do the school centers in the Greater Montreal Area offer in terms of Professional Insertion Programs (PIPs), and what do they entail?
- How do immigrant teachers experience these programs? What aspects do they feel are helpful? Which aspects are counterproductive?
- How do immigrant teachers feel that they might be better prepared by these programs for the challenges they face as new and/or teachers in Quebec?
- Are there barriers to entry that frustrate immigrants who might be interested in participating in these programs?

Chapter Two: Literature Review and the Context of Professional Insertion in Quebec

Introduction

It is worth considering and studying the challenges related to the professional insertion of immigrant teachers. First, as mentioned earlier, Quebec has a critical shortage of teachers for several reasons: a significant number of retirements due to an aging population; regular exodus of prospective teachers after a few years in the profession; and a lack of interest in the profession due to its perceived difficulty, insufficient government investment in education, and the negative image held by the general population, and propagated by a succession of governments during contract negotiations, of the profession in general.

Second, the student body in the Montreal region is increasingly diverse due to the high number of immigrant students that integrate Quebec schools. From a standpoint of both providing role models and diversifying the workplace, it is important, then, for the teaching corps to mirror this increase. Quebec is not alone in this situation, and though the contexts in which immigrant teachers work differ, in Canada and internationally, it is notable that there are several commonalities and shared challenges among the lived experiences of immigrant teachers within the educational system of their host countries.

The thematic organization of these challenges, according to the literature review, are centered on the difficulties that immigrant teachers face in the migration process to the host country and the vicissitudes of their lived experiences during their transitional process. One aspect that makes immigrant teachers particularly vulnerable is due to a transition into an unknown professional environment, including school cultures and pedagogical practices. Deters (2011), when talking about the obstacles faced by immigrant teachers, explains that there is a

strong dichotomy at play between the general need for experienced teachers with various ethnic, geographic, and cultural backgrounds, and the vast number of just such teachers who find themselves blocked from entering the teaching profession in foreign countries (p. 9-10). We can add to these factors the lack of research on the type of specific support that would facilitate the integration of these immigrant teachers.

In the overall literature, it can be observed that there is a consensus that immigrant teachers are not sufficiently prepared to integrate into the education systems of their host countries and that the oversimplified “difference as a deficit” ideology is often the only explanation given for their lack of preparedness. Some scholars also argue that the challenges faced by immigrant teachers must be addressed beyond the “difference as a deficit” ideology, because these arguments ignore the question of structural and institutional barriers that hinder the professional integration of immigrant teachers and put sole responsibility for the problem on the shoulders of these teachers.

The first part of this chapter presents a brief review of the literature related to the professional integration of immigrant teachers in Canada and internationally from 2000 onward and will also provide a brief review of the literature related to immigrant teachers in Québec. The second part of it presents a look into immigrant teachers’ professional trajectories in Quebec as well as a look into the Professional Insertion Programs available to them.

Part I: Literature Review

Studies within Canadian and International Contexts

Studies conducted in Canada and on the international scene generally identify four problematic areas when it comes to professional integration of immigrant teachers within their

host country: the lack of recognition of previous professional qualifications and experience; administrative regulations; racism, and general lack of professional support.

Recognition of Previous Professional Qualifications and Experience

The non-recognition of teachers' credentials and working experience slows down and hinders the professional integration of immigrant teachers, within the job market and within the host society. Walsh, Brigham and Wang (2011) talk about neoliberalism and its influence on the teaching profession, specifically in the context of the United States, and how neoliberalism, a constraining force, is exerting pressure on teaching and teacher education, both in the West, and around the world. Walsh et al. (2011) also note that the 24 internationally educated female participants in their study are affected by the impact of neoliberalism when they embark on a journey of recertification to secure a teaching position in the host country. They are under the effect of neoliberalism because "they are shaped as having unlimited choice in the free market with endless lifelong learning opportunities to 'upgrade', retrain, recertify, and re-credentialing to make themselves more marketable" (p.659).

The authors further explain that these processes of "upgrading, retraining, recertifying, and re-credentialing" look unbiased as far as race, ethnicity, class, and gender are concerned because they are framed as the immigrant teachers' responsibility to upgrade and retrain to qualify for a teaching permit in their host society. Teachers who cannot find success are deemed to have failed themselves in their attempts at self-reinvention (Walsh et al., 2011, p.659).

Consequently, inequalities that are systemically rooted in the dominant social institutions (e.g., gatekeeping mechanisms such as teacher certification bodies, employers' regulations, and universities) that first allow immigrant teachers in under some circumstances and later block

them under others. This leads to “deskilling”, defined by Walsh, Brigham and Wang (2011) as the process by which the experience and education of an immigrant teacher loses its value on the pretext that the content of immigrant teachers’ education is not pertinent to the needs of the host country labour market (p.660).

Administrative Regulations

The recurrent themes across various studies related to the challenges of immigrant teachers in their adaptation to the prevailing cultural patterns of the host society could stem from factors such as teaching practices and culture clash. By analyzing interviews with 31 foreign-educated Latino teachers, Fee (2011) found that problems arose from immigrant Latino teachers’ unfamiliarity with the assessment methods used in American classrooms (pp.392-399). This finding is echoed in Maylor, Hutchings, James, Menter and Smart (2006) who talk about the lived experience of overseas-trained teachers in English schools in London, and how culture clash is an obvious part of that experience (p.2).

Racial Discrimination

Caravatti, Lederer, Lupico and Meter (2014) state that there is “persistent discrimination on many levels” (p.10). According to their survey conducted among 1,358 teachers from 53 home countries, “thirty-four per cent of migrant teacher survey respondents cite discrimination as a moderate to major challenge” (p.10). Bense (2016) explains that episodes of discriminations create powerful barriers that keep immigrant teachers out of top-level positions, as well as general decision-making processes (p.43).

Schmidt (2010) argues that in conversations of integration, the successful integration of immigrants being assessed entirely in terms of immigrants’ responsibilities is problematic

because of the systemic discrimination. He further argues that the underrepresentation of Aboriginal or visible minorities among teachers are examples of the systemic tendency to overvalue the presence of white, non-minority teachers in the system (p.238).

Furthermore, an overall “*difference as deficit*” paradigm prevails, enforcing the assumption that what makes other cultures different is what makes them lesser and that once they have had the luck of being exposed to Canadian superior education system, they should return to their home countries to secure work (Schmidt, 2010, p.245). Another concern is that, since teacher remuneration tends to be commensurate to their professional experience, immigrant teachers with extensive experience may have difficulty securing work due to how high their salary would have to be compared to that of a Canadian-born, inexperienced teacher.

Lack of Professional Support

Miller (2008) discusses the working conditions of overseas-trained teachers in England, and how even though some have been working in England for 10 years or more, the government has yet to fully support and create policies aimed at easing the integration process of these teachers (p.280).

Sharplin (2009) investigated the induction experience of ‘six imported and overseas-qualified teachers’ in Western Australian rural schools. The author highlights how little training they actually receive, and how restrictive the access to this training can be (p.196). Another study conducted by Walsh, Brigham and Wang (2011) explains that internationally educated teachers in Canada are structurally located in the margins of the Canadian educational systems, and that there are currently no systems in place that can effectively accommodate both the applicants’

extensive experience, and their need to be inducted into what is often a radically different system (pp.661-663).

Studies in the Québec Context

Niyubahwe, Mukamurera, and Jutras (2013b) talk about how the concept of Professional Insertion is, at its core, problematic because it is defined differently by teachers, administrators, and researchers. Furthermore, its significance also changes internally depending on whether one focuses on the work (precariousness), institutional (workplace and social cultures), or professional (lack of proper support) aspects of the insertion. They also highlight the significant difference between what immigrant teachers and novice teachers need from insertion support, as well as discrepancies between one school center and another in the services offered for professional insertion (pp. 64-66)

Niyubahwe, Mukamurera, and Jutras (2013a) published review findings that revealed how the professional integration of immigrant teachers in the Québec school system “remains quite controversial” (p.280). Their study highlights the difficulties faced by the Quebec-born teachers in integrating the profession – difficulties that are compounded to new teachers issued from immigration. Oftentimes, these new teachers not only must contend with the bias that their experience and education in their home country is judged insufficient or simply not good enough in Quebec, but they must also contend with the divides of culture and academic systems, and this despite “certain administrative measures” (p.280) that “appear to foster access into the profession for immigrant teaching personnel in Québec” (p.280).

A study investigating the professional integration experience of 13 newly-arrived immigrant teachers in Montréal and Sherbrooke, Niyubahwe (2015) found that the cross-

sectional analysis of the participants' data showed that recently-arrived immigrant teachers face several difficulties adapting to the new physical, social and cultural environment and in the new way of life, and this in addition to bureaucratic obstacles when attempting to secure a teaching permit (p. 2). The next step, securing employment, presents its own integration challenges, especially since no formal measure of welcome or support is put in place to facilitate their integration (p. 2). Once these teachers do find employment, they are then met with a world wholly different from that which they are used to, not only in terms of the curriculum or the cultural aspects, but often in the nature of the relations between themselves and their students, including differences in the pedagogical and hierarchical approach within the classroom (Niyubahwe, 2015, pp. 2-3).

Niyubahwe (2015) explored the difficulties immigrant teachers face in terms of classroom management and adapting to pedagogical practices proper to their new environment, difficulties that usually stem from a lack of knowledge about this environment (p. 276). However, teachers who have benefited from courses, even on a local level, have found them useful in easing their integration into their new professional environment (Niyubahwe, 2015, p. 303).

Part II—An Overview of the Situation of Immigrant Teachers Professional Trajectories and Professional Insertion Programs in Quebec

Beyond the literature, we have the people, and the situation on the ground. In this section, I will take a closer look at the current Professional Trajectories of immigrant teachers in Quebec as well as provide an overview of the Professional Insertion programs themselves.

Immigrant Teachers Professional Trajectories in Quebec

According to the information found on the Quebec Ministry of Education and Higher Education website, immigrants wanting to become teachers in Quebec must follow one of the following professional trajectories.

Immigrants Who Are Teachers in Their Country

Immigrants who have “training in teaching, a school subject or vocational training” and have authorization to teach in their home country must first apply for a teaching licence and receive conditional approval. They then have two years to pass the language examination, and thus be issued a probationary teaching permit, which is valid for five years. Then, to obtain a teaching diploma, they must earn 15 university credits (Ministère de l’Éducation. Immigrer et enseigner au Québec)

- 6 in didactics
- 3 in Québec’s school system
- 3 in the evaluation of learning
- 3 in working with students with handicaps or learning difficulties.
- They must serve a probationary period of 600 to 900 hours.

In vocational training, only the 3 credits in Québec’s school system and the probationary period are required. (Ministère de l’Éducation. Immigrer et enseigner au Québec)

Immigrants Who Are Not Teachers in Their Country

These fall into three categories.

Immigrants Who Have Training in a School Subject

Immigrant teachers who hold bachelor’s degrees in certain subjects, such as mathematics and English may contact a Francophone Quebec university to ascertain the equivalency of their degrees. Most may need to do a qualifying master’s degree. “You can become a teacher in

Québec if you have a bachelor's degree in a school subject such as mathematics, chemistry, English or music, even if you are not currently a teacher" (Ministère de l'Éducation. Immigrer et enseigner au Québec).

Immigrants Who Have Training Related to Preschool Education Services

- Immigrants with diplomas in early childhood education or preschool education services can aim for a career in preschool and elementary school education, if they meet certain conditions:
- Have accumulated 3000 hours of experience as a preschool educator or teacher.
- Be enrolled in a preschool and elementary school teacher education program that enables you to work and study at the same time.
- Then, they can apply for a provisional teaching licence. (Ministère de l'Éducation. Immigrer et enseigner au Québec)

Immigrants Who Have Completed Vocational Training

- Immigrants who hold a Diploma of Vocational Studies can make a career change and become a vocational training teacher, providing they meet the following two conditions:
- Have 3000 hours of practical or teaching experience directly related to the trade or occupation to be taught
- Complete a bachelor's degree in vocational training at the university of your choice (In French), which you can do while working if you apply for a provisional teaching licence (Ministère de l'Éducation. Immigrer et enseigner au Québec).

Professional Insertion Programs (PIPs) in Quebec

The information presented in the *Rapport de reddition de comptes* (2017-2018) come from a questionnaire survey to which the 69 school boards¹: French-speaking school boards (60) and English-speaking school boards (9) in Quebec were invited to take part in. According to the

¹ Note on nomenclature: When I began researching and writing this paper, Quebec still had school boards. On June 15, 2020, the French-language school boards became school centres (although the English ones remain School Boards for now). To avoid any confusion, this paper will refer to the new nomenclature exclusively throughout, except in one specific section which will be clearly indicated.

above report, 63% of what was then known as school boards have officially adopted a Professional Insertion Programs, and that school boards that did not have an official Professional Insertion Programme in place were offering support measures for their new teachers (p.1). The report summarizes some of the most frequently asked questions about the Professional Insertion Programs in Quebec.

Understanding Professional Insertion Programs (PIPs) is much more difficult to do in Quebec than it is in several other provinces. The biggest hurdle was the absence of official documents on the PIPs published on the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's website. There is, in fact, no official Ministry of Education Inductions Manual for PIPs. Thus, all the information referred to in this paper about PIPs is obtained from two reports: the first one is entitled the *Mise en place de programmes d'insertion pour le personnel enseignant, rapports de reddition de comptes* (2014 -2015; 2016-2017); and the second one is the *Rapport des Programmes et mesures d'insertion professionnelle mis en place dans les commissions scolaires* (CollectInfo, 2017-2018).

These two documents are made available to the public under access to information act requests; however, these two documents do not include the name of the people who initially made the request. They include information sent by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Quebec, department of *la formation et de la titularisation du personnel scolaire* under two requests for access to documents held by the Ministry number 16310/17-374 and 16310/20-47. The two requests called for information about the *Rapport de reddition de comptes le plus récent concernant la mise en place de programmes d'insertion pour le personnel enseignant* and

tout autre document ou rapport qui porte sur l’insertion professionnelle des enseignants dans les commissions scolaires du Québec, et plus précisément, permettant de documenter la persévérance ou le décrochage des nouveaux enseignants lors de leurs premières années d’emploi dans les commissions scolaires Québécoise (Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Quebec, 2018).

- 63% of School Boards had a program in 2017-2018, and in most, it was the Principal or Vice-Principal who oversaw it at the school level.
- 97% of school boards spent money allocated by the Ministry of Education to school boards to adopt or establish an official PIP; 29% spent all the money they received, while 44% had to spend more. Most of the money went to websites, flyers, meetings and welcome kits, while very little went to the creation of a plan for communication.
- These programs included: mentorship, training to support teachers, workshops, groups for the creation of pedagogical activities, creation of professional learning communities, support groups, specific help aimed at teachers in precarious standing, and the development of tools for novice teachers.
- The number of teachers who benefited from the PIPs across all levels: 440 in pre-school; 4080 in elementary schools; 1399 in secondary; 146 in adult education; and 378 in vocational training.
- Other highlights include the following information: 59 school boards have named a resource person; 38 have a plan handed out to new teachers; 32 have a committee established to deal with the PIPs.

In the second document obtained through Access of Information, the *Rapport de reddition de compte 2017-2018*, we find a list of several constraints faced by school boards in the process of implementing PIPs. As many as 45 School Boards mentioned at least 1 constraint in successfully implementing PIP. Mostly, these constraints fell under two headings:

1) Budgetary – School Boards cited a lack of financial resources to support teachers and respond to their needs, as well as the impact of this lack of resources on staffing – specifically when it came to the hiring of pedagogical counsellors, providing release time for experienced teachers to act as mentors, and hiring the substitutes to replace teachers who needed to attend the various workshops.

2) Organizational – some of the difficulties were in disseminating information and keeping up-to-date records of new teachers and of their progress. Several school boards requested that some form of software or database be created so that they might better keep track of where each new teacher is at in their progress, but this has yet to be addressed.

These reports do not have specific numbers of immigrant teachers who took part in the program because they are included in the category of new teachers. The dominant modes of information dissemination about the Professional Insertion Programmes used by the school boards who have officially adopted a Professional Insertion Programme among new teachers are school boards' websites, brochures, social media, during meetings, educational kits intended for new teachers, career fairs and/or days, information displays in schools (p.4).

In conclusion, most PIPs are only available to teachers with contract or poste – essentially to those who already possess anywhere from 1 to 4 years of experience. As such, they

are rarely easily accessible to teachers recently immigrated. This situation is in fact pretty dire according to Lamontagne (2006)

Nous remarquons qu'une organisation permet l'accès à son programme après 400 jours d'enseignement. Dans le cas d'enseignants en début de carrière, cela peut représenter 3 ou 4 années de suppléance, et ce, sans accompagnement. Ce constat est fort troublant ! Le débutant sans accompagnement, a ainsi le temps de prendre certaines façons de faire plus expéditives et pas toujours en conformité avec la réforme scolaire. (p.78)

It is thus the ones who need more support – and who actually have time to attend workshops and training – that regularly lack access to it. Many of these teachers move from one school to another, sometimes teaching different subjects and dealing with different administrations and different colleagues. The situation itself is as precarious as can be, and they are asked to perform without any sort of formal support. What is truly egregious also is that often, these teachers will spend several years in precarious positions – and as we will see further in Chapter Five, it's more often immigrant teachers who find themselves in this situation.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

Not much is known about the full extent of the immigrant teachers' professional insertion experience in the Quebec French school centers; this study aims to correct this by giving a voice to eight immigrant teachers, allowing them to tell their stories about the Professional Insertion Programs (PIPs) put in place to help them integrate their work environment. The study will locate the experience of these immigrant teachers, based on the teachers' accounts in an institutional context being the school centers in the Greater Montreal Area. Their stories will add to the stories of other immigrant teachers speaking out about their professional insertion experiences. It is my hope that these new voices can continue to further our understanding of the situation and provide further answers or avenues of research. Given the considerable documented literature on the challenges faced by immigrant teachers once they integrate the workplace in their host societies, the main purpose of this study is first to investigate the Professional Insertion Programs put in place by the school centers in the Greater Montreal Area to help train newly-immigrated teachers in the French school centers, and second, to describe newly-immigrated teachers' experiences with the established Professional Insertion Programs (PIP). In this chapter, the following information will be presented and discussed. First, the research method used in the study; second, the participants; third, data gathering; and finally, data analysis.

Methodology and Research design

The qualitative research approach used in this study is an interpretive phenomenological approach, which was purposefully chosen because interpretative phenomenology "is a qualitative approach which aims to provide detailed examinations of personal lived experience" and does so in "its own terms rather than one prescribed by pre-existing theoretical preconceptions" (Smith & Osborn, 2015, pp. 41–42). This approach is used when "the research question asks for the

meaning of the phenomenon and the researcher does not bracket their biases and prior engagement with the question under study” (Reiners, 2012, p.2). I have chosen this approach since I am examining the Professional Insertion Programs through the immigrant teachers’ stories and perspectives. This study also looks at how the institutions they are housed within structure the professional insertion of immigrant teachers, how the insertion programs help integrate immigrant teachers, and how these practices support those purposes.

I want to highlight the dynamics between institutional challenges and institutional efforts in integrating immigrant teachers, and how these affect aspects of teachers’ professional insertion experiences. Conducting this type of close investigation of the lived experience of immigrant teachers in the Professional Insertion Program allows for a more robust understanding of the insertion process from firsthand accounts of those who experienced the process rather than second-hand stories about it.

Setting

From the onset, I intended this study to be a Case Study taking into accounts both the administrators’ point-of-view as well as the lived experiences of several immigrant teachers from the Laval School Center to lend a voice to a group that I felt was marginalized in discussions concerning them. However, circumstances have led to the setting changing to no longer incorporating the administrator’s point-of-view, but to include respondents not only from the Laval area, but also the Greater Montreal area. My goal was never to point the finger at neither the academic institutions in Quebec nor the government. I was aware that it might seem as if I was trying to get a “gotcha” moment, where I could draw some negative aspects of the Government or the school centers’ work into light and show how the systems were rigged against immigrants. This was never my intention, and I took pains to make sure that my approach

was balanced and neutral, even admitting to my own bias as an immigrant teacher in the section concerned with ethics in my proposal.

With good faith, I reached out to the Laval School Center (at that time still a school board) through a personal contact. From what I had heard, the Laval School Center was way ahead of the Montreal School Center in terms of providing support and training for new teachers, including immigrant teachers. I planned to show how it was possible for the school centers to provide adequate support to new teachers and immigrant teachers, by studying its Professional Insertion Program. After a few promising first exchanges, however, I was abruptly and summarily rebuffed and told in no uncertain terms that I would not be receiving the cooperation of the Laval School Center.

I first contacted a resource person at the Laval School Center through personal contact (a teacher from the Laval School Center). The first person I spoke with was amicable and helpful, and agreed to provide whatever resources I needed. I was put in touch with a Pedagogical Counsellor, someone who actually worked in the Laval Professional Insertion Program. I spoke with the Pedagogical Counsellor on the phone on the 27th of June 2019 and got verbal confirmation that they would help me. After securing my Certification of Ethical Acceptability from Concordia, I sent the pedagogical counsellor a formal invitation by email to participate in the research on the 4th of July 2020. On July the 6th I received a response that after “discussion with [the CP’s] assistant director, they “would not be able to help [me] with my research project”.

The sense I got from this is that there was perhaps an expectation that I would be trying to entrap them, to use their own policies to illustrate some failings on their part – when I was actually hoping to use their program as a sort of example of how successful such program can be.

The Pedagogical Counsellor and the first contact person had seemed keen to help, and it was only once when the request was moved further up the administrative chain that the gatekeeping began. Needless to say, this sudden reversal left me stranded. How was I to present a balanced and complete case study if I was missing important information about one whole side? I was lucky to find, thanks to Access to Information, some valuable documents that helped me get a clear picture of the Professional Insertion Programs. It was always important to me to give a clear view of what the Insertion programs offered, since there seemed to be a clear and sustainable effort from the government to support new teachers.

Participants

The most important step in this study design was to find the appropriate participants. My participants' selection in this phenomenological qualitative study includes eight immigrant teachers. I chose this number based on Wong and Lohfeld (2008) explanation that "in qualitative studies, sample size is based on achieving information saturation (the point where no further new information is gleaned from data sources). In phenomenology, information saturation is typically achieved with sample sizes of 6 to 10 participants" (p.53).

Eligible participants for this study are recent immigrant teachers, by which I refer to teachers who were trained outside Canada, fulfilled teaching job requirements in Quebec, obtained a probationary teaching permit and/or permanent teaching licence, and have been working for at least 5 years in a Quebec school centers. Eligible participants are currently employed by a school center in the greater Montreal area; are currently enrolled - or have already completed - the various components of the professional insertion program offered by the school centers of the greater Montreal area; or are currently enrolled - or have already completed - one

or more professional insertion component since they started working for a school center in the greater Montreal area.

Immigrant teachers were purposefully sampled; for as Glesne (2016) explains, “the logic and power of purposeful sampling [...] leads to selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (p.50). I applied two different purposeful sampling strategies, namely a “homogeneous sampling” Glesne, 2016, p.51), (and an “extreme or deviant case sampling” (Glesne, 2016, p.51) . The use of “homogeneous sampling” aims to understand and describe the professional experience of six immigrant teachers in the Quebec school centers. These six immigrant teachers fulfilled all the selection criteria. These teachers are similar in terms of background and professional insertion experience, and these commonalities will lead to a homogenous sampling that will enable me to study this group in depth.

I also used a “deviant case sampling” by selecting two immigrant teachers who are also recent immigrant teachers, who have probationary teaching permits and/or permanent teaching permits, and have been working for at least 5 years in a Quebec school center, who are currently employed by a school center in the greater Montreal area, were enrolled in the PIP of their school center but did not benefit from any of the PIP components because the PIP content did not correspond to their students’ profile and needs (their students being immigrant children who did not speak French). The aim of using this “deviant case sampling” is to compare these two groups of participants who share the same background but follow different professional trajectories in terms of their professional insertion in the Quebec French school centers. This was useful in determining what other options, or paths, were available to immigrant teachers entering

the academic sector in Quebec. Using two different purposeful sampling strategies helped me learn about different perspective related to my research question.

I recruited participants by sending a study email invitation to my personal contacts in the profession, and through social media groups dedicated to teachers who fit my eligibility criteria. Then, I replied to teachers who fit the eligibility criteria and who were interested in taking part in my study. The consent forms were sent together with the response to study email invitation that included information about participation requirement, namely, to take part in a 90-minute interview outside of school property and outside of work hours, and to sign and return the consent form before the interview date. I was able to secure four participants for my study; all were recent immigrants who have become teachers in Quebec, either with what was then known as the Commission Scolaire De Laval, or the Commission Scolaire De Montreal. I either already knew these teachers after having worked with them, or I found them through personal contacts in the school system. It was difficult to find other participants that fit my eligibility criteria in times of Covid, and that was why I used the snowball sampling technique, namely to “obtain knowledge of potential cases from people who know people who meet research interests” (Glesne, 2016, p.51). The use of the snowballing technique enabled me to secure four more eligible participants to take part in my study.

I had originally planned to do in-person interviews, but once the pandemic began, I instead proceeded with interviews online, through video conferencing. I met each participant for two hours online and bearing in mind the ethical guidelines of Concordia university, we first went through the different clauses of the consent form, namely the purpose, the procedure, the risk and benefits of the research, confidentiality and how to enforce it, and the condition of participation.

The purpose of the study was presented to the participants: to provide immigrants' point-of-view on, and experiences with, the professional insertion program they are enrolled in or have completed in their school center of the greater Montreal area. The procedure of the study consisted of semi-structured interview questions related to the immigrant teachers' professional insertion programs offered by participants' school center. Participants were informed that the interviews would be audio taped for later transcription.

I crafted the interview questions around my research questions, meaning that I created questions meant to provide information related to each of my Research Questions – first by breaking down my research questions into parts, and then creating sub-questions for each part. In this way I was able to not only maintain the focus on the original goals of the research, but I also insured that I would have pertinent information for each sub-section.

The interview questions were separated into five sections, each related in some way to this study's research questions. The first group of questions sought to establish details about the path each respondent followed toward first being hired as a teacher in Quebec, and sought to discover what, if any, obstacles occurred along the way. The second set of questions investigated if there were any barriers immigrant teachers had to overcome to access the professional insertion programs. The third group investigated the insertion programs themselves, what they offered, and what issues they were meant to resolve, while the fourth group dove more directly into how these immigrant teachers experienced these programs, and how they felt about them. Finally, the sixth set of questions asked the respondents for suggestions concerning how the programs might have better assisted them in preparing to become teachers in Quebec.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the homogenous and deviant group of teachers following the interview questions I had prepared, though the conversational style of the

interviews often meant that we would go back and forth over some questions. These interviews helped me understand how these teachers make sense of their experience of professional insertion within this structure of the school centers and what they think of the question under study.

Participant Profiles²

Participant 1 – Aymen, 39, originally from Algeria. He taught English in University in his home country for eight years before emigrating to Canada. He now teaches English as a second language in Quebec, and this since 2015.

Participant 2- Cecilia, 31, is originally from France, and is a multi-disciplinary teacher who taught for two years in her country of origin and has now been teaching in Quebec for a year.

Participant 3 - Karim, 46, taught English in both Tunisia, his home country, and Kuwait for a combined 17 years, before immigrating to Quebec. He has now been teaching ESL in Quebec for 4 years.

Participant 4 – Walid, 46, taught in Egypt (his country of origin) and Kuwait for a combined 13 years, before immigrating to Quebec, where he has now been teaching ESL for 4 years

Participant 5 – Yasmine, 38, was a Pedagogical Assistant in France for nearly four years after immigrating there from Algeria. She has since been teaching French in Quebec for over four years.

Participant 6 – Sara, 38, taught ESL in Egypt for 8 years before immigrating, and now teaches ESL in Quebec, and has been doing so for over three years.

² Only pseudonyms are used.

Participant 7 – Sammy, 44, born in Algeria, taught FSL there for six years. He now teaches the same here in Quebec and has been doing so for six years.

Participant 8 - Lamia, 54, is in the interesting position of having taught at three different school centers, namely Laval School Center, Montreal School Center, and Pointe-de-l'Île School Center (formerly school boards) here in Quebec over the last 8 years. In Algeria, her home country, she was a math teacher for 18 years before immigrating.

Data Collection

Data collection followed the procedures of interpretive phenomenology. I used semi-structured interviews and recorded the narrative interviews with the permission of the participants. While conducting the interviews, I also took notes about the interviewees' auxiliary information such as voice, intonation, body language etc. Interviews were conducted in French. Participants were given a choice between English and French, and they all felt comfortable using French. Whenever each interview was completed, I transcribed it. As such, my data was drawn from the written transcripts of the interview, as well as from information collected from the school centers websites. Also, to describe professional insertion programs within school centers, I collected data through the analysis of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education documents from "la Direction de l'accès à l'information et des plaintes", which was available in open access. I used, as Glesne (2016) suggests, "multiple data -collection methods which is the most common form of triangulation, triangulation also refers to the incorporation of multiple kinds of data source [...] to help deepen interpretations and understanding" (p.45).

Data Analysis

I followed Hycner's (1985) guidelines to analyze the data, which he constructed through "a number of years of teaching phenomenological research classes... and trying to be true to the phenomenon of interview data" (p. 280). These guidelines specify different steps of data analysis: transcription; bracketing and the phenomenological reduction; delineating units of general meaning; determining themes from clusters of meaning; Writing a summary for each individual interview; and finally, determining general and unique themes for all the interviews and writing a composite summary (Hycner, 1985, p. 280). A detailed explanation of each of these steps follows.

Transcription

The interviews were open spaces where I let the participants tell their stories. Once the interviews were completed, I began the long process of transcribing them. The process was long mostly because of the nature of the interviews, which had often been conversations more than simple answer-questions. I did a first pass, transcribing everything verbatim, before going through them again to eliminate things such as pauses, or bits of discussion that were not germane to the interview. Once the transcriptions were finished, I submitted them to each participant and asked them to verify them and sign off on them. I wanted to make sure that the information represented in the transcribed text are the same raw data expressed by the participants during the interview sessions.

Bracketing and Phenomenological Reduction

This was achieved by stepping away from my own expectations and bias, and immersing myself in my interview subjects' stories, and their points-of-view.

Delineating Units of General Meaning

The “units of general meaning” are the responses provided by the participants, in their own words. For this step, I created worksheet in Excel and extracted the answers to each question, from each participant. By this I mean that I created a board that allowed me to have the answers of each participant to, for example, the first interview question, side by side for easy comparison. I did this for each question, copying each participant's answers to them side by side. This allowed me to quickly see the similarities and differences in their responses, spot patterns, and see themes begin to emerge.

Determining Themes from Clusters of Meaning

In this phase, I begin to draw out and group together meaningful information from the participants’ responses into themes allowing me to identify significant topics. I did this by comparing the verbatim answers of the respondents to my research questions and ensuring that their responses were direct results of the questions.

Writing a Summary for Each Individual Interview

Here, I drew out major recurring themes, and began grouping together the units of meaning based around these themes, noting which overlapped, and which were more circumstantial. I summarized the responses, drawing out the salient details as they connected to the themes that were arising from the interviews, and began building a general overview portrait of the interview responses, and how they compared to each other.

General and Unique Emergent Themes and Summarization Process

Thus, once the above-mentioned board was completed, I was able to start going through each question one-by-one and start drawing conclusions from the answers I had received. I made

lists, noting the elements that were similar (for example, most participants highlighted how helpful Pedagogical Counsellors were), those that were different, and began getting a sense of what each participant's experience in the insertion process was. This is where the major themes truly began to image, and a more concrete image of where the research would take me was drawn.

Now, with the major themes having emerged, I proceeded to create a composite summary of the responses, providing a glimpse into "'world" in general, as experienced by the participants" (Hycner,1985, p. 294) bringing their stories, perceptions, and experiences to the forefront, and allowing their voices to emerge. The clusters were summarized and synthesized, allowing me to begin drawing conclusions from the data. Several major themes emerged, ideas repeated often by several – and in some cases all – participants.

Phenomenological Research and Validity

Hycner (1985) explains that "a number of issues ... inevitably arise in the implementation of a phenomenological research method" and that "every phenomenological researcher must be able to address" (p.294).

Accuracy of the Responses

The first step of validation is to verify with the respondents themselves the accuracy of the response. Once the transcriptions were finished, I submitted them to each participant and asked them to verify them and sign off on them. I wanted to make sure that the information represented in the transcribed text are the same raw data expressed by the participants during the interview sessions.

Subjectivity and the Researcher

On the question of maintaining a neutral stance, I should here note a possible personal bias of which I am aware of, and which I took pains to eliminate from my approach to this project. I believe that school centers cannot integrate immigrant teachers in the Francophone school system in the same way they integrate novice teachers who have been educated in Quebec. I think that the help immigrant teachers get from school centers should be more individualized, targeting needs particular to these immigrant teachers – just as the help novice teachers get is targeted to their specific needs. I believe that the transition from the immigrants' home country education system to the Francophone school system is challenging without this individualized support. I am also aware of how my closeness and personal attachment to my topic may sow certain obstacles in my analysis.

While we may share similar backgrounds and journeys, I remained cautious to let their voices tell their own stories. I believe that ultimately my closeness and personal attachment to my topic will also prove an advantage, allowing me to reach a certain level of understanding about this subject. Finally, my goal is to discover ways to better help immigrant teachers integrate into the Quebec school system, and it would be disingenuous of me to disregard out of hand any discoveries that would achieve this goal, even if they do not fit in with my general outlook on the subject.

Retrospective Viewpoint

Another criticism that could be levied here is that of the “retrospective viewpoint”, where the participant is sometimes too far removed from the experience to provide a full and accurate picture of it. However, among the participants to this study, we have two (Cecilia and Karim)

who are (at the time of the study) during their participation in the PIP, thus providing this study with a comparison point that should minimize issues arising from “retrospective viewpoint” (Hycner,1985, p.295).

Chapter Four: Findings

In this chapter, I will present the conclusions drawn from the research performed during this study. It will become clear what is offered by the various school centers in terms of PIPs, and I will also examine the experiences of the immigrant teachers who participated in them.

However, before we dive into discussion about the PIPs in Quebec, it is perhaps preferable to define certain terms that will recur often in the rest of the paper, namely that of Pedagogical Counsellor and Resource Teacher, the better to differentiate the two.

Pedagogical Counsellor

According to the University of Sherbrooke website, (<https://www.usherbrooke.ca>), the role of a pedagogical counselor (referred to as CP in this document from the French, *Conseiller pédagogique* includes:

- Advise school staff on educational, pedagogical, or didactic practices in the context of problem solving, coaching or advisory role.
- Train the teaching staff and other school staff regarding educational, pedagogical, or didactic objects by explaining in class or by supporting the staff within the organization (school center and/or schools).
- Accompany school personnel in a context of collaboration or mobilization to better support the improvement of educational, pedagogical, or didactic practices.
- Innovate in education, pedagogy, and didactics in the context of research or development

(<https://www.usherbrooke.ca>).

The CPs are specialists whose role is entirely devoted to the support of other education professionals. As I discovered through this study, they are a highly prized and very effective means of support for new teachers in general, but also specifically for immigrant teachers.

Resource Teacher

According to the Centre de Transfert pour la Réussite Educative du Québec (CTREQ), the four spheres referred to when talking about the role of Resource Teachers are: differentiation, support, regulation and collegiality, and the role (as created in 2005) is defined in the collective agreements as follows:

- Follow up with ADHD students.
- Assume supervisory role and support for these students.
- Work in concert with teachers and others. (<https://www.ctreq.qc.ca/>)

In short, they are colleagues who are often assigned as a contact person for new teachers. They act one-on-one with students and/or new teachers they are assigned to, but also organize workshops, and offer other forms of support, as required – through their role is not specifically or uniquely devoted to helping their charges, and they maintain a percentage of their workload as teachers.

What follows is an analysis of interviews conducted with eight immigrant teachers who have participated in PIPs or have benefitted from some of their components. These PIPs were offered by two school centres in the Grand Montreal area, namely the Montreal School Centre and the Laval School Centre.

Several key themes emerged from the coding process, and in relation to the research questions, and will be addressed as follows:

- 1) Section 1: PIPs Measures and their Impact on Participants
- 2) Section 2: Social & Cultural Integration
- 3) Conclusion

In my study, some respondents had (3) heard about Professional Insertion Programs through the school principal; others through info sessions (2) or their Pedagogical Counsellor (2). Finally, one respondent heard about the programs through the school center's website and via communications by the people running the programs.

When analysing the interview manuscript, there is a variation in the way the eight participants benefited from the measures of the PIPs in their school center. A whole section of the interview questions was devoted to the description of the PIPs measures that the participants experienced and whether these measures relate to or have a connection to immigrant teachers' learning and integration in their workplace. The measures that are frequently referred to in the participants' interviews are: educational workshops led by experienced peers or pedagogical counsellors, mentorship or individual support and lesson planning or preparation of educational activities done in collegiality. Our further analysis will focus on these measures, as they are the ones encountered by our respondents.

Section 1: PIP Measures and their Impact on Participants

Workshops

In the context of the Montreal School Centre, several respondents (4) attended different workshops related to the use of technology in the classroom, pedagogical and educational practices to be favored in underprivileged and multi-ethnic communities, specifically in

Montreal. Other workshops were devoted to exploring and developing effective communicative strategies when dealing with parents; walking new teachers through the process of planning their class content and activities, as well as the evaluation of the students; effective classroom management; and familiarizing teachers with the concept of the integration of students with special needs in the regular classrooms and IP.

Three out of eight respondents felt that the workshops were effective and efficient, with Sara likening the workshops to “road signs to help us immigrant teachers navigate through the maze of teaching”. Walid explained that “the professional insertion program was a great place to [get] answers [to] questions [commonly asked by] immigrant teachers like me”, adding that they had received answers to all their questions, as well as suggestions on how to improve their teaching. They found that “the trainings were extremely useful”.

Others were less impressed. Cecilia explained that she was “expecting information concerning the school culture in Quebec”, information that would help her “get to know [her] students, the programs but especially [her] colleagues” and would “help on the cultural level”.

Cecilia further explained that the usefulness of the workshops appears to be tied to the needs of novice teachers, and that the usefulness of the workshops appears to be tied to the needs of novice teachers, and that “only those two out of 60 workshops seemed valuable. None of the rest was really related to immigrant teachers”. the two workshops she mentioned did help her with the evaluation of her students but had nothing to offer on the cultural level.

Yasmine and Sammy - who teach in the program of Intégration Linguistique Scolaire et Sociale “ILSS” also known as les classes d’accueil” – a program aimed at helping newly-arrived non-francophone students with French – did not take part in any of the workshops offered by the

PIP program simply because the content did not suit their students' profile. For these two respondents, there was no official help; they relied on colleagues. Teachers helped each other out, sharing materials. There was no class material prepared for them. They were eventually put in contact with CPs by school principal. The help they received from the linguistic, educational, and social integration program CP was more useful than the Montreal School Centre PIP workshops, according to these two participants. The CPs ran their own workshops focused on helping teachers with preparing classwork and offering a general look at how to establish a routine.

Lamia and Aymen, two respondents for the Laval School Centre, attended workshops offered by the Laval PIP. Lamia explained that, for her 1st experience of the the Laval PIP « j'en ai fait 8 formations, j'ai choisi celles qui répondaient à mes besoins par exemple la formation qui est en rapport avec les milieux multiethniques défavorisées et une autre formation par rapport à comment adapter nos compétences pour les enseignants qui viennent d'ailleurs ». Aymen attended workshops about behaviour management for special needs students; evaluating special needs students, especially the concepts of flexibility, accommodation, and modification; exploring and using several reading & writing softwares in the classroom; effective classroom management; and the specific reality of teaching multiple groups. Aymen said that there are some options that are particularly useful to immigrant teachers as far as workshops are concerned, but mostly the content of the training targets new teachers in general, and not immigrant teachers specifically. He felt that very few of the options addressed his needs either as an immigrant teacher, or an English specialist.

Aymen also attended workshops offered by the Carrefour national de l'insertion professionnelle en enseignement (CNIPE). The CNIPE is an organisation funded by the Quebec

Ministry of Education and has a national role in the integration of novice teachers. The CNIPE also acts as a sort of nexus for all the various professional bodies involved with the issue of teachers' professional insertion in Quebec. Its mandate is to

advise and support school administrators in the implementation of practices, programs or mechanisms for teachers' professional insertion, communicate, disseminate and promote to teachers and all stakeholders the resources relating to the professional insertion, keep the portrait of professional integration in Quebec up to date" (<http://www.cnipe.ca>).

According to Aymen, the workshops offered by the CNIPE were more focused on the needs of immigrant teachers. He explained however, that these programs were not covered by the Laval School Centre, and as such he did not get release time to attend them but had to do so on his own time. Respondent felt they were very useful and more focused on their specific needs.

Positive Effects of Workshops and issues

Three of the respondents – Cecilia, Sara and Walid - indicated improvement in some core aspects of their teaching - namely class management, student evaluation, and meeting/communicating with parents. However, while some found some help from the workshops, mostly it was experience and assistance from their colleagues and CPs that really helped respondents. Three respondents, in this case Aymen, Yasmine and Sammy, also underlined the fact that the workshops were useful in helping them better understand administrative practices.

While several respondents found some useful information in the workshops, two major issues emerge in their responses: first, most indicate that the information and training provided in the workshops are offered by the school center is broad, general information, mostly geared

towards new teachers and seldom focused on the specific needs of immigrant teachers, or the reality of the classroom. Aymen explained that workshops are offered to « tous les nouveaux enseignants [...] mais généralement les formations ciblent tous les nouveaux enseignants d'ici ou issus d'immigration, puisque ceux issus d'immigration sont considérés comme nouveaux enseignants. Les formations n'abordent pas les défis rencontrés par les profs formés à l'étranger».

When asked to describe the different workshop activities he attended, and how many of these did address his concerns related to his status of beginner teacher, Karim stated that « j'ai fait deux formations sur l'utilistation des outils technologiques, une formation liée a la pédagogie, une formation liée a la gestion de classe. J'ai fait une formation sur les élèves en difficultés et une sur l'évaluation », which he said were useful, but these were aimed at novice teachers in general, and did not target issues specific to immigrant teachers.,

The other major issue is in relation to the scheduling of the workshops, which are often offered at night. The reason for this is the lack of substitute teachers, which doesn't allow for the teachers to be liberated during the day to attend workshops. Attending these workshops by night, after full days of work, in addition to all other duties that need the teachers' attention, is often very difficult. Some have suggested that they should be offered during Pedagogical Days to make attendance more feasible.

Individualized Resources

One of the most important patterns to emerge from the interviews is the importance of having one-on-one contact with a resource person. This person is usually a Mentor, a Pedagogical Counsellor, Other Teachers, and School Principals are also mentioned.

Mentor

Four respondents had a mentor at their workplace within the Montreal School Centre. They had a positive experience/relationship with their mentors. Respondents thought that workplace mentoring program is an excellent asset of the Insertion Training Program. Karim explained that he had supports of a mentor teacher at his school. He further explained that for him, the focal point of the professional insertion program was its mentorship program. He benefited a lot from mentor/mentee exchanges. Respondent asked Montreal School Centre to be matched with a mentor when he switched from an ESL to a homeroom teacher, as being attached to one group of students and teaching subjects other than ESL was a whole new experience for him. Mentorship program is extended to 3 years as long as respondent is still eligible for the PIP.

Lamia had a successful mentorship experience in her 1st school. « Dans le cadre de l'insertion professionnelle, pendant ce contrat de 6 mois j'ai juste eu un mentor et l'accompagnement était un accompagnement agréable ». The mentor helped with planning and preparing the participant for her 1st evaluation, was available to answer any questions she had, and "l'accompagnatrice m'a aidé avec le côté psychologique, le côté psychologique est très important vous savez".

When asked about specific examples of what other help the school centers could have offered them, participants who did not have mentors often mentioned them. For example, Sammy said that it would be useful to have "access to a mentor", at least for the first few months, and one more "specifically tailored to the new teachers". Yasmine explained that the "greatest help would be to have a mentor, specifically someone issued from the Quebec academic system, assigned to immigrant teachers.... a resource person directly accessible, and knowledgeable". Cecilia also highlighted the importance of "hav[ing] an official mentor for

weekly or even monthly meetings, someone who is knowledgeable about the various services, etc. Someone to help with pedagogical, administrative and social integration issues”.

Pedagogical Counsellor

Several respondents (4) highlighted help received from a CP, and all found that contact person very helpful. Two participants (the respondents who teach in the program *Intégration Linguistique Scolaire et Sociale* (referred to in the workshop section) did attend workshops provided by a CP, although it should be noted that this help was not provided within the framework of a PIP. According to the participants, these workshops aimed at helping them with how to prepare classwork, a general look at how to establish a routine. The two respondents explained that the CP Facebook page became an invaluable resource for them. When asked about the kind of advice they would give to other immigrants who are considering becoming teachers in Quebec, they said “get in touch with your CP as soon as possible.” Several respondents emphasized the value of the CPs (3) and specifically noted their superiority to peer mentors, as mentors are rarely teaching the same subjects as our participants mentees, and thus can help very little with content and evaluation.

Resource Teacher

During Lamia’s first experience with the insertion program in the Laval School Centre, she had access to two resource teachers. Lamia’s resource teachers held info sessions about special events occurring in the school and workshops about varied subjects (how to fill out report cards, etc.) during lunchtime. There were three immigrant teachers in the group; Lamia would have preferred an individual session. She also noted that the two resource teachers decided on content of information or workshops and did not consult with the three new immigrant teachers

what their needs were. Aymen was also critical of the resource teachers. He noted, “many don't really do much work. Most don't even come in class to see the teacher's reality, which would be a great help. It would help also if they were trained specifically in helping immigrant teachers and their reality.”

Other Types of Non-PIP Resource Persons

Most respondents indicated meeting with Principals as first point of contact. Five respondents report this in a positive light. One respondent said they didn't get much help, but the principal was new. Vice-Principals (VPs) are generally praised. In bigger schools with Vice-Principals, for example, the VPs have more time to devote to new teachers than Principals do. Sara indicated being well received and "encadré" with a welcoming committee and staff orientation meetings.

Other participants relied more on help from their colleagues. Cecilia, however, mentioned not receiving any organized help and making do with a support group made of other new teachers, while Yasmine relied on a colleague who had less experience but was Quebec-born. Generally, colleagues are praised as being easy to get along with. All but one respondent found their colleagues kind and helpful; it is worth noting that the one respondent who found them cold and unfriendly wears a veil, though of course it's impossible to ascertain whether this was a determining factor in her interactions.

Most workshops seem to be either helpful or not aimed at the specific needs of immigrant teachers or scheduled at inopportune times. Four respondents mentioned a Mentor Teacher. Two out of the four respondents did find their mentorship experience helpful, the other two, and because of their subject matter, find mentors unable to really help. Two respondents mentioned a

Resource Teachers. These respondents did find this of limited helpfulness as Resource Teachers were either poorly trained or uninterested in the job. While some did find some help from the workshops and mentorship, the main source of help seems to come from CPs, who are trained for the job and devoted to it. The CPs, dedicated personnel, seem to be the most helpful of all available resources, and it seems that personal attention makes a difference for our participants.

Conclusion

There is significant variation of what immigrant teachers think of their intake of the PIP measures they received and whether these measures did adequately address the issues they, as immigrant teacher, were facing or not. Some participants (Aymen, Cecilia, Lamia) think that the PIP measures did help in their professional insertion, but more in terms of general assistance than with any specific issues faced by immigrant teachers. These participants felt that the PIP programs are good in general but lack the type of more focused and individualized help they require. For example, Ahmed, Sarra and Walid think that “there was not real help focused on needs as immigrant teacher. There was a fair amount of help, but all of it was really focused on "new" teachers in general, and not focused on the needs of immigrant teachers.” Sara thinks that “the transfer of learning” – how well skills she learned during the trainings were put to use in the classroom setting – occurred at the end of the training rather than during the workshops. When asked if they would recommend the PIP to other immigrant teachers, all eight respondents replied yes to the question since they address certain needs and questions, even if more broadly than they would have preferred.

Section 2: Social Integration in the Workplace

The interview questions of the study did not focus solely on how the PIPs measures such as workshops, mentorship, and pedagogical counsellors contributed to the pedagogical

preparation of immigrant teachers. The interview questions also sounded immigrant teachers out, to see if the PIP measures they benefited from did help in their social integration at their workplace and/or the school culture.

Workshops, Mentorship, and Pedagogical Counsellors

Five respondents had a positive attitude towards the PIP measures and the positive effects they had on their social integration at the workplace. Karim thought that the PIP measures he benefited from were very relevant. The participant explained that “we learn new things during this program that help us understand the system in place and how to deal with or react to things within this system. For example, the workshop “Communiquer avec les parents de vos élèves” is really important because it shows you how to communicate effectively with parents”. However, one of the main themes to emerge here is that many respondents felt that it was the opportunity to encounter other teachers that really provided the help they needed. Walid explained that “every contact with people who work in the educational system is very important. During these trainings, they sometimes give us tips, ideas on how things work at the social level and at the cultural level, too. So, every contact is very useful, especially at the beginning. You must have your ears wide open”. Aymen thought that most of the help came from the Resource Teacher, especially when it came to cultural differences, and Sara commented in relation to the people she met during the University courses she had to take that “it helped [her] to forge ahead in school environment and [she] started to feel that [she] belonged at [her] workplace”. Finally, Lamia explains that the PIP measures helped “especially on the level of social interactions with colleagues and the cultural differences”.

Some participants found the PIP measures considerably less useful as far as cultural integration is concerned, however. Yasmine and Sammy expressed that “there was nothing in the

workshops really that aimed at cultural integration; It was all pedagogical”. One respondent did not find the workshops themselves useful, but notes that these workshops helped nonetheless with meeting other teachers in similar situation.

Nature of Respondents

When I analysed participants’ answers about the personal measures they undertook to help in their process of social integration into the work environment, I noticed that those participants that found more success in cultural integration were those who had strong interpersonal skills already, and were more outgoing in general. Both Aymen and Karim explained that the PIP measures did help with those aspects of social integration to some extent, noting that being willing to ask a lot of questions and to seek help on their own had a big impact, and that their outgoing personalities played a greater role on the level of social integration with colleagues and cultural differences. Yasmine interacted with other teachers to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts, and Sara “took initiative”, “anticipated difficulties” and “was engaged in seeking answers”. Walid stressed the importance of learning French. “French is very important to integrate the work environment. You need good French. My concern was to never stop learning French through reading and practicing the language.”

In sum, it was not only the PIP measures that facilitated the professional insertion of immigrant teachers in the workplace. The eight participants described their proactive attitude that promoted the pedagogical aspects of their teaching as well as their social integration within the workplace, namely their rapports with colleagues. It is also worth noting that there is a growing awareness among the eight participants about their active role in their social integration within their environments. Seven out of eight participants referred to their colleagues as kind and

helpful, but also noted that in most if not all cases, they themselves were proactive in reaching out to their colleagues.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The research question in this study aims to explore immigrant teachers' experiences with Professional Insertion Programs (PIP) in school centers through the lenses of Critical Diversity. In this chapter I will explain what this approach entailed and what it allowed me to discover.

With reference to the study, I first explain the concepts of workplace diversity; second, I describe Diversity Management (DM); and third, I explicate Critical Diversity and its critique of Diversity Management. Then, I move on to also investigate the management practices of school centers, looking into first the Access Criteria of Professional Insertion Programs, and second the way diversity is managed within school centers.

Diversity in the Workplace

In their article *A Review of Diversity Conceptualizations*, Qin, Muenjohn and Chhetri (2014) elaborate upon the concept of diversity by highlighting that “the meaning of diversity can vary across different approaches of addressing key aspects of diversity, indicating a variety of diversity conceptualizations” (p.146). Speaking specifically of the workforce, Pelled (1996) describes a basic conception of diversity as “sets of demographic diversity variables based on two properties: visibility and job-relatedness” (p.618), which indicate a difference between diversity we can see in terms of age, gender, race, etc., and a more intangible form of diversity in the form of an individual's experience and academic background (Qin et. al., 2014, p.147). Essentially, these ideas highlight the fact that workplace diversity does not only mean those variations we can easily see, but also others that may be more underlying and subtler, and that the two aspects – visibility and job-relatedness – while they may appear different are equally important to employers who seek to diversify, for whatever reason, their workforce. This is what

Gotsis and Kortezi (2015) refer to as “demographic” versus “socio-cultural characteristics” (p.1). The impact of a diverse workforce is not just visual or esthetic – people from different demographics – but can have deeper ramifications that must be considered.

Diversity Management (DM)

For Cox and Blake (1991) in their article *Managing Cultural Diversity* explain that, managing diversity incorporates various aspects of the “hiring and effective utilization of personnel from different cultural backgrounds” (p.45), and is generally seen as a positive, more organic improvement over the more restrictive legislative options of the past, such as Equal Opportunity Employment. However, this does not mean that this approach is free of difficulties.

Kersten (2000) clarifies that the increased emphasis on diversity does bring with it some challenges for employers, what Kersten refers to as “diversity dilemma” (p.236), which many experts believe will be the main issue facing human resource departments in the foreseeable future. But Kersten (2000) also explains that, by and large, employers contend with these challenges because they are seen as bringing a positive public response and tend to be seen as a step forward from less well-regarded policies such as affirmative action, through “organizations voluntarily [engaging] in a process of systemic cultural transformation designed to eliminate any further forms of exclusion” (p.236). Kersten (2000) also highlights the details of the differences between diversity management and “previous approaches to discrimination” as far as “transformation of the organization,” “rhetoric,” “economic rather than legal arguments” and the “inclusive definition of diversity” are concerned (p.241).

What we are seeing is the organizations themselves metamorphosing rather than the narrower scope of policies dealing with the hiring practices of said organizations (Kersten, 2000,

p.241). In effect, the change is more holistic and affects the very fabric of the organization itself, rather than simply altering the selection criteria of the employee. This transforms the language used to discuss these issues from a more “negative, external mandate” into a rather “positive and voluntary effort on the part of the organization” (Kersten,2000, p.242). The changes are supported by financial arguments (for example, a broader appeal leads to a broader client-base) rather than purely legal ones (as is the case with Equal Opportunities Employment laws, for example). Finally, this approach incorporates a view of diversity that is more universal and all-encompassing, one where all aspects of diversity are welcomed – and expected to produce dividends (Kersten, 2000, p.242). However, Kersten (2000) also questions the effectiveness of such actions, and further questions the methods by which their success is evaluated, and the methods by which managers may be prompted to insure their effective applications (p.241).

Kersten (2000) goes even further and suggests that this approach, which attempts to paint the notion of diversity in the workforce with a broad brush, highlighting the general likeability and upbeat nature of the operation and attempting to please everyone while offending no one, is a proposition rife with difficulties at the best of times, and one that becomes even more of a balancing act when dealing with as touchy and polarizing ideas as those of race relations. There is also, Kersten (2000) adds, a real danger of minimizing the conflicting issues when they do arise (p.242), which in the end helps no one, organization or employee.

This in part is one of the issues that rears its head in the study. There is no doubting that the school centers are making efforts to improve their practices in managing diversity at the workplace, but what is more nebulous is the actual impact of every step along the way. Furthermore, in a society as culturally entrenched as that of Quebec, the changes within organizations are neither easy nor are they attempted without reticence. Cultural values have

long been a central of all politics in Quebec, arguably more so than in the rest of Canada. This cultural malaise affects every facet of life and takes up much of the space in the public discourse. Political parties, while ostensibly separated along clearly define partisan lines, remain nonetheless subservient to what is still a powerful, if atavistic, way of thinking. As we can see further in this chapter, this way of thinking permeates the management of school centers and the accessibility to a career within their walls. Let's begin, then, by first looking at the management practices of school centers, namely the Access Criteria of Professional Insertion Programs. Second, how the Professional Insertion Programs mirror the way diversity is dealt with in the context of school centers.

School Centers Management Practices

In order to ascertain the conditions related to immigrant teachers access to the profession of teaching, and the support apparatus put in place by the employer to ease their integration into the system, we need to look at the management practices of the school centers, as they are the frontline management that puts in place the various support systems and operates them. they are also the gatekeepers – the ones deciding who gets into the profession, and who does not. Understanding how they go about this business is thus crucial if we are looking to discover the barriers and obstacles faced by immigrant teachers.

When it comes to this notion of professional insertion of immigrant teachers in the Quebec school system, what we are seeing is an employer who has traditionally been very homogenous, but who is now forced to reckon with various societal changes – shortage of education workers, a continuously more varied “clientele” (both the student body, and society as a whole), an increase in immigration bringing skilled workers from various fields, etc. These changes put the Education Ministry at the forefront of the discussion on diversity in the

workforce. It not only behoves the employer in this case to make changes, but in fact puts them in a situation where these changes are inevitable, simply due to changes in the communities themselves. However, the responses collected during the study do show that there still exists a disconnect between what the employer (The Ministry) believes is adequate support, and what the employees require – though clearly some progress has been made. To arrive at this conclusion, the management practices I examined and to which participants referred to consist first of the Access Criteria, and second the PIP components to which the participants had access, namely workshops, mentors, and Pedagogical Counsellors.

Access Criteria

Some of the interview questions of this study were related to the requirements that must be met for immigrant teachers to benefit from the PIPs in their respective school centers. It should be noted that I could not access the eligibility criteria on the Laval School Center's website. However, the information was available from both the Montreal School Center's website and the New Teachers Handbook (Montreal Teachers' Association, 2020) of the Montreal Teachers Association, according to which teachers who are eligible for PIP are on one of three lists:

- The priority of employment list, which is a list of “teachers with two years or more of seniority, School Boards [and School Centers] must [refer to this list to] offer a “regular” contract to teachers on Priority of Employment list if it has *postes* available for which teachers are qualified” (Montreal Teachers' Association, 2020, p.8),
- The regular contract list (also known as part-time contract eligibility pool). A regular contract “continues from year to year. For teachers with less than two years of seniority,

School Boards' [and School Centers'] obligations are to offer any part-time postes available, including 100% replacement positions. These posts terminate at the end of the school year or with the return of the absent teacher, if they are replacement posts, whichever comes first" (Montreal Teachers Association, 2020, p.8).

- The occasional supply list (also known as the occasional supply pool). Teachers on this list must have 40% workload or more in the same School Center, during the first three years of eligibility following their first contract (Insertion-Enseignants).

I asked the participants to tell me what the criteria for participation in the Professional Insertion programs of their school centers were, and what they thought of them. Aymen explained that they were to “be a new teacher, have a contract, and less than 5 years of experience at the school center.” The respondent believed these criteria are fair; however, he believed the awarding of contracts is opaque. He further explained that “some immigrant teachers would spend a few years doing substitution work and getting experience and would not receive contracts while students fresh out of university with no experience would get them,” and this without any clear reason why it would be this way.

Karim reported that to participate in the program, you must obtain a part-time contract of at least 40% workload in the same school, during the first three years. He noted that with less than 40% workload, you could work as substitute for years, but still not be eligible for the PIPs. “Being a substitute teacher dealing with new groups of students can be extremely challenging, especially if you are left to yourself,” explained Karim. Walid explained that “you are eligible to participate in the program if you have been working in the same school centre for less than 5 years, and that substitute teachers are not eligible for the PIPs, but they can still attend two workshops upon hiring.”

Sara replied that “you are eligible to participate in the program if you have a contract of 50% workload or more, and if you have been working in the same school centre for at least 2 years”. She felt that “these eligibility criteria are unreasonable. My first contract in Quebec consisted of a 20% workload in the Pointe de L’île school center. I had a full day; 5 periods in one day and I didn’t have anyone to help me. I did not even have time to exchange with coworkers or ask questions. So even if I had 20%, even if it was just one day, I think I had the right to participate in this program and have training and get support”.

The consensus among the participants is that the most important criterion to access PIPs is the obtention of a teaching contract. Without a contract, a potential teacher can languish for years accumulating substitution work and still not be able to access the PIPs. However, the recurring theme here is that, while on the surface, the criteria of access to the PIPs appear fair enough, some of the applicants seem to be spending a disproportionate amount of time waiting for a contract. And, anecdotally at least, it appears that this group of applicants who languish for long periods of time waiting for a contract tend to have, disproportionately, foreign-sounding last names.

On this subject, Walid and Sara mentioned either a “struggle to find a full-time teaching position”, or a struggle “getting a contract of at least 40% workload”. Participants also explained that immigrant teachers are often stuck doing substitution work for a very long time several years, in fact. These substitutes are doing the jobs of full-time teachers, oftentimes with several classes during the week, but this work still does not allow them access to official support. Aymen said that “personally, [he] did not encounter [any barriers] because [he] was lucky to get a contract right away”, though he considered himself very lucky as he came in at a moment when there was an absolute dearth of candidates.

How is it a matter of pure luck for one participant “to get a contract right away”, while others “struggle to find a full-time teaching position”, or struggle to “getting a contract of at least 40% workload”? Why is it difficult for immigrant teachers, based on what they have shared during the interviews, to get a part or full-time contract, and what’s the repercussions of finding a contract of at least 40% workload or not on their professional insertion? To answer these questions, we had to dig for answers in teachers’ union documents.

Alliance des professeures et professeurs de Montréal issued a document entitled *Enseignantes et enseignants à statut précaire à la CSDM* (April 2014) in which they explain the process of how contracts are offered to teachers.

To understand this, we need to revisit the information about the various pools the candidates are placed in as they wait for a full-time contract. All teachers considered “precaire” – without a full-time teaching contract – are placed in one of three candidate pools: Admissible to Full Time contract; Admissible to Part Time contract; Admissible to Occasional Employment (p.2 – *author’s translation*). The system functions thusly

Pour l’offre d’un contrat, il existe une priorité de bassin, *mais pas de priorité à l’intérieur du même bassin*. Ainsi, si la CSDM (what was then known as la Commission Scolaire de Montreal) doit offrir un contrat à une personne inscrite dans les bassins, l’offre sera faite en premier à une personne inscrite au Bassin d’Admissibilité à des contrats à temps plein, *puis* à une personne inscrite au Bassin d’Admissibilité à des contrats à temps partiel et *finalement* à une personne inscrite au Bassin de Suppléance occasionnelle. Ainsi, une personne du Bassin de suppléance occasionnelle pourra se faire offrir un contrat si toutes les personnes inscrites dans l’un ou l’autre des deux autres bassins ont refusé ou si elles ne sont pas disponibles. *Cependant, si un bassin compte cinquante personnes, aucune*

d'elles n'a de priorité sur les autres du même bassin (Alliance des professeures et professeurs de Montréal, 2014, p.2, Emphasis mine).

What this means is that, while there is an established priority among the pools, a priority which dictates from which pools candidates must first be drawn, there is no established priority *within a pool*. In other words, it is up to Human Resources to decide how they choose their candidate as there is no priority entitlement within the part-time contract eligibility pool nor the occasional supply pool. Hence, the main issue brought up by several participants is the difficulty of obtaining a workload of at least 40% to qualify for the PIP may stem from some subjectivity in contract awarding *within the pools*.

There is a sense – admittedly only anecdotally so far - that a person's name, and what it indicates in terms of culture or background, plays a role in how quickly one is selected. This phenomenon is no way restricted only to the Quebec School System, nor in fact just to Quebec. But a study published in 2012 by *the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* indicate that such a pattern already exists. In a systematic study of the issue, they discovered that in job hunts “equally-skilled and qualified candidates are 60% more likely to be invited to a job interview when their family name is of Québécois origin than if it sounds like a name of African, Arab or Latin-American origin” (<https://www.cdpedj.qc.ca/en>).

Stories like this suggest the existence of systemic racism in Quebec institutions (and again, to be clear, this is not a situation limited to Quebec), and this in spite of what Prime Minister Francois Legault recently stated publicly that he “sticks to position that systemic racism doesn't exist in Quebec”, and that “he [does not] want it to turn into a trial of Quebecers” (Banerjee, 2020).

Systemic racism is defined as “developed by individuals or groups of individuals who hold power and who reflect their individual racial biases consciously or unconsciously in the rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and practices that govern institutions” (Tours, Hamilton-Mason, & Wewiorski, 2018, p. 6), and is “commonly disguised within unrecognized and known privileges as well as established power bases embedded in the structures and systems” (Tours et al., 2018, p.6). Thus, to say that some elements of the system are and continue to be racist is not necessarily to call those in charge overly racist. To say that a call to investigate the possibility of systemic racism is to somehow taint all Quebecers is a smoke screen that can only serve to give pause to those raising valid questions.

I think that any forms of racism should be acknowledged because if we don't do so, these “practices and behaviors [will be] viewed as “normal” and/or “race-neutral” in society” (Tours et al., 2018, p.80), and “when racial disparities are noticed, they often are attributed to character and lifestyle weaknesses of members of the disadvantaged group, ... rather than understood to be the result of systemic structural racism in the society”. (Tours et al., 2018, p.80). If we apply this to our study, and if we do not acknowledge that immigrant teachers are often stuck doing substitution work for several years, as reported by the participants, and hence have no entitlement to access to PIPs, this “unequal treatment result[ing] from ‘neutral’ institutional practices [will] continue the effect of past discrimination” (Schmidt, 2010, p.245).

Needless to say, it would be beneficial to teachers who spend longer periods doing substitution work to be able to access PIPs once in the system, even if they are without a contract. Having access to those training sessions when they have time to attend them could be helpful and would help alleviate future issues with scheduling. Future research might take a

closer look at this situation, looking to establish whether or not there is a real, quantifiable discrepancy in the selection process within a pool.

Obviously, racism is “a sensitive and complex issue and this is why there is so much reticence and resistance in tackling it. Resistance can be found to varying degrees in many settings, institutions and among the population” (Pierre and Tessier, La Presse, 12 September 2020). Not only is systemic racism, by its very nature, difficult to debate (not the least reason because it is something most people may participate in without even noticing it), but also because of the emotional charge that comes along with it.

What this study suggests is that the possible presence of systemic racism in the candidate pools is problematic and has tremendous impact on the lives of immigrant teachers, people who only want to teach, and often lose years to the system before they begin to work in earnest. And as is usual with racism, it is everyone who pays for this, not just the person discriminated against. In this case, the schools, and especially the students suffer.

The Professional Insertion Programs (PIPs); Diversity within School Centers

Over time I noticed, through changes on the website, a few new components have been added to the Montreal School Center PIP to target the specific needs of immigrant teachers more directly, such as the individualized help of a Pedagogical Counsellor to answer immigrant teachers’ questions, as well as a link to a guide that summarises the different stages in the process of becoming a teacher in Quebec.

These are all welcome changes, but there are still some ways in which the PIP is problematic for immigrant teachers. Perhaps most important, the Professional Insertion Programs (PIPs) are supporting structures around which the professional insertion of all new teachers

within the Francophone system is planned, not just those with non-immigrant backgrounds. It is nevertheless expected to fill the same role for immigrant teachers, even though their backgrounds and levels of experience may vary widely from those for whom the program was primarily designed. Thus, in the context of this study, we can see what Gotsis and Kortezi (2015) call a “reinforcing homogeneity perspective” (p.6) as being the most noticeable approach and/or perspective being taken, the one having the most influence on the managing of immigrant teachers within school centers. In other words, there is an unspoken assumption that brand new Quebec educated teachers have the same requirements in terms of assistance as experienced, foreign educated teachers do. The reinforcing homogeneity perspective refers to the actual practices of an employer that enforces homogeneity through its internal practices, and in this case, it means treating new teachers and experienced immigrant teachers as a homogenous group (Gotsis and Kortezi,2015, p.6).

The information obtained from the participants about the different components of the PIP they experienced helps fill in our picture of this difficulty. When asked to describe the different types of training activities offered within the Professional Insertion Programs (PIPs), and how many of these activities actually addressed the general concerns of immigrant teachers most respondents felt that the content of training targets novice French Canadian teachers at the beginning of their career in general, and not immigrant teachers specifically, and that very few of the workshop options addressed their needs as not immigrant teachers specifically.

In addition, when asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the PIPs components, seven out of eight respondents found some components (mentors and pedagogical counsellors) more useful than other components such as workshops, but most indicate that workshops were

mainly broad, general information, mostly geared towards new teachers, and not really focused on the specific needs of immigrant teachers, or the reality of the classroom as they experience it.

Overall, the respondents' feedback highlighted a lack of equilibrium between the challenges they face and the support they get within the PIP framework, and that it does not target their specific needs.

Keeping in mind Liff's (1997) quotation stating that "the core idea behind managing diversity seems to encourage organizations to recognize differences." (p.13), the "reinforcing Homogeneity perspective" (Gotsis and Kortezi,2015, p.6) is not an ideal fit for our participants, since this approach attempts to solve all the issues of all novice teachers at the beginning of their career in one fell swoop.

There is some good news in that the challenges that most of the participants reported were not the traditional diversity-related ones – questions of gender, or race, or culture – per se. But the difficulty remains the same, i.e., that there is a form of re-enforcement of homogeneity simply because a broad and diverse group – the pool of new teachers – has broad and diverse needs and issues, and the current program focuses on treating each member of that pool as the same, as novice teachers, with the same issues and needs. Liff (1999) talks about two approaches to diversity management, namely *dissolving differences and valuing differences*. The first approach argues that policy should be tailored to individuals rather than social groups, the better to accommodate unique and varied differences (p. 71). The second one, *valuing differences* focuses on differences between social groups rather than individuals and is much more akin to what we know as Equal Opportunity Employment laws, for example (pp. 71-72). In terms of the school system, what we're seeing is an approach by the school centers that is much more akin to *dissolving differences* – basically, in that it treats all new applicants and candidates as

inexperienced candidates. Not only that, it also pre-supposes that, in addition to being inexperienced, all these candidates possess the same background and general knowledge about the Quebec education system. The reality, of course, is that immigrant teachers with years of experience in foreign education systems are very different – and thus have very different needs – than inexperienced teachers issued from the Quebec education system. And these individual needs and differences break down even further when we start taking into accounts differences of language, subject taught, etc. As a group, new teaching candidates are as diverse and unique as the student body, as the communities surrounding the schools in fact, and beyond certain basic elements cannot truly be expected to benefit equally from a broad, homogenised approach to integration.

Conclusion

What truly emerges, however, from the responses in this study, is that as a group, immigrant teachers did find the help provided in the PIPs to be generally useful. But what they found most useful was the individualized help they received from a CP for example. In short, the system as it exists does have a positive impact, and does provide useful assistance; however, it would need to be supplemented more by a more muscular, more targeted form of assistance – a hybrid approach, in fact, that would allow all new teachers access to training and support for the most basic, generalized issues, and then a more tailor-made form of support, perhaps as a second phase, meant to provide the help specific teachers need.

There are still issues concerning the diversification of the workforce that remain contentious and difficult to engage with. In our case, it is difficult to talk about the selection process of teachers within a pool without bringing up uncomfortable suggestions about how these choices are made – and this before we even acknowledge that this is certainly not the sole

outstanding problem. And here we encounter the difference between the more political aspects of the discussion about diversity, and the emotional ones, or “the conflict between the aspirations of the social justice case and the business case (Schwabensland & Tomlinson, 2015, p.1919). It’s nearly impossible to separate the two, yet one is much easier to wrestle with than the other. We’ve seen ample evidence of the latter being tackled—Quebec, after all, needs teachers to staff their classes, and there are not enough available from the pool of new trainee teachers, but the former remains too much of a third rail to draw much in the way of public discourse outside of the more extremist factions involved.

What remains is a sense that efforts and progress have both been made, and that the landscape is certainly more hospitable now for a broader group of potential candidates to become teachers. Missing, though, is a thorough investigation of practices that remain opaque (especially within the context of candidate pools), and a concrete vision of the next step, a way forward that considers (and, quite importantly, acknowledges) Quebec’s growing dependence on immigrant teachers, and the need to not only clear a path for them to access the profession, but also to provide adequate, personalized support so that immigrant teachers find fewer obstacles and difficulties in integrating a social space that is parched for their presence. The door has been opened; what remains now is to make the space on the other side as welcoming and easy-to-access as possible.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Study Email Invitation

This is an invitation to participate in “A Study of Existing Professional Insertion Training Programs for Newly-Immigrated Teachers in the Québec School System”.

Eligible participants for this study are:

Immigrant teachers (teachers who were trained outside Canada, fulfilled teaching job requirements in Quebec, obtained a probationary teaching permit and/or permanent teaching licence).

Have been working in School Centers in the greater Montreal area for at least 5 years.

Are currently employed by a school center in the greater Montreal area.

Are currently enrolled - or have already completed - the various components of the Professional Insertion Program (PIP) offered by the school centers of the greater Montreal area.

Are currently enrolled - or have already completed - one or more professional insertion Component since they started working for a school center in the greater Montreal area.

If you choose to participate in this study or have any questions, please contact the researcher, Afifa Ayari, afifaayari71@yahoo.com

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the faculty supervisor Dr. David Waddington of the Department of Education of Concordia University 514-951-8135; david.waddington@concordia.ca

Appendix B: Response to Recruitment Email

Study Title: A Study of Existing Professional Insertion Training Programs for Newly-Immigrated Teachers in the Québec School System

Researcher's name and contact information: Afifa Ayari, afifaayari71@yahoo.com

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. David Waddington

Faculty Supervisor's contact information: david.waddington@concordia.ca
Supervisor's Contact Information: (514) 848-2424 ext. 2039

Email Subject line: Invitation to participate in a Study

Email Body:

Dear [name of participant],

Thank you for contacting me regarding your interest in participating in the study 'Analysis of the Experience of Immigrant Teachers in Professional Insertion Programs in School Centers in the greater Montreal area'.

You would be taking part in a 90-minute interview in a mutually agreed upon setting outside of school property and outside of work hours. The interviews will be audio-recorded for later transcription. The questions will focus on your experience with the Professional Insertion Programs (PIP) offered in your School Center.

I can provide further details once you have provided me with your availabilities and I will arrange for us to meet to discuss what is involved in this study participation. Attached is the consent form for review and signature before you agree to participate, we will, of course, also review it in detail before you sign.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Afifa Ayari

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Study Title: A Study of Existing Professional Insertion Training Programs for Newly-Immigrated Teachers in the Québec School System.

Researcher's name and contact information: Afifa Ayari, afifaayari71@yahoo.com

Participant's Personal Information and Eligibility Criteria

Name	
Age	
Contact Information	
School Center	
Qualifications	
Native Country	
Subject(s) taught in your home country.	
Number of years of teaching experience in your home country.	
Are you currently employed by a school center in the greater Montreal area?	
Number of years of teaching in your School Center in the greater Montreal area?	
Are you currently enrolled - or have already completed - the various components of the Professional Insertion Program offered by your school center in the greater Montreal area?	
Are currently enrolled - or have already completed - one or more professional insertion component since you started working for a school center in the greater Montreal area?	
If, so, when did you complete it?	

Interview Questions

Part One: Before Being hired:

1. What path did you follow to become a teacher in Quebec?

Probes:

- a) Why did you choose to become a teacher in Quebec?
 - b) What steps did you follow to obtain your teaching licence/permit or certificate?
 - c) What obstacles did you encounter in obtaining your teaching licence/permit or certificate?
2. What are the unique challenges faced by immigrant teachers in the process of Professional Insertion?

Part Two: Questions about barriers immigrant teachers face when attempting to access to access the Professional Insertion Programs.

1. When and how did you find out about the Professional Insertion Programs?
2. What was the major obstacle to overcome to access Professional Insertion Programs?
3. What are the access criteria for Professional Insertion Programs in your school center?
4. And what do you think of the access criteria?
5. What did you expect from Professional Insertion Programs the first time you heard about them, before you even participate?

Part Three: Questions about the Professional Insertion Programs in the Greater Montreal Area: what they offered, and what issues they were meant to address?

1. What systems did the school center put in place to support the process of your professional insertion?
2. What systems were put in place during your first days at school to support you in your integration?
3. Who welcomed you?
4. Did you have access to a mentor or a resource person?
5. Can you describe the different types of training activities offered as part of the Professional Insertion Program and in which you have participated?
6. How many of these training activities do you think addressed your concerns as a beginning immigrant teacher?
7. Describe your first experiences with your colleagues, students, administrative staff, parents?

Part Four: Questions about the participants' experiences of the Professional Insertion programs, and how they felt about them.

1. Overall, how was your experience in Professional Insertion Programs?

Probes:

- a) What are their strengths and weaknesses?
 - b) What was the most useful aspect of these trainings?
 - c) What was least useful or not applicable to your specific situation as an immigrant teacher?
2. How have your teaching practices and/or classroom management changed after attending one or more components of the Professional Insertion Programs?
 3. What were the difficulties you encountered? What role, if any, did the Professional Insertion programs play in helping you overcome them?

Part Five: Questions about respondents' suggestions concerning how the Professional Insertion Programs might have better assisted them in preparing to become teachers in Quebec.

1. Can you give me specific examples of what other assistance the School Centers in the Greater Montreal Area and/or school principals could have offered to better support immigrant teachers overcome the obstacles specific to their situation?
2. What personal measures have you taken to help you in the process of your professional insertion into your work environment?
3. Would you recommend the Professional Insertion Program to immigrant teachers? And why? What advice would you give to other immigrants considering becoming teachers in Quebec?

Appendix D: INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: A Study of Existing Professional Insertion Training Programs for Newly-Immigrated Teachers in the Québec School System.

Researcher: Afifa Ayari

Researcher's Contact Information: afifaayari71@yahoo.com

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. David Waddington

Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information: david.waddington@concordia.ca

Source of funding for the study: n/a

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

- The purpose of the research study is: to provide immigrant teachers' point-of-view on, and experiences with, the Professional Insertion Program (PIP) they are enrolled in or have completed in their school center of the greater Montreal area.

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B. PROCEDURES

- If I participate in this study, the researcher will ask me about my point-of-view on, and experience with, the Professional Insertion Program in School Centers in the Greater Montreal Area
- As part of my participation in this study, I will take part in a 90-minute interview in a mutually agreed upon location outside my place of work.
- I understand that the interview will be audio taped for later transcription, that the researcher will use a pseudonym in the research to protect my identity and that my identity will be kept confidential.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

- I understand that there are no major risks anticipated in participating in this study.
- I understand that by participating in this research, potential benefits include improvement in the Professional Insertion Programs that are more focused on immigrant teachers' specific needs, and that will better facilitate the Professional Insertion of immigrant teachers into their new professional and social environment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- I understand that the researcher will gather personal information (See Appendix C Interview Question: Participant's Personal Information).
- I understand that only the researcher and the supervisor will access my personal information.
- I understand that the information will only be used for the purposes of the research described in this form.

- I understand that the information gathered will be anonymous (i.e., it will not be possible to make a link between me and the information provided in the study).
- I understand that my information will be part of the general data and protected by a pseudonym (code), it will not be identifiable in the thesis.
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.
- I understand that that the information will be destroyed five years after the end of the study.

C. CONDITION OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that my participation is voluntary
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw anytime from the study, by informing the researcher no later than two weeks after I receive a copy of my interview transcripts.
- I understand that there are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking the researcher not to use my information.

D. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please the faculty supervisor Dr. David Waddington of the Department of Education of Concordia University 514-951-8135; david.waddington@concordia.ca

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.