

# Retaining future teachers: The need for support connected to school realities

The shortage of teachers in Quebec, as elsewhere in Canada, means that students find themselves in a teaching situation as soon as they start their professional education. The difficulties they experience as students or while working in the school environment could result in their questioning whether to pursue their professional education or even to consider early abandonment of the profession. Hence the need for teacher education support systems geared to school realities.

<b>Placed in teaching situations from the beginning of their professional education</b>	
<b>Unprecedented teacher shortages</b>	The phenomenon of teacher shortages due to retirements, early teacher dropouts, fluctuations in school enrolments and the lack of attractiveness of professional education programs has increased as a result of the health measures put in place in schools to combat COVID-19.
<b>Recruitment of uncertified teachers</b>	Service centres and school districts are addressing their teacher shortages by increasingly turning to teachers who are not legally qualified, i.e. those lacking a professional certificate, probationary licence or provisional teaching licence. These uncertified individuals include first- and second-year students who work in schools as supply teachers or as contract replacement teachers.
<b>A difficult transition from teacher education programs to entry into the profession</b>	Despite their career-centred training, beginning teachers face a number of challenges in terms of professional integration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job insecurity: part-time and variable-term contracts</li> <li>• Cumbersome and complex tasks: their tasks sometimes fall outside their field of study, include difficult class groups and require them to teach several subjects at different grade levels or in multi-grade classes</li> <li>• Lack of support from colleagues and management in some schools</li> <li>• Classroom management difficulties, challenges in building positive pedagogical relationships and communicating with parents, all of which can lead to a low sense of competence</li> </ul>
<b>Professional education that is not sufficiently connected to school realities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaps between theory and practice: what is taught does not provide adequate teaching practice preparation</li> <li>• Deficient classroom management: new teachers are poorly equipped to manage a class group</li> <li>• Insufficient knowledge of and preparation for students with disabilities or adjustment and learning difficulties</li> <li>• Difficulties in planning and evaluating learning: young teachers often lack skills in these areas</li> <li>• Lags in techno-pedagogy: few courses prepare future teachers for the use of digital technology for educational purposes</li> </ul>

### Support strategies for better retention of future teachers

- Reconcile their studies with their in-school supply teaching duties in order to meet the students' needs.
- Provide flexible and part-time professional education programs to enable a better work-life balance for uncertified teachers who want to develop their teaching skills.
- Create digital university learning environments that are better adapted to school-based teaching in order to better prepare students for the use of digital technologies in education.
- Establish peer mentoring systems (in person or online) from the beginning of the professional education programs.

For online resources and references please visit:  
[www.edcan.ca/facts-on-education](http://www.edcan.ca/facts-on-education)

*Author,*  
**Dr. Aline Niyubahwe**