



# fronquêtes

ENQUÊTES SUR L'ÉDUCATION EN MILIEU MINORITAIRE FRANCOPHONE

## Teacher dropout in Canada: a literature review

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(Summary by Claudia Guidolin)

The initial mandate of the authors of this literature review was to identify attrition factors in scientific literature in order to develop research tools to explore the reasons behind the departure of teachers in minority settings.

From the outset, the authors acknowledged the lack of research on the dropout of teachers in French-language schools in minority settings. They, therefore, expanded their scope of work by adding texts to shed new light on the issue.

They also noticed that research mainly focuses on the reasons why teachers drop out but not on why teachers decide to remain in the profession despite having thought about leaving it at some point.

The authors divided their literature review into five sections:

- i. Definitions of dropout teacher
- ii. Methodologies and sampling
- iii. Research on cause types, consequences and solutions
- iv. New approaches to research
- v. Teacher dropout in French-language schools in minority settings

Research mostly focuses on the teaching profession in general, but some of it focuses on teachers in specific fields such as immersion and French as a second language. However, all research identifies beginning teachers as the group with the highest risk for dropping out.

Nonetheless, the criteria used to define this group are not always the same; and this has a significant impact on results.

The authors indicate that it would be important to consider teachers who leave their jobs but remain in the profession because this may help determine why they have left a job and what has attracted them to their new job.

### METHODOLOGIES AND SAMPLING

The authors describe the methodologies and samples used during the research. They state that research teams had difficulty tracking down teachers who had dropped out.

### RESEARCH ON CAUSE TYPES, CONSEQUENCES AND SOLUTIONS

This section focuses on the main factors of teacher dropout. It describes individual factors such as emotional characteristics and psychological needs, as well as contextual factors such as an increasingly complex profession and the social environment.

While research allowed the authors to produce a list of factors explaining teacher dropout, there is little information about what these dropout teachers do afterwards. According to the authors, more information on the subject would help circumscribe the issue and provide solutions.

### NEW APPROACHES TO RESEARCH

The authors note that research is increasingly moving away from the large-scale style and focusing more on the narrative approach (e.g. life writings, journals) which follows much more closely a smaller sample of teachers and allows for a long-term analysis of the differences between those who drop out and those who do not.

This approach treats the individual as a whole and does not separate contextual factors of dropout from individual ones. Separation leads to overly simplistic solutions like training and mentoring programs. Here, we are seeking much more comprehensive solutions.

What is glaring from the literature review on the dropout of Francophone teachers in minority settings is that there is virtually no research on this subject and that, to understand risk factors, one must rely on research focusing on Francophone teachers in immersion schools.

Narrative studies that take the individual as a whole and aim at a deeper understanding of why teachers drop out led the authors to prefer this approach and to state that in the current context it would be relevant to do a more in-depth study of the special situation of French-language schools in minority settings; all the more so because [translation] “a large survey conducted by the CTF-FCE in collaboration with the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Citizenship and Minorities and the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities (Gilbert et al., 2004) painted an unflattering portrait of the teaching profession in French minority settings.”

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The literature review was part of a research project on the shortage of teachers in French-language schools in minority settings. This project was carried out thanks to the financial contribution of Canadian Heritage. The complete literature review is available in *Frenquêtes*, Issue 13.

to read the full survey (in French) : [www.ctf-fce.ca/frenquetes](http://www.ctf-fce.ca/frenquetes)



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