

Slow and Local: A Re-vision of Teacher Education in Ontario

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Abstract

Modern life has created a culture of speed and standardization, especially in the business world. Education is not immune to this culture and, in an effort to prepare teacher-candidates for modern classrooms, pre-service programs in Ontario (and elsewhere) seem to have adopted a business mentality, creating overstuffed classes, overfull timetables, and over-stressed future educators. This article critiques current pre-service program practices and presents slow living and *terroir* as guiding concepts for revising teacher education. It includes a context for program revision, inspirational observations made in French schools, and recommendations for pre-service programs based on those observations. As well, a model for a two-year consecutive teacher education program is presented, informed by the concepts and observations discussed.

Recently, I had an opportunity to visit elementary and secondary schools in Burgundy, France to study their art education programs and I learned much to improve my practice as a teacher educator. Among the many things that impressed me during these school visits was the structure of the day: they start early, have a long lunch break, finish late afternoon, and provide ample time for digestion, discussion, and reflection. In general, the timetable slowed down teaching and learning. As well, there was an emphasis on regional customs and influences in their schools, from local food prepared on-site to cultural content in lessons.

In a dictionary definition of “slow” (Sykes, 1983), the descriptors are not positive: “deficient in speed”, “tardy”, “reluctant”, “dull-witted”, “stupid”, “deficient in interest or liveliness”, “dull”, “tedious” (p. 998). If one applied this definition to education, “slow” may seem like a negative four-letter word. What I experienced in Burgundy, however, equated it with more positive words: “time”, “free”, “calm”, “balanced”. This experience reminded me of the Slow Food principles (Petrini, 2005), *buono, pulito e giusto* (translated as “good, clean, and fair”), which are important for not only gastronomy but also life in general. According to the Slow Movement (2012), these principles can be applied to travel, cities, books, living, money, and schools for the purpose of making more meaningful connections to places and to people. Regarding connections to places, another concept I learned in Burgundy is *terroir*: a French term born from agriculture. According to Trubek (2008), it is “the notion that the natural environment can shape...taste” (p. 2). Each geographic region, or territory, for example, can create distinctive tastes in wine and food. Trubek focuses on *terroir* as a “taste of place [and] cultural common sense” (p. xv) and suggests it may be applied to culture in general.

Currently, I teach at the pre-service level, so I considered how a slower pace and local focus, inspired by what I saw in France, might work in teacher education programs and how they could be improved. The following article outlines the context for revising teacher education in Ontario, what I learned about slow living and *terroir* from school visits in France, recommendations for revising pre-service programs, and a model for teacher education informed by the concepts and observations discussed. As well, potential limitations related to this model are included.

Why Revise Teacher Education in Ontario?

When I joined a comparative study team from Ontario for a research trip to France, I was looking for some professional inspiration. I had been an educator at the elementary, secondary, and pre-service levels for over 25 years and, although I had practical experience from classroom teaching

and practicum supervision, plus theoretical knowledge from my graduate studies, my education focus was mainly North American in scope. Since I had recently completed my doctorate, I had the time to investigate other countries' ways of teaching and learning to expand my knowledge and improve my practice. I had time, as well, to attend to professional issues that had frustrated me for years.

One of these frustrations is how consecutive teacher education programs in Ontario, and elsewhere, mimic the structure and speed of the business world. Most provincial pre-service programs are organized as eight-month, super-saturated, standardized degrees where candidates' basic subject knowledge is merged with teaching strategies in elementary, secondary, and university classrooms. Upon graduation, new teachers have similar knowledge of the bare essentials of pedagogy and minimal teaching experience without the time to explore, and reflect on, their new professional roles in depth. As a former classroom teacher and faculty advisor, I know what it is like to teach in the fast-paced world of schools and I see how the speed at which we process teacher-candidates in pre-service programs helps prepare them for that world. But is fast-paced consecutive teacher education better?

Honoré (2004) critiques fast-life in general because, he says, "a life of hurry can become superficial. When we rush, we skim the surface, and fail to make real connections with the world or other people" (p. 9). He suggests most people are infected by a "virus of hurry" (2005, online source) but offers the concept of downshifting as the "swapping of a high pressure...high-tempo lifestyle for a more relaxed, less consumerist existence...driven by the desire to lead more rewarding lives" (2004, p. 47).

Similarly, Gleick (2000) equates fast living with illness when he discusses "hurry sickness" (p. 9). He suggests time be set aside for the contemplation and deliberation that, he says, was available before modern technology made communication instantaneous, and supports his argument with the examples of Darwin and Einstein who were self-proclaimed "slow thinkers" (p. 109).

Andrews (2008) criticizes fast living and what is lost because of it:

While globalization may have brought evident technological benefits, increases in freedom and greater mobility for many, it has also meant privileging standardization over diversity, and emphasized quantity over quality and the erosion of traditional knowledge in pursuit of the knowledge economy (p. 35).

Regarding the fast pace of education specifically, Holt (2002) suggests “the pressure to proceed from one targeted standard to another as fast as possible, to absorb and demonstrate specified knowledge with conveyor-belt precision, is [a]...fact of school life” (p. 265) that leads to “institutional indigestion” (p. 268). He proposes that education slow down to make room for contemplation, creativity, and deeper understanding in an effort to make learning more pleasurable and meaningful.

Breslin (2005) suggests similar issues are apparent in universities because they “are hierarchical, strongly departmentalized...industrial in structure and military in discipline” (p. 87). At the university where I teach, the eight-month consecutive Bachelor of Education program seems like a mass-production assembly line. Pre-service teachers attend classes in large groups and their overstuffed timetables include lessons which fall anywhere between 8:30 am and 9:30 pm. Most days, they have minimal breaks, leaving little time for reflection, collaboration, or relaxation. They are expected to complete copious assignments for numerous professors and, for thirteen weeks of the school year, they participate in practice-teaching placements in elementary and/or secondary classrooms. When they are on these placements, they are expected to participate fully as classroom teachers (e.g., plan, implement, and assess lessons and units; collaborate with other professionals; participate in school activities). Some also attend optional weekend workshops and/or spring-session upgrading programs. Such a full, compressed, “drill and kill” program may lead to much stress within, and among, pre-service teachers. As well, external issues, such as shortages in teaching jobs,

massive debt loads, and a culture of competition may add to this stress. These issues, collectively, are making teacher-candidates, especially those in consecutive programs, consumers of surface knowledge rather than reflective thinkers. I fear this practice will cross over to the classroom when they become in-service teachers.

In my professional experience, this was not always the case. When I started teaching in a consecutive pre-service program nearly 15 years ago, class sizes were smaller, there was more time between classes, and everyone had a common lunch hour. The teacher-candidates, themselves, were different: they focused on learning instead of marks, they took time to think and share, and they seemed happy to do projects within and outside of their assignment lists. In contrast, many of my current students seem like Nussbaum's (2010) "useful machines...than complete citizens who can think for themselves...and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements" (p. 2). My "useful machines" are competitive in nature, seem interested in only what will get them 100% on assignments, refuse to do anything altruistic, and dislike collaborative activities.

The concerns raised above inspired the following questions: Does the speed at which teachers are "force-grown" make them better in the classroom? Are there ways to help teachers adopt the concept of slow living while preparing them for the speed of contemporary education?

Former Dean of Harvard, Harry R. Lewis, in his letter to undergraduates (2004), provides suggestions:

...[recognize] that flexibility in your schedule, unstructured time in your day, and evenings spent with your friends rather than your books are all...essential for your education...you are more likely to sustain the intense effort needed to accomplish first-rate work...if you allow yourself some leisure time, some recreation, some time for solitude, rather than packing your

schedule with so many activities that you have no time to think about why you are doing what you are doing. (pp. 1-2)

Although Lewis (2004) directs his advice to first-year university learners, Deakin-Crick (2005) makes similar suggestions for those responsible for planning pre-service programs:

Teacher education...[needs] to move beyond the domain of technical interests of management and delivery of...curriculum and to give sustained attention to the formation of teachers themselves as professional lifelong learners. It will mean creating...structures where there is time for appropriate teacher personal and professional development, and scope for individual and collaborative vision and creativity. Such teachers are likely to be better equipped to nurture and sustain the sorts of communities and cultures of learning which are essential for...tomorrow's learners. (pp. 164-165).

Both Lewis (2004) and Deakin-Crick (2005) raise reasons why a business model is not necessarily a good fit for teacher education: teaching should be about collaboration not competition, working smarter instead of harder, and embracing creativity over standardization.

Much was said above to address how slowing one's pace can improve one's education, but how may the concept of *terroir* help improve teacher education? Tippins et al. (2010), like Trubek (2008), describe *terroir* as place-based experience and influence. I understand, in order to prepare for a wide range of classrooms, teacher-candidates need common, basic education courses. Currently, pre-service programs in Ontario are similar in what they provide to ensure consistency of teacher preparation for provincial classrooms. According to the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) Act, Regulation 347/02 (Government of Ontario, 1996), these programs must include "theory, method and foundation courses and [make] appropriate provision for the application of theory in practice" (online source), at least 40 days of practice teaching, and subject specialization for Junior/Intermediate and Intermediate/Senior divisions. But how they deliver this preparation remains up to

the individual teacher-education programs. Andrews (2008) suggests “articulating a distinctive identity...[that also] helps inform global forces” (p. 129). Universities, therefore, could provide standardized education courses along with focus ones related to regional interests and/or faculty expertise. By doing so, individual pre-service programs could be both comprehensive and unique.

Although these concepts were interesting to me, my observations in French schools were more helpful to see how slow teaching and learning, along with local content, worked in practice. They also provided a potential template with which to revise teacher education in Ontario.

What I Learned in France

The concept of moving from fast to slow living is neither new nor isolated to Burgundy and those who embrace slow living seem to do so as the result of an epiphany. Honoré (2004) describes his as when he realized he was finding faster ways to read bedtime stories to his son instead of savouring the pleasures of time spent together. For me, it was in two stages: during sick leave for exhaustion in my fifth year of teaching and, twenty years later, during my research trip to Burgundy. The schools I visited in Beaune, Dijon, and Vitteaux, for example, exemplified the concept of slow schooling as positive. They had long lunches and flexible schedules that provided time for reflective learning and collaboration. The actual time in, and content of, classes were similar to those in Ontario schools but the main difference was a longer lunch: anywhere from 90 to 120 minutes. Each school had a cafeteria where learners ate an on-site-prepared hot lunch alongside their teachers.

I had opportunities to chat with administrators, teachers, and learners and we discussed similarities and differences between their schools and ours. I also sampled meals made from local ingredients and had time to observe teachers and students at their tables. I was impressed with many things; for example, the meals were cooked well, by professional cooks, and the long lunch break enabled staff and students to eat slowly, digest their meals, converse formally and informally, and reflect on what was taught/learned that morning. After eating, some chose to stay in the cafeterias for

conversations while others went outside to play, walk, or relax before they returned, refreshed, to their classes for the afternoon. I wondered, and asked, if these meals and long lunch breaks were planned for our group's benefit as foreign visitors. The response in all schools was the same: the hot cooked lunch and long break were the norm.

When I attended classes, in a variety of subject areas (e.g., language, art, mathematics, social studies), teachers and learners explored global, national, and regional foci. The latter included stories by French writers, artwork by regional artists, and local history. Overall, what I saw was not only a slower-paced day and inclusion of local content, but also a way to build a better learning community.

Recommendations for Pre-service Education in Ontario

Parkins and Craig (2006) suggest slow living is about a renegotiation of the present instead of returning to a past utopia; it is about making thoughtful changes to compensate for the speed of modern life. Honoré (2004) offers the following idea:

...instead of doing everything fast, do everything at the right speed...slow means never rushing, never striving to save time just for the sake of it. It means remaining calm and unflustered even when circumstances force us to speed up (p. 275).

My professional frustrations, observations in French schools, plus the concepts slow living and *terroir*, inspired me to think of ways to improve the quality of pre-service education in Ontario and elsewhere. I see current pre-service education, like the North American food-view, as a consumable commodity, adapted to be consistent through automated processes. My aim is to present a responsible alternative to the current accelerated, homogeneous, mass-production format of consecutive teacher education. My vision is to move it into a new age of quality by embracing not only a slower pace but also what Trubek (2008) calls "*terroir* intelligence" (p. 250). I, therefore, make the following recommendations for decelerating and localizing teacher education.

Decelerating teacher education

Although one may think embracing a slow pace for teacher education would mean slow learners, I suggest that decelerating the pace may promote quality and balance through reduction of class size, time for reflection, opportunities for “productive failure” (Kapur, 2008, p. 380), and timetabling for nurturing interactions.

Large class sizes do little more than provide a venue for surface learning. As an alternative, Nussbaum (2010) recommends “small classes...where students discuss ideas with one another, get copious feedback on...assignments, and have lots of time to discuss their work with instructors” (p. 125). I, like many pre-service professors, teach large groups of consecutive teacher-candidates. As a result, I feel like I am running a mass-production line of future teachers instead of an individualized program for those who do not feel comfortable in my subject area: art education. I do not have the time within a 24-hour course, with so many generalist learners, to not only get to know them well but also ensure they all have the depth and breadth of knowledge, plus comfort, they would need to plan, implement, and assess art education experiences in their future classrooms. Smaller class sizes, therefore, would provide more one-on-one time and small group discussion opportunities for a slower, and more fulfilling, learning experience. I know, from experience teaching smaller concurrent education classes (half the size of the consecutive ones at my university), that those teacher-candidates have more room to breathe, more time with me, and more comfort with the subject, even though the course content and length are the same as for those in the consecutive program.

As Nussbaum (2010) suggests, in small-class venues, pre-service teachers would have time to think about, reflect on, and discuss what they learn. As a result, they may retain more than just surface knowledge of teaching and learning. Currently, I include written reflection opportunities attached to large assignments, but there is no time for sharing ideas, and promoting discussions, through small and large group presentations. It should be noted that most subjects in the

Primary/Junior and Junior/Intermediate divisions of the teacher education program where I work are taught in these short (24-hour, 1.5 credit) courses. But, if they were lengthened to 36 hours, the extra time could be used for small and large group sharing opportunities, providing that professors do not fill the extra time with more assignments.

By lengthening courses, without adding assignments, teacher-candidates would also have time for what Kapur (2008) calls “productive failure” (p. 380); that is, using inquiry methods that allow learners time to face, engage, and solve problems effectively. If Kapur’s concept was applied to teacher education, pre-service teachers may work on long-term inquiry projects that allow them to experiment, experience problems, and find creative solutions in the process. I co-teach one 36-hour art education course (to visual arts specialists) and, within this course, teacher-candidates have a visual inquiry project where they choose a topic relevant to intermediate learners (e.g., body image, bullying, idols) and have several weeks of class time to plan, research, create, and present their findings, in any visual arts medium. It is a valuable assignment because it provides time for reflection, collaboration, incubation, mindfulness, creation, revision, and presentation: things that the shorter, 24-hour generalists’ classes do not have time to do effectively. As a result, the specialists, who already have a stronger pre-program background in art, have a deeper understanding of not only art education but also artistic inquiry and intermediate learners.

I also recommend a common lunch break, minimum 90 minutes, to enable pre-service teachers time for relaxation, digestion, reflection, conversation, and, perhaps, physical activity. Related to this, I also suggest organizing chunks of weekly or monthly flexible time into teacher-education programs for learners to explore educational topics in more depth. These could be in the form of full- or half-days devoted to workshops on integration, social justice, aboriginal perspectives, character education, environmental issues, among others. Common time, in general, would give them opportunities to get more out of their teacher-education experience than the stress-induced, tightly-

packed schedule they follow in the consecutive program where I teach. Another option could be designing the pre-service program daily timetable using a balanced-day model (Peebles & Kirkwood, 2011) where classes are taught in three blocks, linked with two long breaks. The blocks would provide ample time for professors to model a variety of teaching strategies (Bryant & Bryant, 2000; Fox et al., 2003) and the breaks would allow time for reflection, relaxation, and collaboration. Experiencing such a model at the pre-service level could help prepare teacher-candidates well for similar balanced-day timetables in their future schools.

Localizing teacher education

Joining the idea of improving teacher education by slowing its pace is the concept of adding diversity by embracing local knowledge. In order to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop “*terroir* intelligence” (Trubek, 2008, p. 250), I recommend the following: concurrent and consecutive pre-service programs could welcome local influences, incorporate individual professors’ experiences, and provide opportunities for teacher-candidates to experience regional culture first-hand.

Although each pre-service program in Ontario must provide some standardized content (Government of Ontario, 1996), individual programs could showcase their uniqueness by including local culture within courses and special workshops. Currently, there are 18 accredited providers of teacher education in Ontario (OCT, 2013) distributed across a wide geographic area. If they embraced the concept of *terroir*, the urban pre-service programs, for example, could focus on teaching in cities and multicultural populations whereas those in rural parts of the province could focus on teaching smaller learning populations, in remote areas, and, perhaps, aboriginal communities. Others located in areas where languages are more diverse could focus on the cultures of those who speak those languages (e.g., French, Cree, Ojibwe). Prospective teacher-candidates may, therefore, choose their pre-service program based on these local foci.

It is assumed that professors who teach in pre-service programs arrive with varied teaching experiences that they can share with learners. So, in keeping with the concept of *terroir*, professors with specific expertise from their own classroom and research experience may share their “taste[s] of place[s]” (Trubek, 2008, p. xv) within their courses. A professor, for example, who has taught in various provinces, countries, or venues could include segments about their varied teaching experiences within a course in order to provide a wider view of teaching than just an Ontario one. I have taught in three school boards, in two provinces, studied in Scotland, conducted research in several countries, and used my teaching skills in the business world: all experiences worth sharing with teacher-candidates to help broaden their scope of education. With the current lack of teaching positions in Ontario, and elsewhere, a wide focus on alternatives to teaching in traditional classrooms may be welcomed by teacher-candidates concerned about employment.

To help teacher-candidates develop a sense of local culture, it is important for them to have opportunities to get outside of the university “box” and experience it first-hand. Weekly or monthly flexible time could be used for field trips to local schools, service learning opportunities, and alternative educational experiences. If transportation is an issue, guest speakers could be encouraged to come to each campus to provide presentations and/or workshops for teacher-candidates to learn more about how to incorporate local culture into their future classrooms.

The above recommendations for both slowing and localizing teacher education are not only general in scope but also timely. In August 2011, the Ontario Liberals announced their plan to lengthen the provincial teacher education consecutive program (Ontario Liberal Party, 2011, online source). By June 2013, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013b) had finalized the start date as September 2015 and provided basic parameters: consecutive programs would be two years in length (e.g., four semesters) with teacher-candidates spending a minimum of 80 days (approximately 16 weeks) in the classroom for their practicum requirements. Using these parameters, teacher education

providers have some say in how their programs are structured and, therefore, have an opportunity to not only make some positive changes to their existing programs but also influence the future of teacher education in general.

A Model for Ontario Consecutive Pre-service Programs

Based on my teaching and supervisory experience at the elementary, secondary, and pre-service levels, along with my observations in France and concepts presented here, I propose an alternative model for positive and productive teacher education that blends slow living and *terroir*. Its structure is a two-year consecutive program (see Table 1), including four four-month terms: term one for foundations, terms two and three for subject specialization, and term four for areas of interest. It also incorporates courses reflecting the requirements for accreditation (Government of Ontario, 1996) for all teacher education programs in Ontario.

Table 1

Two-year consecutive education model

	Focus	Format	Practicum
Term One (year one)	Foundations: courses in theory, methods, and other foundations of teaching and learning	Choice of face-to-face and/or online (where available)	Four weeks (observe first week of school; teach 25% in other three weeks)
Term Two (year one)	Subject specialization – part one (all teacher-candidates choose five out of the following): art, dance, drama, music, language arts/English, mathematics, French, geography/history/social studies, physical and health education, science, technology	Choice of face-to-face and/or online (where available)	Four weeks (teach 50%)
Term Three (year two)	Subject specialization – part one (all teacher-candidates choose a <i>different</i> five out of the following): art, dance,	Choice of face-to-face and/or online (where available)	Four weeks (teach 75%)

	drama, music, language arts/English, French, mathematics, geography/history/social studies, physical and health education, science, technology		
Term Four (year two)	Areas of interest (all teacher-candidates choose five courses): courses based on local foci and/or part two of any subject specialization and/or certificate programs	Choice of face-to-face and/or online (where available)	Four weeks (teach 100%)

The first term could provide teacher-candidates with education theories, an historical perspective, and the basics of planning, implementation, and assessment, all related to the general guidelines provided in Ontario Regulation 347/02 (Government of Ontario, 1996). This foundation focus could be applied by teacher-candidates not only when they take specific subject courses in terms two and three, and areas of interest courses in term four, but also during their practice-teaching placements in all four terms.

Terms two and three could be spent applying the foundation knowledge learned in term one in specific subjects listed within the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum (OME, 2013a); for example, the arts, languages, mathematics, physical and health education, science, and social studies. As well, by having the opportunity to take a wide range of subject area courses, all teacher-candidates, regardless of division, would have a broader understanding of subject area content than they may have from experiencing current, narrow programs (e.g., Intermediate/Senior) where they specialize in one or two subjects.

Term four helps to localize teacher education and involves more choice for consecutive teacher-candidates. They could, for example, take courses related to local foci (e.g., rural schools, urban schools, aboriginal perspectives, multicultural education, outdoor education) and/or build on the basic subject content knowledge explored in terms two and/or three, especially if they do not feel

confident in a subject and need more time engaging with it. As well, courses taught in the last term could be more thematic than those in terms two and three, and/or take an inquiry approach to provide a more holistic learning experience for teacher-candidates. Each course would be 36 hours in length (3 credits), presented in face-to-face and/or online formats so teacher-candidates could create their own schedules around family commitments and commuting distances. Technology, therefore, could be used to help make teacher education more relaxed and pleasurable rather than just making it faster.

Another option for term four would be to provide a certificate program where teacher-candidates focus on an area of interest (e.g., the arts, the environment, aboriginal perspectives, special education), in a variety of venues, to “build” their own education focus certificate(s). Currently, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) provides one such certificate program in environmental education that combines course work, workshops, and service learning (OISE, 2013).

Practice teaching placements (e.g., a total of 16 weeks) for consecutive teacher-candidates could take place during all four terms, thus stretching out the classroom learning experience. They could begin the school year by observing the first week of school, in order to see how routines are established. They could also spend three more weeks of term one teaching 25% of daily instructional time in order to ease into lesson planning, implementation, and assessment. In terms two, three, and four, teacher-candidates could gradually teach more during each practicum (50% in term two, 75% in term three, 100% in term four) as part of a slower introduction to teaching than in current eight-month consecutive programs.

The two-year model could also include different start times to allow for more flexibility; for example, term-one foundation courses could start in September and January. Teacher-candidates could then choose to not only start a pre-service program mid-year but also complete the program

part-time by dropping in and out of it, as needed, over three to four years. As well, professors who teach mainly foundations courses could teach them in both terms if program start dates were at different times of the school year.

Table 2

Sample week model one – three-hour classes, long lunch

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-11:30	Class	Class	Flex time	Class	Class
11:30-1:30	Common Lunch	Common Lunch	Common Lunch	Common Lunch	Common Lunch
1:30-4:30	Class	Class	Flex time	Class	Class
Evening	Homework/ Online course work	Homework/ Online course work	Homework/ Online course work	Homework/ Online course work	

In order to further slow teacher education, and accommodate local culture, sample week model one (see Table 2) could be adopted within each of the four terms. It allows for two three-hour classes per day, a long common lunch break, and “flex time” mid-week for special projects and/or making up time for lost classes due to statutory holidays. Each class could be scheduled as a three-hour block, offered once each week, in order for in-depth attention to content and provide opportunities for professors to model a variety of teaching strategies (e.g., lecture, collaborative activities, individual work). Long classes may be better for generalists who are learning much for the first time; for example, they have one or two areas of expertise from their undergraduate studies but are expected to teach most subjects in the classroom. Three-hour classes, therefore, could provide ample time for generalists to learn subjects with which they have little experience.

Regarding a balanced day format (Peebles and Kirkwood, 2011), Table 3 illustrates how a timetable, similar to those used in many Ontario elementary schools, may be applied to pre-service

consecutive programs. As in Table 2, teacher-candidates could still have common time, but it would be organized in a different way.

Table 3

Sample week model two – two-hour classes, balanced day

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-10:30	Class	Class	Flex time	Class	Class
10:30-11:30	Common Break	Common Break	Common Break	Common Break	Common Break
11:30-1:30	Class	Class	Flex time	Class	Class
1:30-2:30	Common Break	Common Break	Common Break	Common Break	Common Break
2:30-4:30	Class	Class	Flex time	Class	Class
Evening	Homework/ Online course work	Homework/ Online course work	Homework/ Online course work	Homework/ Online course work	

Regardless of which model a program chose or created, common time could enable teacher-candidates to eat at a slow pace and provide time for positive activities such as exercise, extra-curricular clubs/sports, meetings, and other individual or group activities. The mid-week “flex time” could be organized by different groups each week, with a particular focus to involve, engage, and inspire all members of the pre-service community. It could, for example, be used for presentations, theme days, workshops, local field trips, school visits, and/or service learning opportunities.

The idea of a block of “flex time” each week came not only from Burgundy but also from information shared by a former teacher-candidate (J. Schryer, personal communication, July 2006) when he was teaching in Kashechewan, Ontario. According to him, children there learned the provincial curricula four days each school week and, on the fifth day, local elders taught them about their First Nations’ heritage (e.g., hunting and fishing practices, crafts, folklore). Their regular teachers then used that time for professional development activities. This example may support

Slaughter (2002) when he suggests educators “include all those social innovations that break away from the industrial fantasy and reconnect us to each other and the earth” (p. 95). The children of Kashechewan, therefore, were learning not only what they needed for life beyond their community but also cultural knowledge to share with their future children.

Weekly blocks of “flex time” could be used in each teacher education program for differentiation purposes. Urban pre-service programs, for example, could use the time to focus on teaching in diverse multicultural environments. Rural ones could focus on the benefits and challenges of teaching in smaller centres. Others may focus on events related to aboriginal perspectives, Francophone cultures, and outdoor education. So, instead of “fast-school” standardization, each program could provide unique experiences for their teacher-candidates, based on their geographic location and faculty expertise.

Potential Limitations

These ideas for slowing and localizing teacher education programs are not without limitations. If teacher-candidates chose to take their Bachelor of Education degree part-time, and dropped in and out of the program, courses they have and have not taken would not only have to be tracked but also provided at different times of the school year. As well, three-hour courses (as in Table 2) may be too long for some professors (or teacher-candidates) so those blocks may have to be divided into two 90-minute lessons for some. The lack of evening courses may also present difficulties, especially if a course is taught by a part-time instructor who teaches in an elementary or secondary classroom during the day. Although “flex-time” in Tables 2 and 3 was placed mid-week, it could be moved to suit specific program needs. More importantly, it would have to be organized well to ensure a variety of groups within a pre-service program use the free time effectively for teaching and learning opportunities. In order for any of the ideas mentioned to work, administrators, professors, and other

stakeholders would have to work together to plan, implement, assess, and revise their slow and local teacher-education programs.

Conclusion

McGettrick (2005) suggests, “Education...[provides] a means of empowering each person to contribute to the benefit of society. At the heart of education is the formation of people of enquiry and intellectual debate” (p. 35). Although my stay in Burgundy was short, it had much impact on my considerations for improving teacher education in Ontario. It provided food, and time, for thought, especially for how that experience could benefit teacher-candidates. My aim is to create a more pleasurable experience for them so they may carry the concepts of slow living and *terroir* into their future classrooms and beyond if/when they become school administrators. I see my role as a teacher educator as not only preparing teacher-candidates for their first year in the classroom but also providing a springboard of theory and practice for the rest of their careers. If they experience slow living and *terroir* at the pre-service level, those concepts may permeate, and influence positively, their thoughts when they make decisions at the school level.

I concede that decelerating and localizing teacher education may seem “edutopian” and may not sit well with those who are speed junkies and/or who support standardization. To them, I say they can choose to speed through life, and settle for “cookie-cutter” sameness, but they can also choose not to embrace that way of teaching and learning. Gleick (2000) offers some advice: “To leave time free, it is necessary to decide...we make choices about how to spend it, how to spare it, how to use it, and how to fill it” (p. 232). If slow living and *terroir* are embraced to help improve teacher education, then pre-service programs will need, first, a community dedicated to slowing and localizing these programs. Second, they will need a set of policies to ensure the hybridization, and sustainability, of slow and local teacher education. Third, they could adopt, or develop, similar models to those presented above.

It is inevitable that change will happen for Ontario consecutive pre-service programs so I ask those responsible for making decisions within these programs to make mindful and positive changes. Although they have parameters set by the provincial government (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b), each university will have the choice as to how its program will look. I hope that lengthening consecutive programs will not mean increasing workload. Instead, I suggest universities in Ontario, and elsewhere, increase the pleasure of learning by incorporating the concepts of slow living and *terroir* into teacher education.

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