Immigrant Teachers in Canada: Balancing Labour Market and Equity Agendas

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Workshop Presenters

- Jas Uppal and Paula Rosehart, Simon Fraser University
- Sandi Janusch, Chinook Learning Services/University of Calgary
- Cameron Dearlove, The Working Centre
- Ximena Munoz, Manitoba Fairness Commissioner
- Clea Schmidt, University of Manitoba

Guiding Questions

- How can approaches used in various bridging programs and mentoring initiatives for immigrant teachers mutually inform one another?

- How can labour market and equity agendas be integrated to support the meaningful integration of immigrant teachers?

The Case for Immigrant Teacher Integration

- Immigrant-receiving jurisdictions have a responsibility to facilitate the meaningful contributions of newcomers (Reitz, 2005; Schmidt, Young & Mandzuk, 2010)
- Immigrant teachers can afford all members of school communities the opportunity to engage with and affirm diversity (Schmidt, 2010)

The Case for Immigrant Teacher Integration (cont'd)

Immigrant teachers can potentially serve as cultural and linguistic liaisons in school communities (Carrier & Cohen, 2005; Schmidt, 2010)

Immigrant teachers can provide much needed academic and professional role models for K-12 learners and other immigrant teachers/professionals (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009)

Some Challenges

- Lack of data on immigrant teachers
- Absence of teacher shortages
- Systemic discrimination
- Government immigration and education agendas not necessarily well-aligned
- Mentoring services for immigrant teachers very limited

Moving Forward in Supporting Immigrant Teachers

- Our experience running small cohorts at the U of M has been highly successful
- Offer both a bridging program for re-certifying IETs and a mentorship program for certified IETs
- Work closely with the field to shift hiring practices
- Active research agenda
- After three cohorts, 75% employment rate
- Sustainable funding and partnerships?????

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