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FACTORS PROMOTING THE EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TEACHERS BY ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

FINAL REPORT

Marilyn Caplan
Cari-Lynn Clough
Joanne Ellis
Kimberley Muncey

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Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec
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Project # PA2006-006

VANIER
CÉGEP/COLLEGE

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Acknowledgments

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Summary

The cegep network has been undergoing changes in its teaching staff. High numbers of teachers are at or near retirement age and consequently new, often inexperienced teachers are being hired to help fill the gap created by the unprecedented volume of retirements. The overall goal of this three-year research project was to analyze and assess the conditions under which academic departments can most effectively integrate new teachers and contribute to their professional development. Through this analysis and assessment, we aimed to identify and describe the actions and materials that are most essential and beneficial for departments to implement and sustain so as to accommodate the new and in-coming teachers.

In order to conduct research on a practical, feasible scale, we worked with three departments; one member of each department served as a facilitator, the main link between the researchers and the departments. Intending to produce a portrait of both the cultures of the departments and new teachers' experiences within them, we chose a qualitative approach, namely action research and grounded theory. The two methods share an approach in that neither begins with a hypothesis that researchers set out to prove; rather, they each allow the situation, its participants and circumstances to dictate how the research will unfold. This methodology entailed conducting a needs assessment; coding and analyzing the resulting data carefully and rigorously until the point of saturation; using the data as a basis for designing and implementing action; and observing, reflecting on, evaluating and, when necessary, refining the course of action.

The needs assessment allowed us to explore new teachers' experiences through an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews (our two main sources of data). In total, 44 teachers responded to the questionnaire and 22 participated in an interview. The results of the data fell into one of three rubrics: pedagogical, administrative and social. Within these rubrics there were categories and corresponding themes, which had emerged from the data and primarily reflected the challenges new teachers face. This information served as the foundation from which facilitators launched action geared at new teachers. Action took the form of workshops, information sessions, gatherings, mentoring and the production of materials.

Overall, we found that, considering time and resources, our three key departments were quite successful at integrating their new teachers. Amid the numerous results of this research project, the most prominent was that a supportive, nurturing and dependable department is the most crucial factor to new teacher integration. Based on the results of both the needs assessment and the action stemming from it, this report concludes with suggestions for further research on the subject and of ways departments can successfully address the main challenges new teachers encounter.

Résumé

Le réseau des cégeps connaît depuis un certain temps des changements au sein de son personnel enseignant. En effet, un nombre élevé d'enseignants ont ou auront bientôt atteint l'âge de la retraite. Il s'ensuit que de nouveaux enseignants, souvent inexpérimentés, sont embauchés pour combler le manque de personnel dû au nombre sans précédent de départs à la retraite. Le but principal de ce projet de recherche d'une durée de trois ans était donc d'analyser et d'évaluer les conditions propices à l'insertion et au développement professionnels efficaces des nouveaux enseignants par leurs départements. À partir de l'analyse et de l'évaluation, nous avons cherché à identifier et à décrire le matériel et les activités les plus profitables et indispensables aux départements et devant être développés de façon suivie par ceux-ci afin d'accueillir les nouveaux enseignants à leur entrée au cégep.

Dans l'optique d'une recherche menée sur un plan pratique et réalisable, nous avons travaillé avec trois départements; un membre de chacun des départements a servi de facilitateur, assurant en grande partie le lien entre les chercheurs et les départements. Afin de dresser un portrait des cultures propres aux départements et aux expériences des nouveaux enseignants y travaillant, nous avons choisi une approche qualitative, notamment la recherche-action et la théorie à partir des données (*grounded theory*). Les deux méthodes partagent la même approche en ce qu'elles ne se fondent pas sur une hypothèse de départ devant être prouvée par les chercheurs; elles laissent plutôt la situation, ses participants, ainsi que les circonstances dicter le déroulement de la recherche. Cette méthodologie consistait à réaliser une évaluation des besoins; procéder au codage et à l'analyse attentive et rigoureuse des données recueillies, et ce, jusqu'au point de saturation; se baser sur les données afin de concevoir et mettre en oeuvre l'action; procéder à l'observation, à la réflexion, à l'évaluation et, lorsque nécessaire, au réajustement de l'action.

L'évaluation des besoins nous a permis d'examiner les expériences des nouveaux enseignants à l'aide d'un questionnaire en ligne et d'entrevues semi-structurées (nos deux principales sources de données). Au total, 44 enseignants ont répondu au questionnaire et 22 ont participé à une entrevue. Les résultats des données se classaient dans l'une des trois rubriques suivantes : pédagogique, administrative et sociale. À l'intérieur de ces rubriques se trouvaient les catégories et leurs thèmes respectifs issus des données recueillies et reflétant les principaux défis auxquels font face les nouveaux enseignants. Les facilitateurs se sont basés sur ces informations pour entreprendre une action adaptée aux besoins des nouveaux enseignants. L'action a pris la forme d'ateliers, de séances d'information, de rencontres, de mentorat et de production de matériel.

De manière générale, nous avons trouvé que, compte tenu du temps et des ressources, nos trois départements clés avaient bien réussi l'insertion de leurs nouveaux enseignants. Parmi les nombreux résultats de ce projet de recherche, le plus important est qu'un département fiable, qui fournit soutien et encouragement, représente le facteur le plus déterminant dans l'insertion des nouveaux enseignants. D'après les résultats de l'évaluation des besoins et ceux de l'action entreprise suite à celle-ci, nous concluons ce rapport avec des suggestions pour des recherches plus approfondies sur le sujet, et sur des façons dont les départements peuvent s'y prendre pour aborder avec confiance les défis majeurs auxquels sont confrontés les nouveaux enseignants.

CHAPTER 1
Problématique: Renewal of Cegep Faculty

1.1 New teachers in the college network

Teachers play a crucial role that is intrinsically linked to student success. The quality of education a student receives has an impact on the type of student he will be, as well as on how well he[1] will fare afterwards in the workforce. In order for teachers to effectively train their students, they must be properly trained themselves; this entails being skilled in both the subject matter they are teaching and pedagogy.

Furthermore, if being an expert teacher is a reflection of being content, confident and adept in one's job as teacher, then the environment in which one teaches also contributes to how well teachers, and consequently students, perform. That is, integration within a school and the subsequent professional development (or lack thereof) one receives from the school he teaches at can both be determining factors in one's career as a teacher. By the term integration, we mean that the department provides an orientation on the workings of the department and as the teacher's role within it, as well as the functioning of the college as a whole. The orientation process should be conducive to a welcoming atmosphere in which the newly hired teacher feels comfortable asking questions when they arise.

[1] Please note that this report will solely employ masculine pronouns for the purposes of clarity, simplification, and to mask the identity of participants.

Lauzon (2006) identified the possible correlation between a difficult start to one's teaching career (usually due to lack of effective integration) and high, at times unmanageable, levels of stress and/or departure from the teaching profession, especially if this rough start is not immediately proceeded by some kind of intervention by colleagues to help assuage stress. While integration fosters a smooth, positive start to one's career, professional development can help ensure it stays that way. Professional development promotes the renewal of skills and attainment of new ones, allowing teachers to stay current in their teaching methods and content. Professional development can also have the added benefit of renewing interest in one's career after many years of teaching.

At this point in time integration and professional development are of particular relevance to the cegep system. Experienced teachers who have amassed a great deal of professional knowledge and teaching expertise are retiring in large numbers. Consequently, they need to be replaced, which means that a high number of new, often inexperienced teachers need to be integrated into the cegep system.

The term "new teacher" should not be applied to first year teachers only. Both Bateman (1999) and Lauzon (2006) emphasize that this group includes teachers in years one, two, and three of teaching. In her study of how teachers acquire their professional knowledge, Lauzon designates the first three years of a teacher's life as the beginning stage. At this time, teachers are concentrating on

the material to be presented, as well as on how to effectively carry out classroom management. From its observations of new teachers, the Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence at Vanier College confirms that this inclusion of second and third year teachers in this group of “new” teachers is appropriate. Teachers in these first three years are similar in their commitment to become integrated into their work environment and to begin to establish effective pedagogy.

The “mass exodus of experienced teachers,” as Bateman (1999) has referred to it, has indeed been a much-discussed subject within Quebec’s cegep-level education system. Since the beginning of 1996, the renewal of teaching personnel has been an issue of prime importance; the numbers of new teachers entering the network are well documented (Raymond, 2001). Between 2000 and 2015, close to 6,700 cegep teachers will have retired (Bateman, 1999). This figure represents 80% of the teaching body (Raymond et al, 2005). More specifically, between 2005 and 2009, 2576 teachers will have been replaced, representing 31.39% of the teaching body (Bateman, 1999). At Vanier College, we have 187 tenured teachers (60.5% of the teaching body) who will be 60 years old or more in 2010, and on the verge of retirement. If anything, this data emphasizes the extent to which the cegep network will be losing rich resources and talent.

The high retirement rate among cegep teachers will clearly result in high numbers of new teachers in the system. This being the case, one may wonder the extent to which new teachers are aware of and/or familiar with their new

teaching environment. Many new teachers enter the collegial system having been cegep students themselves and so they might already understand collegial goals and expectations. For others, however, this collegial system, unique in North America, poses a formidable challenge. They haven't heard of the Parent Commission Report (1963 – 1966) nor of the obstacles facing Quebec youth in the 1960's to acquire post-secondary education; consequently, they don't understand the elaborate structure established to meet the needs of Quebec youth. The idea of combining the technologies and the pre-university streams is new to them; they don't understand the role of general education to bring students together in the same core curriculum. Furthermore, being unfamiliar with the cegep system, they may have unrealistic expectations as to the level of the average student. They are thus already at a disadvantage as they take on their professional teaching duties. Other obstacles pose additional problems.

The majority of new teachers enter collegial teaching without formal training in pedagogy. Minimal requirements for hiring in the collegial sector are university training in the discipline. This is despite the fact that calls have been made repeatedly for teacher training, first by the Parent Commission in 1964, and subsequently by the ministère de l'Éducation in 1978 and 1996 (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 2000). Most teachers must acquire their necessary professional development in the midst of carrying out their college teaching functions. Bateman's study (1999) of new teachers confirms this emphasis on academic qualifications while teaching qualifications are to a large extent

disregarded. Of the 178 new teachers she surveyed, 75.8% possessed an advanced academic degree but only 35% possessed teaching qualifications. L'Hostie et al. (2004) also confirm the absence of teacher training amongst teachers, as well as a lack of practice in teaching before they assume their first teaching post.

1.2 Demands on new teachers

The demands on new teachers to acquire professional skills are becoming increasingly daunting. The challenge of learning these skills is continuously stressed in the literature (Tardif, 1997; Couturier, 2004), especially for beginning teachers (Raymond, 2001).

Many factors contribute to this increased difficulty but the demands of the 1993 Reform are central. At this time, the ministère de l'Éducation called on teachers to change from the paradigm of teacher-centered education to learner-centered education. Teachers could no longer simply serve as the conduit of knowledge between teacher and student, but rather the teacher was required to involve the student in a process by which students would construct knowledge for themselves. This socio-constructivist framework required teachers to have a deep understanding of the approach to be used and of the students they were working with. Moreover, with the Reform, teachers have had to understand the

competency-based approach at the center of instruction and evaluation, as well as the program-based approach, and to take charge of the implementation of their programs. Teachers cannot simply introduce some new tricks or follow the methods of their own teachers (Rosenfield et al., 2005); rather they need to develop a comprehensive methodology based on theory. In 2000, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (CSE) clearly confirmed its belief in the focus on learning rather than on teaching; teachers are not only expected to be the experts in their discipline but also in the processes of learning by their students. The fact that numbers of teachers find this challenging (Perrenoud, 2005; Chbat, 2004; Langevin, Boily, and Talbot, 2004) doesn't remove the burden from new teachers; they feel that they must try to involve their students in their own learning.

The complexity and the number of competencies required by teachers are described by Laliberté and Dorais (1998). They describe the penultimate competence as the ability of teachers to intervene professionally with colleagues in order to aid students in learning, to help them form themselves, and to develop their (the students') own competencies. Bateman (2001) presents an alternative profile of the competent teacher. This profile includes professionalism, mastery of content, specific pedagogical knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge. She elaborates on what is included in general pedagogical knowledge: principles of educational psychology to be used in the design and delivery of instruction; the

means to “assess student learning adequately, meaningfully and fairly;” the management of the classroom; and the integration of information technology.

Raymond and St. Pierre (2003) stress the many roles of the teacher as facilitator, animator and pedagogue. Pratte’s description of the very act of teaching illustrates just how complex teaching is (2001). It is a multifaceted, interactive, rational act that is situated within a context and is contingent upon circumstances. Finally, reflection is demanded throughout, as teachers must reconsider their actions, evaluate them, and then have these reflections lead to new actions. Unfortunately, reflection is often a difficult tool for new teachers to learn to utilize, especially considering everything else they are juggling at the start of their career. It is only by the development of reflection on action at the time the action is being carried out (Schön, 1983) that one can begin to attain a true professional identity (CSE, 2000). Becoming a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) is thus yet another challenge facing new teachers (L’Hostie et al., 2004; Pratte, 2001; Lauzon, 2006).

Bateman’s 1999 study makes clear the kinds of assistance new teachers require. She underlines help with course management as being basic. Teachers need to know how to prepare their courses: what materials to include, how to present them, and how the objectives of these courses fit into the program objectives. Teaching methodologies present the second challenge to new teachers. What methodologies are most appropriate? How can diverse methodologies be used to

meet diverse learning needs? What evaluation tools should be used? Teachers have to learn how to focus on pedagogy that helps students learn. It is not enough that they simply are familiar with a body of knowledge. What can they then do with this knowledge? How do they have to manipulate this knowledge? How can objectives be written as competencies? Finally teachers have to gain an understanding of the needs of their learners, particularly adolescent learners. They have to understand that often students are still at the concrete level of thinking; critical and abstract thinking frequently presents problems for students (Bateman, 1999).

The environment to which new teachers have to adapt is highly complex. The students, the majority of whom have just recently graduated from secondary school, are at a difficult stage in their lives. Desirous of freedom but not yet possessing the skills to deal with it, they pose particular problems for the inexperienced teacher. In addition, many come to college with inadequate preparation. These students are confronted by a range of academic and social problems their teachers can hardly relate to, problems surrounding family and peers: poverty, violence, crime, and illness. In Montreal, many of the colleges face additional challenges because of their immigrant populations. Teachers have students from a vast array of cultures and countries. Many students do not adequately communicate in the language of instruction. Students with learning difficulties can make other demands. Teachers suddenly find themselves having to adapt to much lower expectations about the progress of their students, and

having to deal with unforeseen disruptions and discipline problems (Mackay, Miller and Quinn, 2006).

The college environment places even greater demands on teachers as they are expected to be familiar with technology. Course management systems are becoming increasingly obligatory. Teachers may master one system only to find that their college has changed to another one. The new system has to be learned, course materials must be migrated to the new system, and students taught new requirements. Many teachers lack an understanding of how technology can be integrated into the curriculum and used in the classroom (Karsenti, 2005). Poelhuber (2001) found that even the integration of computer technology into courses did not necessarily imply changes in the pedagogical approaches of the instructors. New teachers might have found ways to incorporate technology into their courses, but they did so in ways that only continued to support outdated teaching practices (Poelhuber, 2001).

Meanwhile, technology only accounts for one of many potential hurdles new teachers could face at the start of their career. Added together, the culmination of these hurdles could affect the start of a teacher's career in a negative manner. Tierney and Rhoads (1993), for example, argue that the first few years of a teacher's career are critical. Many new teachers feel overwhelmed. Indeed, Bateman's 1999 study included a focus group with experienced teachers in which they characterized new teachers as "obsessed" because of their

passionate concern about subject matter; “overwhelmed” as they try to acquire the basics; so “overworked” they are lacking the time needed for professional development; and “insecure,” “conservative” such that they can only “teach by the book.” In 2001, Bateman stressed that frequently new teachers, left to learn on their own, have to deal with isolation, which can lead to less effective teaching and dissatisfaction. Pratte (2001) talks about the uncertainty many new teachers feel. Tierney and Rhoads (1993) add another aspect, the stress new teachers feel as experienced teachers regard them with, if not distrust, then what is often perceived as a certain non-acceptance. Lauzon (2006) confirms the negative experience of some teachers as they begin to teach. Some teachers decide to leave teaching, or, if they stay, are already disillusioned. Sustained, immediate, and consistent assistance must be ensured for all new teachers.

1.3 Support provided by the college and the network

Individual cegeps and the network as a whole have clearly recognized that new teachers need support. They acknowledge that in particular new teachers require assistance not so much in their specific subjects but in how to teach. The issue is the kind of services the cegep network should provide. The CSE (2000) has called on universities and colleges to address this need with formal and informal measures. In the Francophone sector, there is the Module d’insertion professionnelle des nouveaux enseignants du collégial (MIPEC). In the

Anglophone sector, there is the Master Teacher Program (MTP), developed in conjunction with the PERFORMA program that was designed specifically for training cegep teachers in pedagogy and is accredited by l'Université de Sherbrooke. Both of these programs respond to the needs of teachers for ongoing and comprehensive professional development. MIPEC is already in existence in twenty-four colleges. Yet, as Raymond (2005) points out, despite MIPEC's many contributions, it unfortunately does not reach out to all teachers. Moreover, of those teachers who enroll, a substantial number drop out. For instance, in 2004 an astounding 302 teachers registered for MIPEC; however, of those who were already enrolled, 67 had temporarily interrupted their progress and 110 appeared to have abandoned the program entirely. Although the teachers enrolled in the MTP have nothing but praise for it, unfortunately only a relatively small number of teachers from the Anglophone colleges are enrolled. Given their busy schedules, not all teachers can devote the necessary time to follow these formal training programs, or commit on a long-term basis; nor does everyone want such a structured approach. Furthermore, given that teachers register for these programs on a voluntary basis, those who most need them may never register. According to anecdotal evidence, teachers have increasingly called for a more flexible offering of MTP courses; this is slowly beginning to take shape with the implementation of the new MTP three-hour traveling workshops, which are based on courses given in the MTP.

Cegeps have implemented other in-service initiatives for new teachers recognizing that such initiatives can be more effective than pre-service programs. Such in-service programs can be very motivating as they meet the immediate needs of teachers. Orientations for new faculty, Pedagogical Days with workshops and seminars, and workshops organized according to expressed needs (computer skills, for example) are evidence that cegeps are aware of their responsibility to integrate teachers and assist them in acquiring professional development. Other initiatives, such as Vanier's Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence, have been created with the express purpose of helping teachers grow professionally according to their needs. The problem with many of these projects, however, is that the numbers of teachers involved are often limited and the effect, however positive at that moment, is not always sustained.

A more sustained approach can be found in various mentoring programs, such as those reported by Cantin and Lauzon (2002). Mentoring programs offer inexperienced teachers the opportunity to be guided by more experienced teachers, and those mentored tend to feel much gratitude for the sense of security and understanding they receive. The model of accompaniment described by L'Hostie et al. (2004) presents experienced faculty helping new teachers with an emphasis on assisting the novice to reflect on his work. The experienced faculty member first acts more as a coach, and then later the emphasis is on reflection on practices that have been successful, those that have not, and why. In this model, a resource person is necessary to support the

mentor. L'Hostie et al. indicate that the results from this intervention are positive, both for the new and experienced teachers involved. Pratte (2001) suggests another model of the pedagogical counsellor reaching out to teachers, assisting them as needed. While all these models do contribute to the integration and professional development of new teachers, they only serve a limited number of faculty; moreover, the costs involved can be high**.** How can one ensure that these programs are more wide-spread, touching a greater number of teachers, while still being cost effective?

Possible solutions can be found in Lauzon's insightful project (2006). Through the autobiographies of her subjects, she traced the progress of teachers in their advancement towards and acquisition of the profession of teaching and consequently their professional identity as a teacher. Teachers reported on professional activities they sometimes participate in and on discussions they have from time to time with colleagues. Through reflection on these and other activities organized by their colleges or the network, teachers slowly gained a greater understanding of their profession. As Lauzon uncovered, however, in many cases, too much time is wasted and too much distress is experienced before new teachers acquire the perspective and skills of a competent teacher. Other means must be found to reach out in a systematic way to all teachers, to provide the collegial support that is so necessary. Fundamentally, the success of our students relies on it.

1.4 The role of academic departments

Academic departments are in an excellent position to offer the sustained, grass-roots, practical, immediate, discipline-specific yet also general, support to their own teachers in a systematic, comprehensive, and cost-effective manner. Departments have been called upon by the CSE (2000) to play a determining role in the educational activity of colleges. The FAC/CEGEP Professors Collective Agreement 2000 - 2002 stated that the function of departments includes ensuring assistance to new teachers. The FAC/CEGEP Professors Collective Agreement 2000 - 2002 also underlined the departmental coordinator's role in defining goals, ensuring that teaching methods are applied and that evaluative techniques are in place. Departments and their coordinators, then, have already been assigned a key "on the ground" position in ensuring the welcome and integration of new teachers. Preliminary discussions with two departmental coordinators at Vanier College highlighted certain services already in place: assistance with course planning, competencies, and evaluation. Meetings provide an introduction to the departmental culture, policies and collective wisdom; informal get-togethers provide much needed social support. The departments' experienced teachers can pass their expertise on to the novice teachers and so ensure continuity of approach and knowledge of departmental history, essential for sound future decision-making. A welcome side effect of this approach is that seasoned teachers can appreciate the validation of their experience and feel content in their last years of teaching, understanding how

essential it is to train the next group of teachers and their role in this initiative (Bateman, 2001). Departments, then, are in the best position to reduce the trial and error approach of many new teachers, helping these teachers acquire useful "on the ground" training and become effective in a time efficient manner.

Lauzon's research (2006) states that departments can have a positive impact on their members, particularly on the newest ones. Collegial departments can encourage observations of classes, team-teaching, discussions on pedagogy, and regular exchanges of information. Lauzon reports how teachers often name their colleagues as their most important source of learning. Khyati (2005) points out that new learning must be contextualized within the work environment; it is the department that can do this most easily. Raymond (2001) underlines the key role of departments in offering support to new teachers in terms of their disciplines. Departments are closest to new teachers and best know the specific work environment; it is therefore only logical that department members integrate their new colleagues into the department as fully as possible. Departments that are fully committed to the integration of their teachers could organize mentoring, a practice favoured by the CSE (2000). Such departments could also be more inclined to refer new teachers to formal teaching programs. By providing many options for teachers to pursue, departments would be fulfilling the demand of the CSE (2000) for a flexible training program respecting diverse needs. Departments are the ideal vehicle to provide personalized professional

development (Lévesque 2002). The department could become Lessard's community of learners (2005).

Bateman (1999) offers more insight into the valuable role departments could play. Her exploratory study of new faculty in 1999 showed that most teachers (94.7%) felt that conversations with other teachers had a positive effect on new teacher integration. While few of the teachers surveyed had access to mentoring programs, 63% agreed that such programs could be useful. When asked what essential services colleges should provide, the most frequently cited recommendations were "assistance from a mentor and/or the chair of the department" and "conversations with teachers." The study also emphasized the need for basic information to be provided to new teachers, such as when to order books, how to print copies, etc. (Bateman, 1999).

If, however, departments are not always able to fully integrate new teachers (such as by offering the above-mentioned basic information), the reason may be due to a lack of time and resources. Robert (1989) discusses the myriad challenges facing departmental coordinators. To begin with, he states that coordinators receive insufficient release time to balance teaching and coordinating duties; indeed, an estimated work week of approximately 50 hours would be needed to fully execute the tasks of both roles. Furthermore, coordinators might have the additional stress of facing conflicts of interest and finding themselves stuck in the middle between their department and the

administration (Robert, 1989). Thus, a major issue is how departments can do more for teachers in a way that is feasible and that will not exacerbate the existing situation many coordinators find themselves in.

1.5 Goal and objectives of the project

This three-year project was developed taking into consideration the increasingly urgent need for effective integration and professional development to accommodate a significant influx of new teachers due to the high rates of retirement among experienced faculty. **Our project had the general goal of analyzing and determining the conditions under which academic departments can most effectively integrate new teachers and contribute to their professional development.** A series of questions informed the structure and approach of the project. What exactly are the needs of new teachers? What kinds of activities do they require for their integration and professional development? How can departments assume a greater role in the professional development of their new teachers without further taxing already strained resources? What are the critical factors that will promote this effort, and which will hinder it? We sought to identify these factors in order to propose recommendations to the cegep network for departments to build on what is currently offered and/or develop and implement new action for the professional development of new teachers.

Our specific objectives in carrying out this project were:

- To review the extent to which departments are meeting the needs of their new faculty in terms of integration and professional development
- To identify and describe the critical factors that will promote or prevent the necessary developments within departments to assume a more proactive role with new teachers
- To determine what actions and materials are necessary for departments to sustain and support new teachers
- To make recommendations for the successful integration and professional development of new teachers by their departments, to be disseminated throughout the cegep network

1.6 Plan for achieving goal and objectives

In order to move forward with the project it was, of course, imperative to work with departments and try out ideas in an actual, concrete situation. Three departments were selected based on their numbers of new and retiring teachers; they shall hereon-in be referred to as department A, department B and department C. The departments and their specific participants from them shall remain anonymous to respect their privacy, as well as to help create a sense of transparency which we hope will facilitate the transfer of practices throughout the network.

The project employed a combination of action research and grounded theory as its methodology. This means the methodology basically consisted of conducting a needs assessment, and from these results developing and testing various activities and materials; this was followed by reflection and evaluation. With this method, decisions were not imposed by people outside the department; faculty members decided for themselves what measures to implement.

Further, our method allowed for a solution to emerge from the problem (as opposed to being imposed from outside); thus, the results apply to the general situation colleges are in, as opposed to a situation in which a theory was imposed, in which case results may only apply to the institution that has devised the theory. Indeed, due to the transferability action research yields, the sharing of results is highly encouraged (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). With minimal restructuring and few additional resources, departments could take on a major role in providing this support. We anticipate the results will be beneficial for various groups, and will contribute to Vanier College's general pedagogical development. The project results will also hopefully serve the purpose of other institutions throughout the network.

CHAPTER 2
Research Methodology

2.1 Type of research

The purpose of our research was to identify the best ways new teachers can be integrated into their departments, as well as the most effective professional development activities departments can offer new teachers. To accomplish this, it was necessary to begin by drawing a portrait of the current situation, by discovering what departments were already doing to integrate new teachers and provide professional development. Further, it was crucial to take into account the realities new teachers face to help ensure the development of practical ideas that could be applied to the situation. This type of research necessitated the use of qualitative research because it is used to study social and cultural phenomenon; it allows researchers to draw a portrait of the situation to be examined (Dolbec and Clément, 2000). This "portrait" is then a key tool used to assess a situation, its strengths and weaknesses, and the direction the research must take in order to ensure that useful and applicable results are acquired.

More specifically, we elected to execute our project using grounded theory, a type of qualitative research that is hinged on "the discovery of theory from data systemically obtained from social research" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It was necessary for this project to employ methods that would allow us to let our research findings determine the course of action. That is, we felt it would be

detrimental to begin our research with a pre-determined course of action already in place, as this would take the emphasis away from research findings and not allow for flexibility; we deemed it more beneficial and more likely to yield long-lasting results if we planned our course of action based on the results and information garnered from the research.

One of the merits of grounded theory that strongly appealed to us was its reliability. Because theory that emerges from grounded theory is so intrinsically tied to data (and the subjects from whom that data is collected) it is unlikely to be refuted; it stems from the data source (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Data is obtained and eventually transformed into theory following these mostly-overlapping steps:

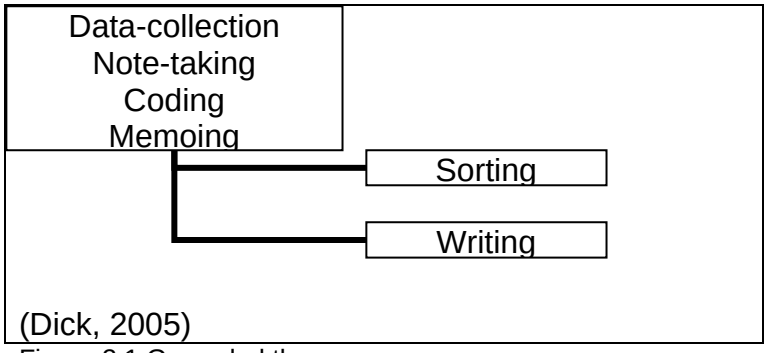

Figure 2.1 Grounded theory process

In conjunction with grounded theory, we applied action research to our project. Action research and grounded theory share the same approach in that neither begins with a hypothesis that researchers set out to prove; rather, they each allow the situation, its participants and circumstances to dictate how the research will unfold. Action research consists of the following rigorous four-step cycle:

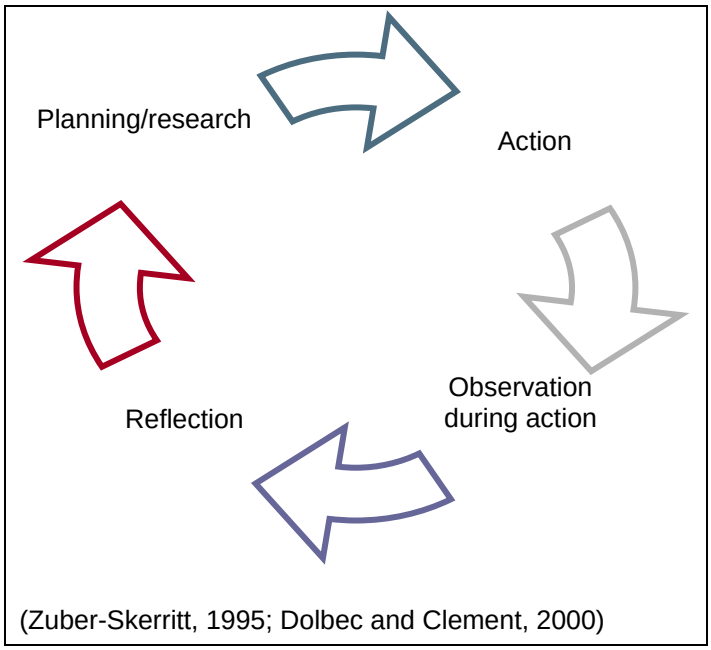

Figure 2.2 Action research cycle

This structure was not only beneficial, but indeed crucial to the development of our project because we did not want to impose ideas and actions derived from a theoretical perspective. Rather, we wanted them to emerge and grow organically from the departments. As Zuber-Skerritt (1992) suggests, merging theory with practice and working within an existing situation leads to realistic, sensible amelioration in what have been hitherto considered problematic areas. The purpose and usefulness of action research is summarized in table 2.1, consisting of a reproduction of Zuber-Skerritt's (1992) model of C.R.A.S.P.

We immersed ourselves in the situation at hand and allowed our findings to determine how to achieve our objectives. Action research and grounded theory involve a collaborative implementation of new activities and take place in a

concrete, actual (as opposed to theoretical) situation (Dolbec and Clément, 2000).

Action research is: **C**ritical (and self-critical) collaborative enquiry by **R**eflective practitioners being **A**ccountable and making the results of their enquiry public, **S**elf-evaluating their practice and engaged in **P**articipative problem-solving and continuing professional development.

Table 2.1 C.R.A.S.P. model

Our plan was to gather data from teachers and departmental coordinators, then map and implement action (by way of activities, workshops and materials) and while the action was occurring, be engaged in the process of "reflection in action" (Schön, 1983). Reflection would then lead to more research and the cycle would continue. The continuous cycle helps maintain a focus on the goal and ensure rigour. Once a cycle had been completed, it would be renewed on the basis that the reflection process would refine and perhaps reorient our plan of action. Due to the dynamic social context, it was paramount that our approach be flexible and adaptable to unforeseen changes that would occur throughout the process. The fact that a cycle consists of on-going "loop learning" would ensure continuous improvement and validation of the results (Dolbec and Clément, 2000).

It was essential that our method allow us to work collectively with members of different departments. Grounded theory and action research's methodologies

dictate that problem-solving must incorporate action. In order for our objectives to be met, it was imperative that we test the ideas that came forward in actual situations in order to be assured that our work was moving in the right direction.

2.2 How research was set up

As we were using action research as our methodology, we did not need to set up an elaborate course of action prior to commencing our research. Rather, we needed to set up our research by determining who the participants would be and clearly define their roles, and which tools we would employ to amass data.

Participants

We based our groups of participants on the model offered by Hatten, Knapp and Salonga (2000) which they describe as such:

> The focus of collaboration involves interaction between a researcher or research team and a practitioner or group of practitioners. The 'practitioners' are individuals who know the field or workplace from an internal perspective regarding the history of the workplace development, knowledge of how others in the setting expect things to be done and knowing how things are usually done. The 'researcher' is an outsider who has expertise in theory and research but limited knowledge regarding the local setting.

The research consisted of three primary groups of participants: the researchers, the facilitators and teachers from departments A, B and C. The facilitators and teachers can be viewed as Hatten, Knapp and Salonga's "practitioners." Each group had its own function in moving the project forward.

2.2.1 Researchers

The research team was made up of four professionals from The Learning Centre at Vanier College. We developed the systems for data gathering, conducted the needs assessments and analyzed the data, the results of which we shared with the facilitators. We provided training to the facilitators on the range of possible activities, and the role and process of reflection. In meetings, we guided them and offered input on the project's direction. While maintaining the flexibility and open-endedness demanded by action research, we performed the crucial task of ensuring that the project stayed focused on its goal of uncovering the best ways departments can integrate and offer professional development to new teachers.

2.2.2 Facilitators

A member of each department served as a facilitator and worked with both the researchers and teachers in their department. Having scrutinized the data analysis, facilitators used their knowledge of their department to create and implement activities and materials to help provide information teachers felt was missing. The facilitators were key players in encouraging their departments to reflect on and put into place activities that would help their teachers. In the course of facilitating new practices in their departments, facilitators observed and took notes in their logbooks of what worked and what didn't.

2.2.3 Teachers

It was of the utmost importance that teachers be highly involved in the research. As Lewin (1948) and Dolbec and Clément (2000) state, one of the fundamental tenets of action research is that in order for progress to occur, it is imperative that those for whom research is being effected be involved in the process. As stated above, we did not set out with a hypothesis to prove, but rather wanted to draw a clear portrait of the situation in order for this portrait to determine and guide the action to be taken. Because teachers form a critical part of this portrait and are arguably the ones most affected by it, it was crucial to have them offer and form the elements of the portrait themselves. By involving teachers directly in the process, the data collected yielded richer and more comprehensive results, with concrete, tangible ideas and plans to undertake. Bateman (1999) and Lauzon (2006) both define a “new” teacher as having up to three years of teaching experience. For the purposes of this project, however, we decided to extend the definition to include teachers with four and five years of experience. Our primary reasons for defining new teachers as having up to five years of experience teaching at Vanier were, first, because work in the first couple years of cegep teaching can be sparse and irregular; and, second, to ensure a high enough rate of participation.

2.3 Data-gathering tools

Our aim was to uncover and develop practices that could be realistically adopted by departments and that would have a lasting effect. Therefore, action research allowed us to work with and within the existing cultures of the targeted departments, rather than attempt to change their culture. Because our research was guided by and developed from the existing situation, we needed to begin with a clear portrait of it; the selection of data-gathering tools was thus the starting point of the project, and that which helped launch and guide us in the direction(s) the departments wanted to go in or continue going in.

2.3.1 Online Questionnaires

The purpose of the online questionnaire was to begin getting an impression of what the department already had in place for new teachers, and to elicit feedback on how teachers felt about what was in place. It also served as a forum for teachers to make recommendations regarding additional services they would like to see their department offer.

The questionnaire, created with surveymonkey.com, was broken down into two sections: one for new teachers with 0 – 5 years of experience, and the other for teachers with 6+ years of experience. The first question of the survey asked participants how many years they had been teaching at Vanier. It was set up in

such a way that, depending on how the first question was answered, the participant would be brought to either the new or experienced teachers' section.

The questionnaire was composed of six questions for experienced teachers and eight questions for new teachers (see Appendix 1). The questions for experienced teachers revolved around what the department currently had in place for new teachers, how and whether this could be enhanced, and whether, as an experienced teacher, the respondent had participated in activities for new teacher integration. The questions for new teachers revolved around their entry paths into Vanier, what they found helpful in terms of assistance from their department and to what extent, if any, they had experienced challenges. For both groups, the questions were open and encouraged respondents to suggest possible activities that could be implemented during the action phase of the project.

Advantages and Disadvantages

One of this tool's main advantages is that it allowed us to get a comprehensive, global view of the situation. While a great deal of information was garnered from the semi-structured interviews (see below), it was unfeasible to interview everyone. Therefore, the questionnaires offered everyone the opportunity to voice their opinion on the issue of new teacher integration (particularly experienced teachers, since the interviews were limited to new teachers).

Another advantage is that having the questionnaire online was an efficient way to contact all teachers quickly and with limited use of paper, which helped reinforce Vanier's environmental policy. Because it was online, we were also able to verify numbers intermittently, with the added bonus that the software tabulated results for us, which saved time.

The surveys were completely anonymous; the email we sent to teachers contained a website link which brought teachers directly to the survey and so they did not have to reply to the email. This anonymity, along with the fact that teachers could respond to the survey from the privacy of their own homes, was intended to allow respondents to more openly discuss their department's possible shortcomings. This is not to say that we encouraged negative comments; however, the purpose of this project would have been defeated had teachers not felt comfortable enough to express their thoughts and opinions. In general, the questionnaire was indeed a practical outlet for teachers to carefully consider their stance on the various aspects of new teacher integration, particularly because they had as much time as they wanted to consider their responses to each of the questions, rather than being put on the spot.

While the anonymity of the online questionnaire had its advantages, it also fostered what we consider to be its greatest disadvantage. Because we do not know who said what, we were left with no way of knowing whether something

that was written in the survey was repeated by the same person in an interview.[2] We therefore feared that a comment could have been tallied twice when it was in fact made by the same person twice and should have only been tallied once. This was a genuine concern because the impending action plan was dependent on survey and interview results, and skewed numbers could have led to a misdirected list of priorities. In order to avoid the problem of reporting false numbers, we did not place a strong emphasis on the results of the new teacher surveys. It should be noted, however, that once teachers submitted their survey, their survey link did not allow them to attempt to submit a second survey, which would have exacerbated the problem associated with anonymity.

2.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to obtain a more in-depth portrait of the situation than the online questionnaire could offer. The interview process was guided by qualitative research, particularly "depth interviewing" as defined by Crabtree and Miller (2004). They write:

> The interview is a research-gathering approach that seeks to create a listening space where meaning is constructed through an inter-exchange / co-creation of verbal viewpoints in the interest of scientific knowledge.

The process focuses on uncovering as much information as possible on one subject (in this case it was integration of and professional development for new teachers), rather than asking questions on many different subjects. The interview process consists of first undertaking preliminary research on the topic

[2] This concern applies only to the surveys filled out by new teachers as experienced teachers were not interviewed.

and then designing the interview in terms of how it will be conducted, ensuring that it respects the landscape and culture of the subject, that the interview setting is accessible and comfortable, and that informed consent and confidentiality are in place. This is followed by pilot testing, which immediately precedes the actual interview. During the interview, interpretation and analysis are continuous, and notes are taken (Crabtree and Miller, 2004).

Like in the questionnaires, the interview questions were open and designed to illustrate the types of challenges new teachers face at the beginning of their teaching careers at Vanier (see Appendix 3). For the creation of both the survey and interview questions, we consulted with a Vanier teacher who was not affiliated with the project or any of the departments in question and who has abundant experience in qualitative research. The purpose of this consultation was to ensure that our questions were not "leading." Under the guidance of action research, we did not want the questions to influence or suggest responses. Indeed, in-depth interviews need to allow room for changes in direction to occur throughout an interview; the interview ought to be viewed more as a "conversational research journey" than a one-way discourse in which the interviewer prompts the interviewee for the answers he wants to hear (Crabtree and Miller, 2004).

Advantages and Disadvantages

The main advantage of the in-depth, semi-structured interviews was that it allowed us to garner very detailed information, which in turn allowed us to create a vivid portrait of the situation new teachers in our targeted departments found themselves in. Interviews are of paramount importance to action research; indeed, the interviews guided our project, taking us in non-predetermined directions, often areas we had not expected at all. It all depended on where the interviewee took the conversation. Another benefit of using interviews is that in a face-to-face, two-way discussion, we were able to ask interviewees to expand on points of interest, or to clarify points and comments that may not have been immediately obvious. Similarly, it also offered teachers the opportunity to ask any questions they may have had about the project, and/or their involvement in it. Being engaged in a face-to-face discourse also had the great benefit of allowing us to pick up on "non-verbal and emotional interchanges" and other nuances not afforded by other data-gathering methods (Crabtree and Miller, 2004). Finally, on a different level, we often got the sense that the interview process was somewhat cathartic for certain teachers, particularly ones whose cegep teaching careers had gotten off to a rough start.

The disadvantages of using in-depth, semi-structured interviews were minimal. It must be taken into consideration that someone who is shy might be reluctant to volunteer for an interview; or, if they do partake in an interview, might be less forthcoming in a face-to-face situation. Furthermore, despite the fact that there

were overlapping, recurrent themes amongst the interviews and saturation was achieved, we were still only able to account for the experiences of the teachers who volunteered to be interviewed, and therefore our portrait of the situation may not have been as global as we would have liked.

2.3.3 Post-project focus groups

We opted to conduct focus groups at the end of the project in order to hear from teachers who had been hired after we conducted the online questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The rationale behind this was to discover whether the project had had an impact on their integration. At this point in our research, focus groups were a better option than in-depth interviews because we were interested in group/departmental dynamics rather than individual circumstances; in whether and how the project's implemented action had had an effect on the departments' respective cultures. While individual interviews are better for generating ideas (as required for the needs assessment), focus groups are ideal for revealing a more global perspective, thereby allowing us examine if actions had been sustained after the departments' participation in the project had ended (Morgan, 2004). Furthermore, in terms of logistics, conducting focus groups better suited our timeframe; while the needs assessment[3] period spanned an entire semester, the post-project assessment needed to be completed in a matter of weeks. In short, rather than schedule and conduct several interviews, we saved time by conducting three focus groups (one for each of our targeted departments).

[3] I.e.: the online questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

The focus groups were guided by open-ended questions that were loosely based on the interview questions we had used in the needs assessment (see Appendix 6). Indeed, it was imperative that the questions not be rigidly structured in order for participants to interact with one another and allow for responses to lead to "new avenues of exploration" (Focus Group Research, n.d.). As researchers, we moderated the discussion and made use of the questions to ensure that participants did not stray from the subject of new teacher integration and professional development. Participation was strictly voluntary and all participants had to sign consent/confidentiality forms (see Appendix 5).

Advantages and disadvantages

Ultimately, the main advantages of conducting focus groups had to do with efficiency and effectiveness. In a manner that was not overly or unnecessarily time-consuming, we were able to solicit feedback from new teachers on the topic in question. According to Foster, Stewart and Rhyne (2003), focus groups allow researchers to simultaneously observe how different parties feel about an issue. They write, "Focus groups are a good tool for letting you understand, from the point of view of the participants, what the phenomena is like." Thus, by asking participants to discuss their integration and whether or not they felt it was sufficient, we immediately got an idea of whether integration procedures were standardized and the same for everyone, as well as whether further recommendations should be offered to the department(s). Another advantage to focus groups is that "the interaction among focus group participants brings out

differing perspectives through the language that is used by discussants. People get caught up in the spirit of group discussion and may reveal more than they would in a formal interview setting" (Focus Group Research, n.d.).

The disadvantages associated with using focus groups are similar to those of other qualitative research data-gathering tools. Because the participants speak only for themselves, results cannot necessarily be applied to the entire group participants belong to (Foster, Stewart and Rhyne, 2003). Another potential concern is the "uncertainty about accuracy of what participants say. The results may be biased by the presence of a very dominant or opinionated member; more reserved members may be hesitant to talk" (Marczak and Sewell, n.d.). To minimize the possibility of this interfering with results, the moderator must be vigilant. Fortunately, our participants did not appear at all shy about disagreeing with participants and/or disclosing their individual experiences.

2.3.4 Logbooks

Each departmental facilitator kept a logbook throughout the duration of their involvement in the project. The protocol for the facilitators' logbooks encouraged facilitators to be meticulous and detail-oriented because logbooks were the main venue for documenting implemented action. The purpose of a logbook is to provide a forum for reflection, a venue for researchers/participants to document their views on the project at hand (Dolbec and Clément, 2000). The facilitators used their logbook to record their daily observations, ideas they had and

obstacles they encountered; to elaborate on key events, offering a detailed, in-depth description; to analyze how things were progressing and contemplate ways to improve whatever was not going well, or activities that their colleagues were not interested in; and to keep us informed regarding their thoughts, inferences and judgments on how they felt in their role as facilitator. Consequently, the logbooks helped steer the course of the project insofar as they helped us understand what was working and what wasn't; this allowed us to refine our course of action.

Advantages and Disadvantages

While the interviews were crucial for determining the initial course of action, the logbooks were critical to the on-going assessment and development of our course of action, helping determine whether we were on the right path, and if not, what possible modifications could be made to ameliorate the course of action. The role of the logbooks was not limited to documentation; they also provided a space for reflection. The logbooks played the dual role of ensuring that reflection would take place and documenting reflection. They also offered a good way of staying connected with the facilitators, keeping us informed of what they were doing, as well as how they felt about it. Furthermore, the logbooks were useful for keeping track of ideas for possible future activities and for analyzing how suggestions, proposed activities and offered activities were received by department members.

In order for a logbook to be beneficial, the person maintaining it must be well versed in the practice of reflection. Therefore, a potential disadvantage of this tool is that it is essentially only as good as the quality of reflection the writer puts into it. Also, it can be quite time-consuming, so the log-keeper must be prepared, willing and able to devote a certain amount of time to writing (and thinking about what they will write) in their logbooks. Finally, it can be argued that one of the logbook's limitations is that it represents the perspective of only one individual. This, however, becomes much less of an issue if/when the log-keeper is attentive to and mindful of the reactions, attitudes and suggestions of others.

2.4 How research was undertaken

The research unfolded in five steps: (1) clarification of the situation; (2) planning of the action; (3) implementation of action; (4) observation during action; (5) reflection and evaluation. As shall be demonstrated, because of the cyclical nature of action research, these steps recurred as often as needed to further refine the course of action to help ensure sustainability. Furthermore, at times there was overlap between the steps, particularly the third, fourth and fifth.

2.4.1 Step 1: Clarification of the situation

The starting point for our research was to develop a definition of the situation that was accurate and agreed upon by the different groups of participants. This

entailed assessing the needs of new teachers in order to understand how they felt about their integration into their department, as well as the school as a whole, and, to a certain extent, the cegep system. This initial step allowed us to understand the situation, the context, and the perspectives of the various participants.

Because our subjects were teachers, we sought approval from the Vanier College Teachers' Association (VCTA) prior to the commencement of our needs assessment. Copies of the proposal were sent to the executive committee, and they requested that we present the project at an Association Council meeting. In spite of certain reservations, the VCTA Association Council unanimously approved the project.

Following approval from the VCTA to move forward with the project, our next step was for the Vanier College Ethics Committee to sanction the project, as we were working with human subjects. To prepare for this, we developed the protocols and questions for the online questionnaire, pre- and post-project interviews with teachers and coordinators, and post-project focus groups (see Appendices 1 – 6). The format and structure of our data-gathering tools and the development of our questions were informed by a survey of literature on qualitative research, action research, grounded theory, creating effective online questionnaires, conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups.[4]

[4] Of particular help were *Approaches to Qualitative Research: a Reader on Theory and Practice* edited by Sharlene Leavy and Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (2004), *The Discovery of Grounded*

The questions for the pre- and post-project interviews to be conducted with the department coordinators were designed to assess the situation as fully as possible (see Appendix 4)). Similarly, the questions for our interviews with teachers (Appendix 3) were open-ended and broad with additional follow-up questions to access detailed, nuanced, and in depth data, which was key to garnering a full, representative portrait of the experiences of new teachers (Crabtree and Miller, 2004). We also developed the consent form we would be presenting to our participants (see Appendix 2). Lastly, we produced the job description for our future facilitators. Following this, we applied for and received approval from the Ethics Committee.

Before launching the needs assessment with our targeted departments, we pilot tested the instruments with a department that was not affiliated with the project. This department, henceforth referred to as department D, was chosen primarily for its size, to help ensure a sufficient number of participants. We emailed 17 new and 8 experienced teachers from department D to request their participation in pilot testing the online questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The email contained a link to the online questionnaire, which contained a built-in consent form at the beginning of it. In order to maximize the number of respondents, we decided to make the survey as least time-consuming as possible, averaging around ten minutes.

Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967), and *The Reflective Practioner* by Donald A. Schön (1983), to name a few.

The results met and surpassed our target. For the semi-directed interviews, our target was 3, which was met. For the online questionnaire, our target was 5 experienced teachers and 5 new teachers; we received completed questionnaires from 6 experienced teachers and 9 new teachers. The assessment of the pilot testing data led to minor adjustments in the wording of a couple of questions; no major changes were required.

An important common factor among the pilot interviews was that the three teachers from department D had all started their teaching careers at Vanier in Continuing Education before teaching regular day-stream courses. Foreseeing that this trend might also be prevalent in departments A, B and C, we decided to also conduct an interview with the academic coordinator of Continuing Education; the questions were adapted from those used in the coordinator interviews. We were interested in researching what kinds of integration and professional development new teachers receive when they enter the College via Continuing Education.

While we were conducting the pilot test, we contacted the coordinators of all three departments to officially request their departments' participation in the project. Following their approval, we interviewed the coordinators of departments A and B.[5] The questions we asked the coordinators pertained to the activities that were already in place to integrate and provide professional development for

[5] Our interview with the coordinator of department C took place at the start of A07, as per our timeline in which department C's participation in the project unfolded one semester later than departments A and B.

new teachers in their department. These questions aimed to uncover the cultures of the departments we were working with, what encouraged or discouraged new activity, and what was already in place. We also asked the coordinators for feedback on the questions in the questionnaire and semi-directed interviews with teachers.

We took advantage of our meetings with the coordinators of departments A and B to make arrangements to present the project to their respective departments for approval. We also contacted the coordinator of department C for this; rather than wait until its participation in the project was about to commence, we wanted to gain Department C's approval at the onset of the project. Department A voted to support the project at one of its departmental meetings. Departments B and C both requested that we, the researchers, attend a departmental meeting to present the project and respond to any possible questions or concerns teachers might have. Following our presentations and responses to questions, neither of the departments expressed concern pertaining to their involvement in the project, and thus departments B and C voted in favour of supporting the project.

In H07, potential participants (new and experienced teachers) in departments A and B were sent the link to the online questionnaire via email; the same questionnaire was sent to department C in A07. For the online questionnaires, we did not establish a target number of desired responses as we were inviting everyone to participate. Department A yielded the least number of respondents with four new teachers and six experienced teachers answering the

questionnaire; next was department B with seven respondents in each category; finally, in department C twelve new teachers and eight experienced teachers filled out the questionnaire.

In H07, potential participants (new teachers) in departments A and B were sent an invitation via email to participate in a semi-structured interview. New teachers in department C were emailed the invitation to participate in A07. Our target was to conduct five to ten new teacher interviews per each department.

There was little response at first, so we consulted with the same Vanier teacher whose help we had enlisted for the creation of our questionnaire and interview questions. He offered helpful suggestions for increasing the number of participants, namely re-sending the request for interviewees to new teachers, offering a token of compensation for their time, and asking interviewees to spread the word about our project to fellow new teachers in their department. In addition to this, we also asked the facilitators to assist us in garnering participation. Our response rate subsequently increased and by the end of H07 we were able to reach our target. It should be noted that under no circumstances were teachers made to feel obliged to participate; participation remained strictly voluntary throughout the course of the project.

Departments A and B each yielded six interviews. Then, in A07 when we conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers in department C, the lessons

we had learned from our interviews with departments A and B worked to our advantage, and we were able to secure ten interviews with little difficulty. All of the interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and subsequently transcribed. Having collected this information, we were then able to move on to the second step, that of planning the action.

2.4.2 Step 2: Planning of the action

Throughout H07 and E07, we began coding and analyzing the interviews from departments A and B according to grounded theory. For department C, the interviews were all transcribed by the start of H08, and we were then able to begin coding and analyzing the data.

The practice of grounded theory first elaborated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) ensured the quality of the data analysis. Grounded theory, working perfectly in tune with action research, is defined by Charmaz (2004) as

> consist[ing] of the researcher deriving his or her analytic categories directly from the data, not from preconceived concepts or hypotheses. Thus, grounded theory methods force the researcher to attend closely to what happens in the empirical world he or she studies.

Grounded theory is therefore used to describe, explain and understand the participants' experiences, and express their voices. Theory emerges from the collected data by constantly comparing results. A rigorous system of coding is implemented whereby the first interview is read and coding begun; then, by constant comparison, coding continues and as points are repeated, categories

are established. With further analysis, properties of categories are found and core categories and themes begin to emerge. The researchers write memos commenting on the categories. There is constant searching for evidence to confirm the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2004). This is the process we employed to help us begin formulating ideas for potential action.

First, we analyzed the individual interviews. As we carefully read the interviews, we took constant notes to help code and classify what the interviewees were saying about their respective experiences. We would then compare our notes from different interviews, looking for similarities and differences between them. Where we found similarities among the experiences new teachers discussed in interviews, we created a category. Then, within that category we examined the degrees to which a particular experience, and the circumstances surrounding it, had been similar or different. For example, if new teachers encountered a similar problem, we looked at whether the level of severity was the same for all of them, and where teachers had experienced different degrees of severity we looked at where they differed and what made one teacher's experience better or worse than another. We also explored the different ways teachers dealt with similar situations and the effectiveness of the solutions employed. This process led to the creation of themes within the categories.

When we reached the point of saturation, we assessed the interviews as a group based on the common elements, categories and themes that had emerged from

the individual interviews. The main reason for doing this was to help ensure and fortify the accuracy of our findings. It was interesting to note that, although there were indeed differences between the three departments, the main categories that emerged from the data applied to all of them.[6] Once the coding was completed, we created lists and charts detailing the categories and themes that emerged from the common elements, as well as other issues which may not have been shared by many respondents, but which were significant enough to document for the benefit of new teachers who may be faced with them in the future.

While coding was a significant part of transforming the needs assessment into a portrait of the situation facing new teachers, we needed to further analyze the data to see how it could suggest a direction for the project. Looking for ways to improve new teacher integration, we focused on elements of new teachers' experiences that could be improved upon for future teachers. In preparation for our inaugural meeting with each of the facilitators, we compiled a list of the areas where new teachers faced the most difficulty.

At the start of A07 for departments A and B, and H08 for department C, we met individually with the facilitators to discuss the findings of the needs assessment, the role and purpose of reflection, and the logbooks.

Before discussing the actual findings, we explained to the facilitators how we had come up with the data that had been pulled from the interviews, and why we had

[6] Categories will be discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

chosen this method. This consisted of an overview of action research, how we had not set out to prove a certain theory but rather wanted a theory to emerge from the findings, and, finally, how grounded theory allowed us to do this. We then explained how the interviews had been coded and continuously cross-referenced, and how, subsequently, categories and themes had emerged. We shared the details of the categories and the specifics within each one. We encouraged the facilitators to further analyze the data in case, being more familiar with the department, they could identify other new teacher issues or concerns to address as we began planning for action.

To help the facilitators completely understand their involvement in the project, it was paramount to discuss the role and purpose of reflection in action research.[7] Within the frame of reflection, we discussed with the facilitators how the logbooks are integral to the process of action research. This discussion also entailed an overview of what kind of information we were asking the facilitators to document in their logbooks. We asked them to write precise, detailed notes on how the project was unfolding; document events leading up to an activity (preparations, how participants were contacted/invited, etc); the actual events (who showed up, what people did, how it went); post-event feedback; and to jot down any intermittent thoughts, observations, queries, and so on. They were informed that the logbooks would be used to accumulate information that would permit the

[7] A more thorough definition of reflection is offered in this chapter under "Step 5: Reflection and Evaluation."

facilitators and researchers to analyze and evaluate the activities implemented, and prepare our future course of action.

After the facilitators read the interview transcripts and our coding and analysis of them, we met to discuss future action. The facilitators had each come up with a list of potential activities to offer participants that drew on the results of the needs assessment. Looking over this list, we decided together which activities were most needed, most pertinent to the project and most feasible considering the resources and time span of the project. From this point, facilitators were ready to begin the process of implementing action.

2.4.3 Step 3: Implementation of action

The first step in implementing action was figuring out the best times to offer activities to teachers. Facilitators needed to consider both teachers' schedules and room availability. Taking into account teachers' busy and varied schedules, it soon became apparent that it would be impossible to cater to everyone; thus, the facilitators focused on appealing to the most people possible. To schedule activities, they looked for dates in the semester that wouldn't be as busy as others and for times during the day when teachers would be less likely to be teaching (such as the weekly hour-and-a-half "universal break" when there are no classes). Facilitators booked rooms for activities based on the materials needed to run the activity (for example, whether a computer lab was required), the anticipated number of people and the rooms available.

Facilitators reached out to and encouraged all department members to attend events. It was important to include experienced teachers as well as new ones in order to facilitate the creation of bonds and the transfer of knowledge. For each planned activity, the facilitator would email departmental colleagues to advise them of what was in the works. Follow-up emails were sent as the day of the activity approached, and departmental meetings were also used to broadcast upcoming events.

It was necessary for the facilitators to continually be in contact with potential participants, whether via email, telephone or in person to ensure attendance; teachers' busy schedules usually meant that the facilitators were faced with minimal confirmations prior to an event. In order to help ensure that action was effective, it was crucial to reach out to the greatest number of potential participants. On one hand, we wanted to maximize participation in order to ensure that our research would apply to the whole department as much as possible; simultaneously, we were all dedicated to maximizing participation because, as the interviews testified, the activities and workshops we were offering were needed and of significant importance to the success of new teachers. Keeping this in mind, when departments A and B collaborated on a joint C.I. calculation workshop,[8] the facilitator for department B decided to record the session with a video camera for it to be viewed by future teachers and current new teachers who were unable to attend.

[8] As shall be detailed in chapter 6, C.I. ("charge individuelle") calculation was found to be one of the most enigmatic and recondite areas for new cegep teachers.

In terms of offering workshops based on the needs expressed by new teachers, a vital part of implementing action was finding skilled and knowledgeable people to animate the workshops. Given the wealth of resources that can be found within a college, we decided, together with the facilitators, to recruit in-house experts for the workshops. When choosing someone to animate a workshop, we pooled our knowledge of what people in various departments do. In one instance, for our workshop on classroom management,[9] the person asked to conduct the workshop had been mentioned as extremely helpful on the subject by some of teachers we had interviewed. We approached prospective animators via email, telephone or in person, and explained our project and how the need for the proposed workshop had arisen. Because the workshop animators were part of the Vanier community, they were able to offer a tailored, Vanier-specific approach to the subject. Another benefit of using in-house experts is that it allowed new teachers to meet more people within the College and get to know the services these people offer in support of teachers.

In certain instances, the implemented action was not initiated by the facilitators. On a few occasions, a department was already holding an event that we were able to link with our project. In these instances, the facilitator would ask the person responsible for the event to participate in whichever capacity was relevant. In one case, for example, a facilitator chose to observe an event to garner ideas for future action; in another, a facilitator asked whether the event could be a joint venture between the department and the project; in yet another,

[9] Another crucial issue for new teachers, as explained in chapter 5.

a facilitator asked to use the event to implement an action that was intended for that department.

Action was also put into practice on an informal, unplanned, ad-hoc basis. This was mostly in the form of mentoring new teachers who had started teaching in our targeted departments after we had started the project, and were thus not interviewed. As part of their role in the project, the facilitators made themselves available to newly-hired teachers in their respective departments. When questions arose or the facilitators had pertinent information to share, they would be in contact, generally through email, and occasionally through face-to-face, one-on-one meetings.

In addition to events, action also consisted of the creation of materials, namely department-specific new teacher integration handbooks. Again, department members were invited to participate by contributing to the handbook and/or offering feedback on its contents. For example, one component of the handbooks produced by the facilitators from departments A and B was a section outlining different types of course syllabi; teachers from these departments were asked if they wanted to supply a syllabus (or more, if relevant) that they had used previously.

As the implementation of action is integral to all facets of action research, other forces are at work while action is happening. The final two steps in the action

research cycle happen simultaneously with action and/or immediately after, and delineate the exact importance of action within the context of research.

2.4.4 Step 4: Observation during action

Observation during action is crucial since the main point of each action is to verify what works, what does not, and how the project should proceed. Thus, it is necessary to pay close attention to action as it is unfolding.

Observation of action was undertaken solely by the facilitators. Their focus for observation was two-fold. First, facilitators paid attention to the reactions of the participants, noting whether or not they were finding a given event useful and/or worthwhile. Facilitators also looked out for the mention of other activities or materials that could be of value to new teachers. Secondly, facilitators assessed the organization of the event, examining whether the set-up of the space was conducive to making participants feel welcome and at ease.

This step requires “active” observation; one must be vigilant at all times and on the lookout for things that may not be immediately obvious. This form of observation also entails taking notes on how an event is unfolding, the types of comments participants are making, people’s body language; jotting down inferences, possible follow-up questions or comments, and, if applicable, ideas for future action.

It is necessary to record action because reflection, the next step in the action research cycle, is heavily dependent on this. Reflection is facilitated by having concrete documentation to study and ponder.

2.4.5 Step 5: Reflection and evaluation

Although this step is listed as the fifth, it is not the final as reflection occurs consistently throughout all steps, and often leads to a renewal of the first four steps. This step was crucial in determining the development of the project. Action research places a strong emphasis on reflection and evaluation as the researchers (and, in our case, facilitators as well) must continuously reflect on what is happening at different stages of the project in order to refine the plan of action according to the results of the previous activity. As Schön (1983) advises, a key factor to effective reflection is exploring the details of a given action, and "attend[ing] to the peculiarities of the situation at hand."

In this way, reflection allowed the findings to determine the path of action to be taken to achieve our objectives and consequently permitted theory to emerge from action. Reflection and evaluation also gave the research a degree of flexibility and adaptability; it was imperative to create an action plan that was malleable and that could be modified if necessary. Indeed, "reflection can lead to a reconstruction of the meaning of the social situation and provide a basis for further planning of critically informed action, thereby continuing the cycle" (Hatten, Knapp and Salonga, 2000).

Reflection essentially took place on an individual and group basis. Individually, facilitators began using their logbooks at the start of A07 to write precise, detailed notes; document events leading up to an activity; describe the actual event; offer post-event feedback; and include any intermittent thoughts, observations, queries, etc. Logbooks played a crucial role in reflection because, while writing entries, one already begins to reflect; the act of writing requires one to process ideas and think about them before committing them to paper or computer document. On another level, the logbooks contributed greatly to reflection in that the entries gave both facilitators and researchers material to scrutinize.

In addition to being read by all of us individually, logbook entries were discussed at length in the regular team meetings. First, we read the entries on our own, writing down notes and questions for the facilitators. We would then meet together to discuss our thoughts on the logbook entries at hand, and compare notes and questions. Following this, we would meet with the facilitator who had written the entries in question and continue reflection as a group, sharing our responses and questions with the facilitator. The team meetings would also go beyond reflecting solely on the information in the logbooks to candid discussions about how we all felt the project was unfolding. Everyone was encouraged to partake in reflection, as this offers more of a global understanding of the direction action is taking.

In order for reflection to be successful, it was crucial to rigorously document all processes and try to understand why an activity was successful or not, or perhaps why it had garnered ambivalent responses. This included reflecting on why some people had participated and others hadn't, and what the attraction or repellant could have been, as well as reflecting on whether, once there, the participants had found the activity useful. Furthermore, facilitators ended most activities by asking participants to kindly complete an evaluation form.[10] These forms contained invaluable information pertaining to the relevance and usefulness of activities; they were closely perused for tips and hints regarding possible future action. In short, reflection allowed us to use the experience of the most-recent activity to figure out what the next activity should be and how it should unfold.

Reflection led to evaluation, which led to a refinement of action and instruments, and thus the cycle continued. Reflecting with a focus on our objectives allowed us to evaluate the success of preceding events. We deemed it most suitable to begin the evaluation process with the areas we deemed potentially problematic. Reflection began early in the project, during H07, when it soon became obvious that we were having difficulty getting new teachers to participate in interviews and we contacted the aforementioned Vanier teacher who was experienced in qualitative research. As stated earlier, we discussed ways of increasing

[10] We did this for most, but not all, activities because some were more social in nature (such as end-of-semester gatherings and new teacher lunches) and handing out an evaluation form would have made these events appear contrived, unnatural and would have taken away from the events' conviviality.

participation in the project, all-the-while ensuring that it was still on a strictly voluntary basis. We employed his suggestions with effective results. Due to the difficulty we initially encountered finding participants, we also decided to contact potential participants in department C earlier in the semester than we had for departments A and B (this was facilitated by not having to do pilot testing, as was the case in H07).

As described above, participation was also an issue for the activities; we were presented with the dilemma of increasing participation in activities despite teachers' busy schedules. With persistence and collaborative brainstorming with the research team, facilitators devised ways to help secure participation at events as the project progressed. The facilitator for department A had the idea of incorporating food into events to attract participants. This seemed to help, especially considering that, no matter how busy one may be, one still has to eat. Ultimately, however, participation in activities, as well as the number of activities the facilitators' schedules permitted them to implement, was limited. This posed a potential problem in terms of producing recommendations for future new teacher practices in cegeps. Upon reflection, we came to the realization that, combined, the facilitators' activities and the interviews we had conducted were a rich source of reflection, and thus of ideas for how to integrate new teachers.

Lastly, other areas that were not seemingly problematic were also reflected upon and consequently refined, particularly our selection of data-gathering

instruments. As mentioned above, after our H07/A07 needs assessments, we noted a flaw in the collection of the online questionnaires filled out by new teachers, namely the potential for double-counting responses from any given teacher. We therefore used the questionnaire only to gain insight into the ideas and opinions of experienced teachers.

Reflection on our use of instruments also benefited us in terms of data-gathering tools we had not yet employed, but planned to use towards the end of the project. Our initial intention was to use focus groups at the end of the project to engage in discussion with the same new teachers we had interviewed. Our idea was to ascertain from these focus groups whether the activities, materials and practices the facilitators had implemented had had an impact on their respective departments, and if so what kind of impact. Approximately a year and a half into the project, however, we realized that the teachers we had interviewed at the start of the project no longer necessarily considered themselves to be “new,” and so, depending on the activity, were not always interested in partaking. Thus, it was futile to ask them whether, as a new teacher (which they no longer were), the project had been helpful to them. The teachers who were benefiting from the project were actually the ones who had been hired *after* we had conducted the interviews. Therefore, we opted for post-project focus groups with newly hired teachers in our targeted departments in lieu of the teachers we had previously interviewed. One of the main advantages of qualitative research is that subjects interviewed at the end need not be the same ones as at the beginning of the

project. This change in plans would have been much more problematic had we been using quantitative methods.

2.5 Chapter summary

As we aimed to demonstrate in this chapter, we employed qualitative research as our methodology because it most suited the attainment of the project's objectives, in a manner that was both realistic and which accommodated the departments' differing cultures. Action research and grounded theory allowed for results and consequent action to stem organically from the situation being assessed; never were outside ideas, theories, practices or solutions imposed onto departments. This chapter also introduced the project's participants, as well as the uses, advantages and disadvantages of our data-gathering tools. Finally, we delineated the five steps of the action research cycle, explaining what took place at each step and how the project unfolded.

Having established our methodology, we can now turn to exploring our participants in greater depth. The next chapter offers a portrait of the survey respondents and interviewees. We will look at how many respondents and interviewees we had; what kind of teacher training, if any, they had before coming to Vanier; the entry paths through which they came to Vanier; and how long they had been teaching at Vanier at the time of the needs assessment.

CHAPTER 3
Needs Assessment Process and Respondents

As established in the previous chapter, the needs assessment was a crucial element of the development and direction of this project; consequently, we paid careful attention to collecting data and the tools used to do so in order to ensure that the needs assessment was conducted soundly. This meant starting very early on in the project to conduct online surveys and semi-structured interviews, our two main sources of data. The purpose of this chapter is to offer a general portrait of the respondents; in subsequent chapters we will explore the categories and themes that emerged from the data and the action developed and undertaken thereafter. This section of descriptive data regarding online questionnaire respondents and interview participants will consist of: how long participants have been teaching at Vanier, our new teacher participants' entry paths into the College, and what teacher training, if any, they received prior to starting their cegep careers.

3.1 Online questionnaire

All teachers, new and experienced, in departments A, B and C were sent an email asking them to participate in an online questionnaire. Table 3.1 consists of a sample of the email.

Dear [department name] teachers,

We are inviting you to participate in the research project, *Factors Promoting the Effective Integration and Professional Development of New Teachers by Academic Departments*, a PAREA-funded project being conducted by staff of The Learning Centre (Marilyn Caplan, Joanne Ellis, Kim Muncey and Cari Clough).

Your participation would involve responding to an online questionnaire, which asks a variety of questions about the integration and professional development of new teachers. It should take approximately ten minutes to complete.

Your responses will remain confidential, and will not be identified with you personally. The data collected will be accessible only to the research team. Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty should you choose not to participate.

We look forward to collaborating with you on this project. To fill out the questionnaire, please click on this link: [link to department-specific online questionnaire]. We would appreciate it if questionnaires could be filled out by [department-specific deadline].

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Marilyn Caplan at extension 7071 or caplanm@vaniercollege.qc.ca.

Thank you for your time,

Marilyn Caplan, Joanne Ellis, Kim Muncey and Cari Clough

Table 3.1 Invitation to participate in online questionnaire

Following this request, a total of 10 members from department A responded, 14 from department B, and 20 from department C. We grouped teachers into categories according to the number of years they had been teaching at Vanier. The new teachers fell under the 0 to 5 years category, and experienced teachers made up three categories: those with 6 to 10 years, 11 to 20 years, and 21 or more years. As mentioned in the previous chapter, teachers in the 0 to 5 years category were given a different set of questions than experienced teachers. Figure 3.1 shows the total of who responded to the online questionnaire for all

departments, detailing the percentage of respondents from each group of teachers.

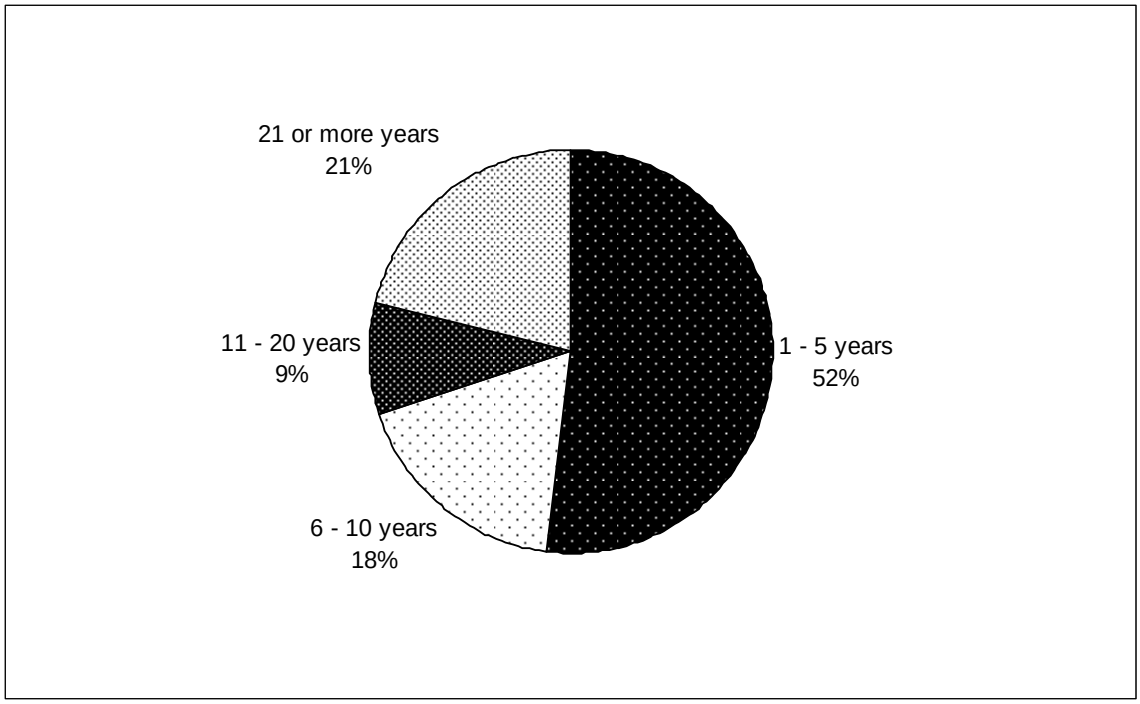

Figure 3.1 Online survey respondents: Number of years at Vanier

3.2 Semi-structured interviews

Teachers in each of the three departments with 0 to 5 years of teaching experience at Vanier were sent an email requesting participation in a semi-structured interview (see Table 3.2). In total, we emailed all 46 teachers who fell into the 0 to 5 years of experience category in departments A, B and C, collectively. Those who were interested got in touch with the research team either via telephone or email to set up an interview time. The next step was to find a location for the interviews. We wanted to ensure our participants a private,

undisclosed location since we had promised complete confidentiality. With one exception, we interviewed participants in various meeting rooms on campus; a public transit strike compelled us to conduct an interview at the home of one of the researchers. For the interviews on-campus, the interviewee met us in The Learning Centre, and from there we went to the interview room.

Dear [department name] teachers, Last week we invited you to participate in the research project, *Factors Promoting the Effective Integration and Professional Development of New Teachers by Academic Departments*, a PAREA-funded project being conducted by staff of The Learning Centre (Marilyn Caplan, Joanne Ellis, Kim Muncey and Cari Clough). Now we are requesting your participation in an interview with teachers who have 0 – 5 years of experience. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes. The data gathered in these interviews will help shape the project, and therefore your participation is vital to its success. Your responses will remain confidential, and will not be identified with you personally. The data collected will be accessible only to the research team. Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty should you choose not to participate. Please contact Marilyn Caplan to set up an interview time at extension 7071 or caplanm@vaniercollege.qc.ca. Sincerely, Marilyn Caplan, Joanne Ellis, Kim Muncey and Cari Clough

Table 3.2 Invitation to participate in an interview

While we had anticipated that the interviews would last approximately half an hour, for the most part they ranged in length from 45 minutes to an hour, and some exceeded this. The interview questions were designed to generate discussion and help draw out the interviewee. Further, the questions did not limit the interviewee, though all-the-while staying on the topic of new teacher

integration and professional development. Considering the nature of the subject and that the experiences shared were still very fresh to some teachers, the interviews were cathartic for some. At the end of the each interview, we presented our interview subjects with a small token of our appreciation to compensate for their time.

3.3 Number of semesters at Vanier

Of the teachers we invited for an interview, six teachers in Department A, six in B and ten in C volunteered to be interviewed, for a total of 22 interviews. They varied in the number of semesters they had been teaching at Vanier. In fact, one teacher in department B has actually been at Vanier for several years, but in a different department; at the time of the interview this teacher had been in department B for three semesters. We decided to include him in the interview process to see how the experience of someone who is new to teaching might differ from that of someone who is an experienced teacher, but new to the same department as the inexperienced teacher. Figure 3.2 details the numbers of semesters our interview subjects had been at Vanier at the time of the interviews. The aforementioned teacher is listed according to amount of semesters specifically in department B only.

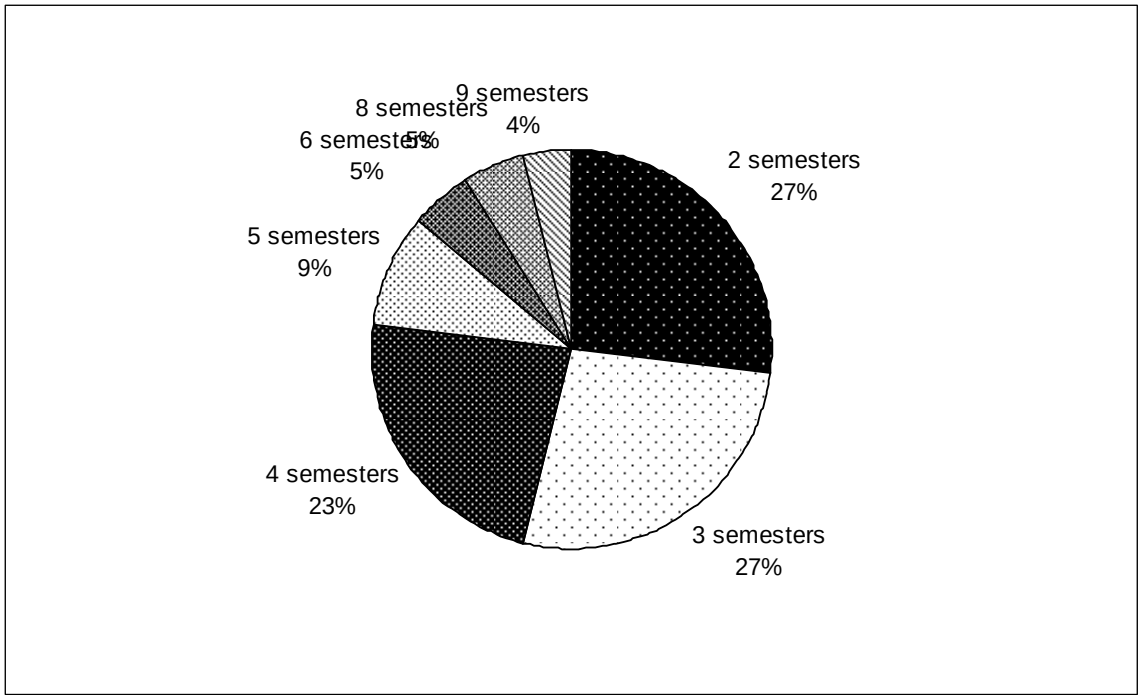

Figure 3.2 Interviewees: Number of semesters at Vanier

3.4 Entry paths into Vanier

Of the 22 teachers we interviewed, 21 spent their first two or more semesters at Vanier volleying between teaching in Continuing Education (summer and/or evening[11]) and the daytime division (sometimes within the same semester, i.e.: teaching both day and evening in order to have a full course load). Others, who were hired either in the summer or fall, were without work in the winter semester. In addition, during these first two or more semesters, some teachers only had enough courses to be considered part time, particularly during winter semesters. In short, it can be inferred that none had a particularly smooth entry into Vanier so far as job security and stability are concerned. Figure 3.3 demonstrates the

[11] At Vanier, evening and summer courses fall under the jurisdiction of Continuing Education.

ways in which our interviewees began teaching at Vanier, whether it be regular daytime, Continuing Education nighttime or Continuing Education summer session.

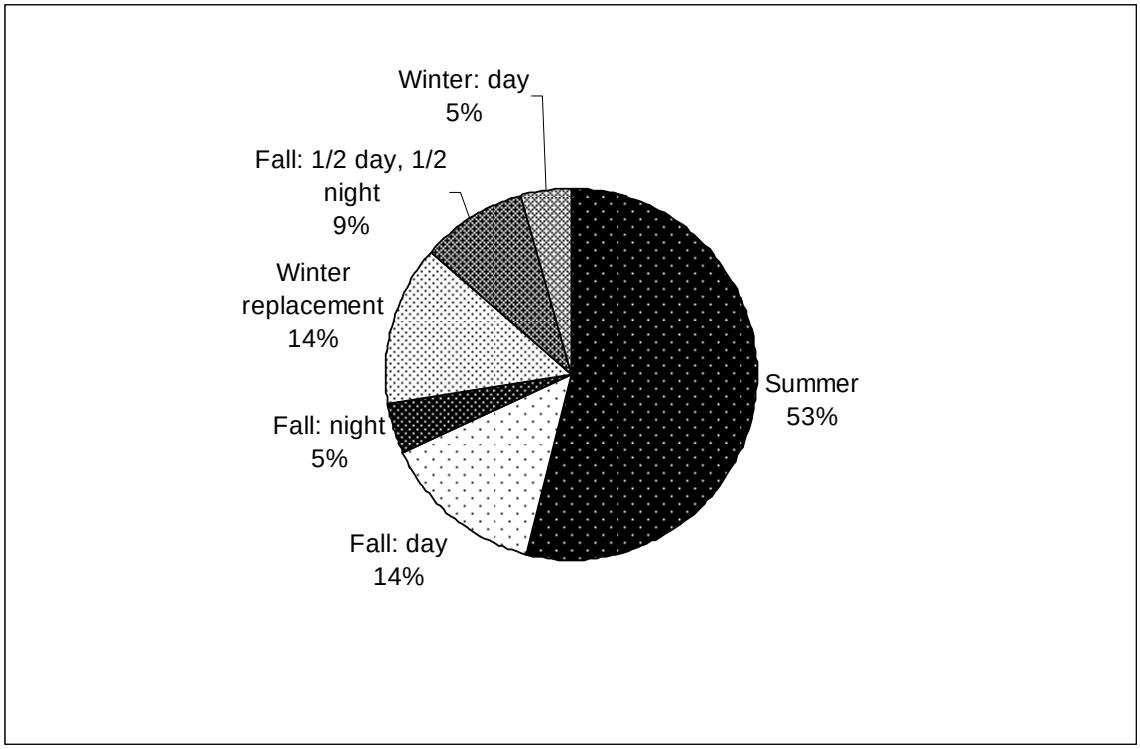

Figure 3.3 Interviewees' entry paths

Regardless of entry path, 36% of these teachers were last-minute hires, finding out just a few days before the start of classes that they had gotten the job and needed to put a course together, or sometimes two or three courses. While it is understood that developing a course in a limited timeframe is a daunting task, especially to a novice, others had an equally challenging, though quite different problem. As shown in figure 3.3, some of our interview subjects were hired at the last minute as replacements. These teachers found themselves having to teach courses that had been designed and structured by the person they were replacing, and which not always akin to how the new teacher would have set up

a course. Depending on the nature of the leave, the teacher being replaced was not always available for consultation. In many other cases, as depicted in these figures, teachers began their careers at Vanier during the summer semester. This can pose additional problems as the majority of faculty members and a high percentage of staff are on vacation during this time and therefore generally unavailable should new teachers require assistance. Needless to say, regardless of the precise details of the situation, having little time to prepare and/or having little professional support both greatly add to the stress of starting a new job. And, indeed, in many of these cases teaching at the cegep level was just that, a *new* job.

3.5 Teacher training

In the interviews, new teachers were asked about any kind of teacher training they may have received in prior to teaching at Vanier. Teacher training is made up of two general categories: education-wise (having studied pedagogy in a university setting) and experience-wise (having taught previously, regardless of level of instruction). Please see Table 3.3 for a comprehensive summary of our interviewees' pre-Vanier teacher training.

In department A, of the six teachers we interviewed none of them had received formal training in pedagogy, such as a university degree in Education. As a PhD

student, however, one of the teachers had attended a series of teacher training workshops, including one “on teaching large class sizes and stimulat[ing] discussion in the classroom.”[12] They all, however, had had some experience teaching. It should be noted that some teachers had experience in more than one setting, hence why the tally of previous teaching experience areas among the six interview subjects is more than six. Their teaching experiences were as follows:

- Five out of the six had worked as teaching assistants (TAs) while pursuing graduate studies
- One had taught at a high school
- Two had taught at other cegeps
- Four had taught at universities
- One had taught English as a second language (ESL) courses

Of particular note here is that four out of six of these teachers had no previous experience in the cegep system, either as a teacher or student. Thus, despite previous teaching experience, these four teachers did not know what to expect regarding teaching at the cegep level. It can therefore be suggested that a situation such as this would require that particular attention be paid to integration into the work environment.

[12] Quoted from interview.

The teachers we interviewed in department B had some pedagogical training prior to teaching, though still rather limited.

- Two of the six teachers interviewed had taken one or more education course as an undergraduate student
- One obtained a certificate in university teaching as a PhD student
- One of the interviewees had taken a PERFORMA course (though this course was taken after the teacher had already begun teaching at Vanier)

The six teachers we interviewed from department B came to Vanier with a rather varied collective teaching experience.

- Two of the six teachers had worked as TAs while pursuing graduate studies
- One interviewee had taught at the high school level
- Two had taught at another cegep
- One had taught in another department at Vanier
- Two had taught at the university level
- One had taught at an adult education centre for students who failed specific subjects in high school
- One had worked as a tutor in a university counselling and development department
- One had taught ESL courses

Our interview subjects from department C had similar teacher training backgrounds as those from departments A and B, with actual teaching practice taking precedence over the study of pedagogy. Nonetheless, there was some pedagogical training among the teachers we interviewed from department C:

- One out of the ten teachers interviewed has a Bachelor's degree in Education
- Two teachers have a one-year education diploma
- One teacher has a two-year teaching certificate
- Two teachers had taken PERFORMA courses (these courses were taken after having started teaching at Vanier)

In terms of teaching experience, department C interviewees were involved in the following prior to teaching at Vanier:

- Five out of the ten teachers worked as TAs while pursuing graduate studies
- Four previously taught at the high school level
- One worked as a student teacher at the high school level (as part of a two-year teaching certificate)
- Two had taught at other colleges
- Three had taught in universities
- One had taught afternoon classes in an elementary school
- One had taught at a Jewish afternoon supplementary school
- Three had taught ESL courses

- One had worked as a substitute and remedial workshop teacher at Vanier

Type of training	Department A	Department B	Department C
Took Education/teaching course(s) in university		3	4
Took PERFORMA course(s)		1	2
Worked as a TA	5	2	5
Taught high school	1	1	5
Taught at another college	2	2	2
Taught in another department at Vanier		1	
Taught university	4	2	3
Taught ESL	1	1	3
Miscellaneous teaching[13]		2	4

Table 3.3 Interviewees' pre-Vanier teacher training

3.6 Chapter summary

Based on our groups of interviewees, it would seem that, at least in these particular departments, an incoming teacher is more likely to have had some practical teaching experience (though not necessarily at the cegep level) than formal education in the field of pedagogy. As we move on to a discussion of the results of our needs assessment, we shall see to what extent previous teaching

[13] Adult education centre, university peer centre, student teaching, afternoon classes, substitution and workshop animation at Vanier.

experience may have helped teachers new to Vanier and perhaps the cegep system in general.

Having presented a portrait of the teachers we worked with and the tools they were equipped with upon beginning their careers at Vanier, we are now ready to explore the data that we collected and the themes that emerged from this data.

CHAPTER 4
Connecting with the data:
Emergence of categories and themes

This chapter will focus on the post-interview, pre-action phase of the project. During this phase, the needs assessment we had conducted was transformed from random pieces of data into portraits representative of the new teachers in each of our targeted departments. Working with the collected data was a four-step process; it was within these steps that analyzing, coding and categorizing the data took place.

It should be noted that we began with three general, foundational rubrics under which everything could be classified: pedagogical, administrative and social. Contrary to how this may appear at first, the recognition of these rubrics prior to the analysis of data is still in keeping with grounded theory, which states that categories ought to emerge from the data. Our three all-encompassing rubrics pre-exist the specific experiences of the teachers we interviewed and derive from the cegep environment. Thus, these rubrics were not imposed from outside of the situation (as grounded theory warns against), but manifested organically from the wider context of educational institutions. Arguably, all of a teacher's professional dealings are either pedagogical, administrative or social in nature.[14] These rubrics therefore served the purpose of helping us as beacons directing the areas under which to file matters of importance.

[14] Of course, had other over-arching rubrics materialized from the needs assessment, we would have acknowledged them and readjusted our working model.

4.1 Step 1: Individual review of transcripts

The first step was for us (the researchers) to read the transcripts from each interview individually. At this point, we were looking for matters of significance in the experience of the teacher whose interview we were studying. That is, comparisons with other interviews (i.e.: comparisons to fellow new teachers) had not yet begun. We started by isolating each interview in order to help ensure that we were indeed seeing a genuine, precise portrait, not one influenced by what others had gone through. It was crucial to do this in order to give accurate measure to issues and later be able to prioritize potential action by noting what was having the greatest impact on new teachers.

At this point, we were not yet coding or creating categories. During this stage, we were actively taking notes in an attempt to make sense out of and classify each teacher's experience on an individual basis. We made note of everything that interviewees expressed as having been important to them. Through analysis, we further took notes on that which may not have been explicitly stated as important by the interviewee, but which we deemed as such on the basis of several factors. Some of these factors, for example, included whether certain occurrences were repeatedly mentioned; whether the interviewee was left unscathed by a negative experience we felt could have had a detrimental effect on someone else; and whether an experience or situation proved to have consequences that impacted the interviewee's career in any way.

4.2 Step 2: Collective assessment of transcripts

Secondly, we looked at the individual interviews as a group. During this step, we assessed the notes we had written in the previous step. We compared, verified and classified elements of the individual interviews we had noted as important. This allowed us to tentatively confirm (or, in cases of disagreement, open up for debate) the classification of an interview. It is at this point that coding began. Each point that we agreed was of significance was coded. Following this process, each of the 22 interviews was coded.

4.3 Step 3: Formation of categories

The third step was central in that it is here that categories were formed. We, first individually and then together as a group, compared the interviews (and our coding of them) with the others in the same department. A category was established when we came across one of the two following scenarios: an experience was either shared by more than one person, or it happened to only one person, but was remarkable enough to make note of as a way to forewarn new teachers about it. Categories were created until we reached saturation, when the data had been exhausted and no new information could be gleaned.

We concluded step three by looking at the different elements within each of the established categories. We referred to these elements as themes, and they consisted of the varying degrees to which interviewees were affected by a situation or experience, the different ways they reacted to predicaments and the spectrum of solutions employed for similar problems. Needless to say, themes diverged within categories depending on the new teachers' individual personalities. This was probably most evident in the category of classroom management, for example, where there were virtually as many different types of reactions and attempted solutions as there were interviewees who declared it a problematic area. Thus, at this stage, all the different methods of dealing with classroom management were labeled as themes.

4.4 Step 4: Reflection and modifications

Finally, the fourth step in this post-interview, pre-action phase consisted of reflecting on and validating the accuracy of the departmental portraits we had produced from our needs assessment and subsequent coding. This meant scrutinizing the categories and themes for each department[15] and questioning whether they actually represented and defined the departments (or at least the set of department members we had interviewed). This further entailed going back to the interviews and charting which and how many of the interviewees fell into each category. This allowed us to see the bigger picture and have a visual

[15] Though, as shall be demonstrated, most categories spanned across all three departments.

image of the situation, which in turn permitted us to confirm whether or not a category, or collection of categories, properly characterized the departments. This step finalized our needs assessment and enabled us to move forward with the results in order to plan and execute action.

4.5 Categories under each rubric

As mentioned above, each category fell into one of three rubrics: pedagogical, administrative and social. Both the pedagogical and administrative rubrics contained numerous challenges for new teachers in all three of our targeted departments. Although the social rubric did not prove to be a source of difficulty for most new teachers, it nonetheless consists of points that are worthy of discussion.

What follows is a breakdown of the categories that fell under each of the rubrics. After each list of categories, we have included, for each separate rubric, the survey responses when asked to specify to what extent the challenges they had faced as new teachers had been pedagogical, administrative and social in nature (figures 4.1 – 4.3).[16]

4.5.1 Pedagogical Categories

- Course preparation

[16] This question only appeared in the new teachers' section of the online questionnaire, and not the experienced teachers' section.

- Pedagogical resources
- Personal time management
- Level of students
- Student motivation
- Classroom management
- Evaluation and grading

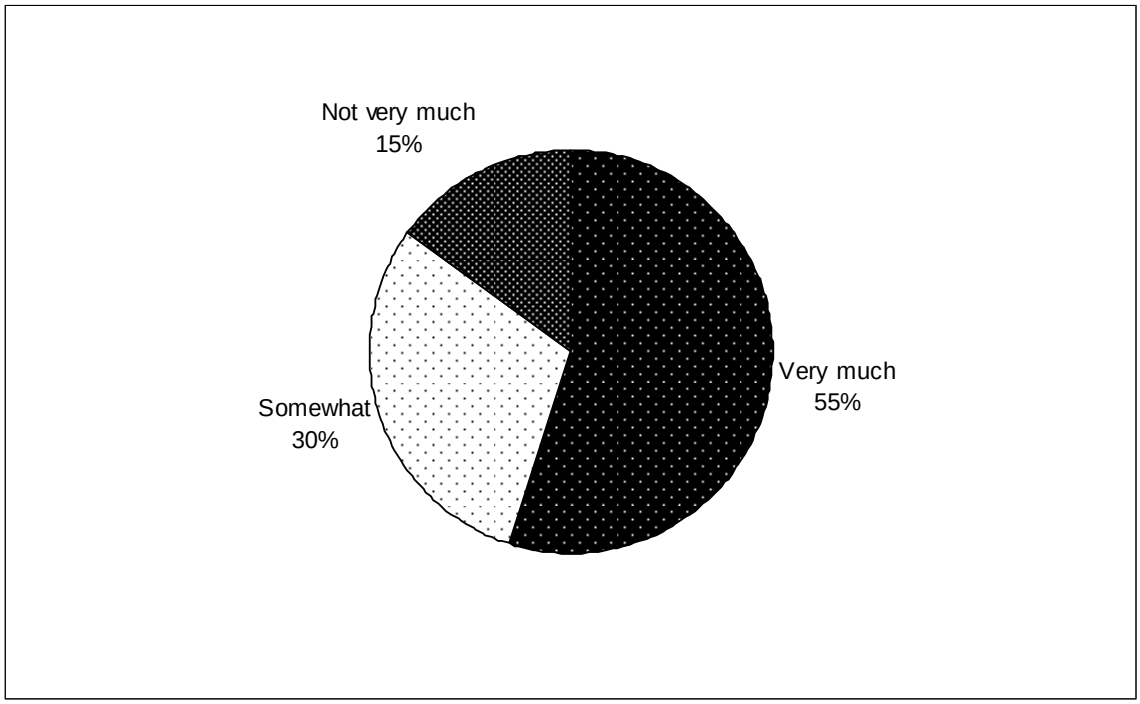

Figure 4.1 Pedagogical challenges

4.5.2 Administrative Categories

- On-campus resources and services
- Acquiring accurate, timely information
- Bookstore

- Differing procedures and policies in place between daytime teaching and Continuing Education teaching
- Human Resources
- Computer Systems
- Logistics

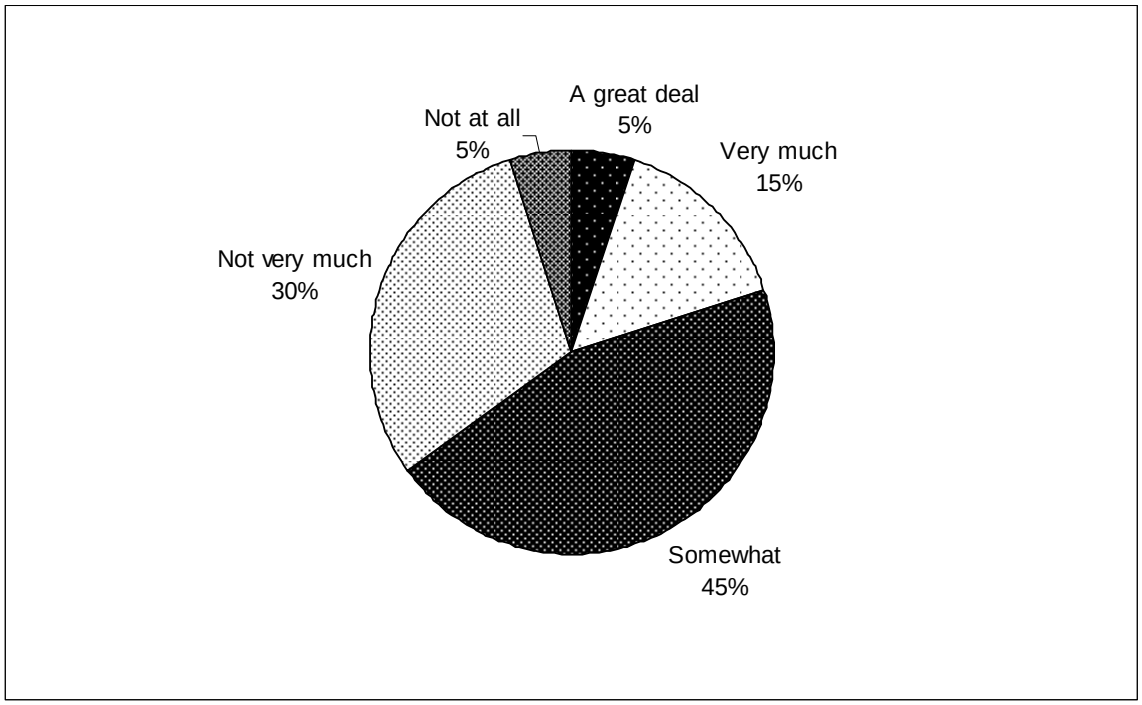

Figure 4.2 Administrative challenges

4.5.3 Social Categories

- Isolation
- Perceived lack of collegiality
- Lack of time to socialize

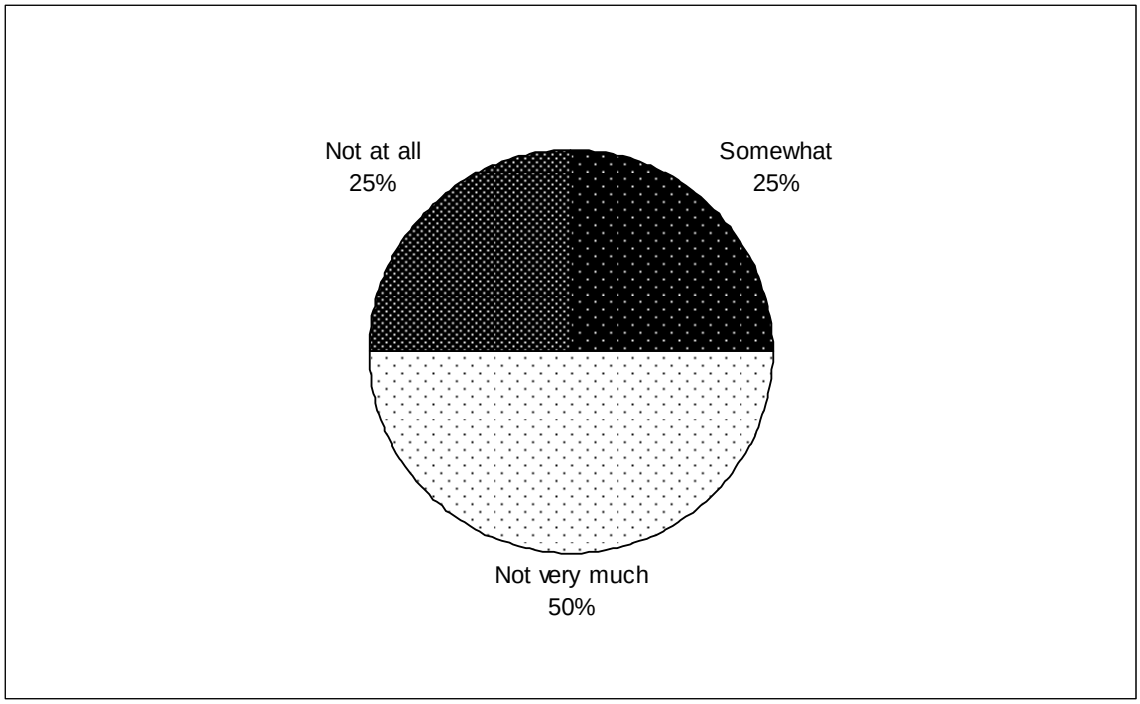

Figure 4.3 Social challenges

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 will each deal with the pedagogical, administrative and social rubrics, respectively. In these chapters, we will further explore the categories and corresponding themes that fall under the rubric in question. The examination of these issues will lead to a discussion of the action that stemmed from them.

CHAPTER 5
Pedagogical Rubric

Being a qualified, successful teacher goes beyond being skilled and well-versed in the subject one is teaching. In order to reach out to, engage, and get through to students, a teacher needs pedagogical knowledge and tools.

For the most part, one can assume that pedagogy would be one of the main concerns or focuses of a new teacher because it is at the forefront of a teacher's professional duty. It can be inferred that a new teacher with no or minimal experience in pedagogy will be faced with a greater challenge than a new teacher with pre-existing pedagogical knowledge or expertise.

As demonstrated in the two previous chapters, the teachers partook in our needs assessment had varying degrees of experience in the field of pedagogy; only ten of the twenty-two new teachers in our sample had studied pedagogy formally in a classroom setting, and this varied from taking one course to doing a Bachelor's degree in Education. The majority of our sample derived their teacher training from previous teaching experience; of these, most had worked as teaching assistants (TAs) while in university, some had taught in universities, and a handful of them had previously taught at the high school level or taught English as a second language (ESL). Very few of them, only six in fact, had previous cegep teaching experience from other colleges or departments. Others still had

never attended cegep as students and had no previous knowledge of the system and its demographics.

It was very interesting to delve into our interview subjects' prior experience in pedagogy and assess how, if at all, said experience served them well as they began teaching at Vanier. This was particularly so because the online questionnaires revealed that 85% of respondents in departments A, B and C reported having "somewhat" or "very much" faced pedagogical challenges at the start of their careers at Vanier (see figure 4.1). These percentages far exceed those for the administrative and social rubrics.

The categories and corresponding themes that emerged from pedagogical discussions in the interviews stem primarily from the pedagogical challenges new teachers faced. Because the interviews offered new teachers a safe, confidential space to reflect on their earliest experiences at Vanier, they tended to prefer sharing experiences that they may not have felt comfortable discussing openly with fellow department members. As such, many interviews revealed in depth pedagogical problems new teachers had faced.

The seven categories that make up the pedagogical rubric are listed below in table 5.1. Themes associated with these categories ranged in terms of the extent to which they posed challenges for our interviewees. Nonetheless,

despite level of gravity, all were taken seriously and viewed as integral components of teaching in the cegep network.

Pedagogical Rubric: Categories
1. Course preparation
2. Pedagogical resources
3. Personal time management
4. Level of students
5. Student motivation
6. Classroom management
7. Evaluation and grading

Table 5.1 Pedagogical categories

5.1 Pedagogical support

The idea that some of the interviewees dwelt on the challenges they had encountered should not suggest that discussions hinged solely on the negative. In fact, when applicable, new teachers were happy to share with us the types of pedagogical support they had received. The list below is a compilation of the

help interviewees in departments A, B and C said they had received, and of the activities in place in their departments they partook in.

- Colleagues were helpful and supportive; they answered questions
- Coordinator was helpful and generous with time and advice: answered questions, put new teachers in touch with experienced teachers
- Meeting with all the new teachers and coordinator
- Get together for new hires teaching the same course
- Departmental meetings and occasional post-meeting dinners
- Unofficial mentoring system between teachers who share offices
- Departmental mini-conference
- Help from one teacher in particular
- Colleagues shared pedagogical materials
- Sample course outlines were made available
- Online discussion forums and documents
- “Professional responsibilities” document
- On-campus resources were helpful and supportive
- Workshops on:
    - Plagiarism
    - Class control (offered by Continuing Education)
    - Integrating students
    - Creating a learning environment
    - Different computer systems/online course management systems
- PERFORMA courses

Interviewees were appreciative of the support offered to them and, when time permitted, took full advantage of it. The quotes below highlight new teachers' positive pedagogical experiences.

> I found the workshop that the Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence put on was very helpful.
>
> I was hired at the last minute, literally the last day, and so I had to prevail on the kindness of people to offer suggestions and I ended up using a colleague's course pack. It was very kind to suggest it.
>
> My officemate [is] a wonderful person and a wonderful resource.
>
> What is happening in [my] department is very, very good and I have to give it to the people who oversaw the operation; it is the website, in which all kinds of teachers are now uploading material, uploading tests, quizzes, all kinds of exercises and so we are in communication via [this website]. And that is extremely helpful.
>
> There were a couple of people who had been here, I think, two years longer than I had, so they were around that summer. [One colleague] in particular sent me an email just to say, 'I know you're new, feel free to ask me any questions, please email me about anything, give me a call.' So I mean, you're saved as a new teacher just by the kindness of others, which is really great and really wonderful.
>
> My officemate has lots of great ideas about discipline and rules and classroom management, so he gave me a lot of tips. […] Part of it is, I may not have just taken the time to meet with people, so I was lucky to have him.
>
> The thing I love about Vanier is I find everyone is so friendly and welcoming and helpful. People in the department have been very receptive to any kind of question, so that's been good.

> Here at Vanier, everybody I met, from senior faculty to new appointees, and people who were hired at the same time as I was, were bending over backwards to help you and to give you advice and to share grading grids and exams and exam banks and on and on. I was overwhelmed by people's generosity and by this free giving of ideas and time and effort.

The aforementioned list of the kinds of support our interviewees shared does not mean that everyone received everything on the list. Indeed, some felt they lacked support. In other situations, certain aspects of teaching could not necessarily be demonstrated by someone else, but had to be learned by the individual. We shall now move on to the challenges experienced within the different categories, as well as how our interview subjects dealt with these challenges and their suggestions for how new teachers can avoid some of these problems in the future.

5.2 Pedagogical categories and themes

5.2.1 Course preparation

This category includes both **planning a course** before it begins and **class-by-class preparations**. In terms of the former, some first-time teachers experienced a double challenge in that, for one, they lacked experience and had

difficulty[17] planning a 15-week course. Secondly, some were unsure of their targeted audience, of the kinds of students they were planning for.

This quote attests to the struggles some of our interviewees dealt with before stepping into the classroom and commencing their course.

> [Something challenging to new teachers is] how difficult you want to make the course, like what specifically do you want to teach. Because sometimes you're teaching and it's really hard to know where they want you to stop, [what] they want you not to teach or to teach because you can just keep going on.

Demonstrating that mastering the art of course preparation does not come easily, one interviewee described how, even a couple of semesters into his career at Vanier, preparing a course for the first time could be difficult:

> It was a course that I'd never done before. So of course that adds challenges because you don't know what works, what doesn't work. What do the students know coming in, what do the students not know coming in? So that posed some problems.

Another interviewee, who had course preparation experience from years of teaching high school, found that this prior experience did not necessarily translate to course planning at the college level.

> [After teaching high school,] the hardest thing was to manage the difference between a fifty-minute class and a two-hour class. And to only see students twice a week, when you're used to seeing them once a day for fifty minutes. So it was kind of a coordination problem. And there was the challenge

[17] Or, in the case of last-minute hires, a lack of time.

> of setting out a course for fifteen weeks, as opposed to an entire year.

Setting out the course plan was one of the biggest themes in this category. Many new teachers expressed to us frustrations they had with creating course outlines, which could creep up both as the outline was being produced and after it had been given to the students.

> I wasn't sure what had to be on the outline. I understood it was sort of like a contract between you and your students but I didn't know what was absolutely supposed to be in there and what could be left out exactly. There are no preexisting models to work away from.
>
> It would be nice to have some type of template, like maybe have a bank of outlines the other teachers used and the readings they covered, just so the new teacher gets the idea.
>
> One thing that was difficult was just writing the rules on the course outline, being clear about my lateness policy, late work coming in and absences and participation and attendance. There's a standard clause that had just been posted and revised, but I had been working with some older outlines. So I had cut and pasted some things and it turned out that part of it was outdated and I didn't realize that that paragraph was something that you should just use without changing, or what things you could change, or what things you shouldn't change. So I was using one of the older rules that students can be penalized for absences, but apparently they can't now. I don't know when that changed.
>
> [On my first course outline] I was ambiguous about my late work policy, so I ended up being pretty lenient about late work coming in. But next time I'll be very clear about it.
>
> There are course models online here, but those are models for the technical things you need to put on,

> so I didn't have any models from Vanier of an actual syllabus, an actual reading list, an actual course description. So I did have models of, 'here's the number of assignments, here's what the methodology section should read,' but the workaday stuff of the course was not there.

The themes under this category ultimately suggested that course preparation is something that is not necessarily instinctual, but something that is learned and improved upon with ongoing teaching experience. When a course does not go exactly as planned, the key to maintaining a successful learning environment is adaptability.

In addition to being flexible, a key element of knowing how to present information to students lies in knowing oneself as a teacher. As the teacher quoted below explained, there are as many types of teachers as there are people who are teaching. It is crucial to not try to be a type that you are not.

> [When I was teaching ESL overseas] the first week or so we were replacing teachers who had been there for the year and we sat in on their classes to see what their style was and how they went about doing the class. And when I started teaching I found that I was mimicking their style and it really was uncomfortable for me because I wasn't really interacting with the students the way that I naturally would interact with them. […Then] I got back into my own sort of mode of interaction. And so it was actually unhelpful, I felt, for me to see that and to have my thoughts influenced by how the other teachers interacted with the class. And it was the same thing [when I started at Vanier as a replacement for another teacher]. I took over [a teacher's] class, and I sat in on one or two of his classes as well and his style is very different from mine. […] But when I went in there, I tried to mimic

> his style in some sense, maybe not even consciously but just having seen it influenced the way that I interacted with the students, until I fell into my own mode of interacting with them.

Teachers' Solutions

Of great value to this project is that many of our interviewees chose to speak about their trials and tribulations within the context of the solutions they employed to get them through course preparation.[18] Rather than dwell on how rough they had it, many chose instead to focus on the lessons they learned and how they learned them.

This list details the kind of help new teachers required and where they sought it.

- For guidance on how to choose suitable texts and course materials:
    - Asked coordinator and/or colleagues
    - Used and or looked at a colleague's texts and materials
- For guidance on course objectives and competencies student should acquire in a given course:
    - Spoke to coordinator and colleagues
- To come up with exercises, tips on how to present material and/or organize lesson plans and class discussions:
    - Reflected on past experience either as university TA or high school teacher

[18] As well as the other categories in this rubric.

    - Modeled themselves after former teachers
    - Recalled advice given by university professor they were assistant to
- To help give students a solid course structure:
    - Used online course computer systems to post course content and communicate with students
- To make the course more manageable:
    - Adjusted the workload to make it lighter for students during the busy points in the semester
- To help break up long classes and render them more manageable:
    - Used computer labs to help break up the time
    - Broke the time up into sections, beginning with drier elements and moving towards class discussions and group work
- For how to plan out and manage the entire semester:
    - Planned courses on a semester-basis, rather than per class
    - Used 8-week grid, each week divided by tasks and posted online for students to see
    - Relied on experience and/or guesswork

One of the teachers we interviewed discussed the benefits of studying in the PERFORMA program. While not every teacher may have the time to invest in a program that takes, on average, four to five years to complete, it does appear to be the ideal route to embark on to become a more effective cegep teacher. The

interviewee below explained how one PERFORMA course in particular helped improve the way he organizes his courses and lesson plans.

> The fourth course of the program is “Assessment as Learning,” and it made a big difference in how I put together a course, so I know what the objective is at the end and I sort of reverse engineer rather than starting off at the beginning and saying, ‘by the time I get to the end of the semester, this is what we’ll have covered.’ Instead, it’s ‘what do they need to know at the end of the semester, and how do I get them there?’ So it helped a lot in terms of planning the assessments and how I grade them, the rubrics I had for grading. It’s made a big difference in terms of planning on a semester basis rather than on a ‘What am I going to teach next class’ basis. And instructional strategies, if a particular strategy isn’t working, if they’re not getting the concept you’re trying to get across, some of the alternative ways you can present the same material makes a big difference. Because without teacher training, what you’re basing it on is what you responded to as a student. So once you start taking these courses, you start to understand the different ways of approaching learning, the different kinds of intelligences there are, the different kinds of learners there are. Therefore as a teacher, how you can present stuff for a wider variety of students so that they all end up learning as much as possible.

Teachers’ Suggestions

Discussing their own attempts to surmount challenges facilitated reflection on what our interviewees felt should be in place for incoming teachers to either prevent such problems from happening to them or to at least have solutions already in place for challenges that may be inevitable. These are their suggestions for the course preparation category:

- New teachers should be made aware of clear course objectives so they can emphasize and integrate them into their courses.
- Departments should offer detailed descriptions of the differences between different levels of courses within the department.
- Departments should offer new teachers a collection of course files: course outlines, homework assignments, in-class activities, quizzes, exam structures, projects, etc.
- New teachers should be made aware of examples of different types of texts and what their common features and objectives are. Being familiarized with different textbook publishers would also be an asset.
- New teachers could be offered a template or bank of course outline samples with an actual syllabus, reading list and course descriptions.
- New teachers could submit week-by-week plans of a course to the curriculum coordinator when they submit course outlines; this would help the structure and organization of the course.
- New teachers should not base their teaching style on what they responded to as a student. Rather, professional development activities could introduce them to alternative styles.

5.2.2 Pedagogical resources

Once our interviewees began teaching their first courses, they started to get to know both their departments and their own individual needs better. Consequently, they became more aware of the pedagogical resources they

sought from their departments. The three main themes to emerge in this category dealt with **getting support from, and using as a resource, fellow department members, departmental documents** and **college-wide workshops for teachers.**

New teachers tended to use colleagues in their department primarily as a source of information; when issues or questions arose, they would seek guidance from more experienced teachers. This assistance was greatly appreciated and in general interviewees reported that colleagues always made themselves available to them. However, another manner in which teachers could serve as a resource was brought up in some interviews, and this one was widely under-used: sitting in on other teachers' classes, observing them with the aim of uncovering ways of improving one's own teaching methods. These two quotes show the interest in and benefits that could result from being invited by a teacher to attend one of his classes.

> I would love to see other people teach. But I think there's a stigma attached almost, because I feel kind of strange [about it]. I'd be surprised if maybe 1% of teachers have seen other people teach and this is something that is kind of striking because I mean, that's one thing in the Education program [while I was a student] that we did a lot, you know. We'd watch each other teach and we'd prep in front of other people and we'd obviously be evaluated by other people, so it was a normal thing to watch other people teach. But I've been to department meetings here where people have a very violent reaction to it. When there is a suggestion that someone might come in to observe, they're always very careful, like 'would you mind maybe having someone in your class?' […] But I think it's crucial. Otherwise, how do

> you know how you're doing? Your students kind of provide feedback, but that really has to be taken with many grains of salt because the students basically like you if it's easy or things that are really not that important. I think fellow teachers might be better [to provide feedback].
>
> You know what would be really great? If some of the older veteran teachers were willing to allow another teacher to come in and observe them. When you go in and observe a class, and everybody's focused and working, all of a sudden you're like, 'oh!' I remember I used to substitute teach and I saw these teachers with perfect control over their classes, and I was like, 'what are they doing exactly?'

Others viewed getting involved with departmental committees as a way of being resourceful in that it allows new teachers the opportunity to spend more time with colleagues and get to know them better. Also, as a committee member one sometimes has greater access to certain information. Even for those who do not have the time or inclination to join, one could view committees as beneficial in that they could help indicate where to go depending on the type of information being sought; committees are put in place to make information more manageable.

In theory, committees are helpful; they bring people together and help keep others informed. In practice, however, committees are not always practical and/or productive. In interview after interview, we heard of committees that were set up and plans that were promised, but that, for various reasons, never came to

fruition.[19] At times, plans were grandiose and unrealistic; however, for the most part, as the quote below exhibits, committees and their intended plans did not amount to much because those involved lacked the time.

> There are a lot of committees in [my] department, but it's hard for those people to arrange to meet. Particularly at the beginning of the semester, when you need to have the most meetings, you have the least time. Everyone's overwhelmed with everything.

Among the things time-strapped committee members might fail to produce are informative documents for teachers. As much as our interviewees tended to prefer acquiring information from colleagues, there are times when no one else is around or when the person being asked does not have the correct information. As such, it is clearly important to have policies and procedures in print, not to mention the fact that this renders such information more formal and official.

There were some instances where new teachers were not able to find pertinent pedagogical documents or felt that what was available was somehow insufficient. Under these circumstances, our interviewees were often left to resort to guesswork for dealing with their queries. The two quotes below reflect the uncertainty that sometimes accompanies problems with using documents as resources.

> [When one first starts,] the problem is that you don't know what your questions are. How would you know that unless someone had told you? And to have a document that says 'here are the things' isn't enough; you almost have to have a Frequently

[19] One such example would include setting up a mentoring system.

> Asked Questions kind of document. But there's also some other things that you don't know and all of a sudden you're in the middle of a situation and you realize, 'I have no idea how to deal with this.'
>
> There are documents, there is a such thing as a course file and it presents itself as a box file with all kinds of documents and any new teacher would leaf through it and see, 'okay, this is what an exam looks like, this is what an assignment looks like, homework and so on.' That was never given to me. I was told, 'oh yes, it's in a big box' and there was a bit of a problem. Some documents were in boxes and could not be located. […] I happened to enter the department at a time when all kinds of people were assuming new responsibilities and all kinds of stuff, like documents, were in boxes that had been relocated, moved from one office to another, maybe lost on the way, who knows?

While documents pose challenges at times, workshops offer immediate information and the opportunity to ask questions on a given subject as information in being processed. Workshops tended to be popular with teachers who had the time to attend them (not having time was the most popular reason for not partaking). Most found the workshops helpful. However, when targeting a diverse group, workshops do not always, as we see below, benefit all attendees.

> One of the complaints I had about [a workshop on a computer system] I went to was that there was one presentation for all the varying abilities of computer skills. […] I felt there was a lot of wasted time. So when it comes to the use of technology, when they do have pedagogical services, if it would be possible to break it up in some way so that instead of having one session from 8 to 4, have the beginners from 8 to 11:30 or whatever and then have the people who feel more comfortable at a different time so that in the morning session I can do

> something different and then catch up with what the beginners had done, so that the beginners can have an all-day session. Part of the problem with that of course is who's a beginner and who's not, right? It causes those types of issues. But I did feel that it was agonizingly slow. That happened with [another technology] workshop I went to as well.

Teachers' Solutions

As shown above, the most common themes pertaining to pedagogical resources dealt with **conferring with colleagues, consulting documents** and **attending workshops**. Below is a list of other venues teachers pursued to acquire or increase pedagogical knowledge, as well as a more comprehensive list of some of the workshops our interviewees partook in.

- Emailed fellow teachers and coordinator with questions
- Researched and understood different approaches to learning to become aware of different types of intelligences and learners
- Maintained contact with one of the colleagues who had interviewed him
- Spoke to friends teaching at other schools
- Spoke to the academic coordinator of Continuing Education
- Attended workshops on:
    - Various computer and online course management systems
    - Classroom discipline and management
    - Diversity of population and diversity of age among cegep students
    - The range of level of students in a class
    - Classroom procedures
    - Teaching strategies

- Evaluation/marking criteria

Email was a popular choice, particularly since in-person, face-to-face consultations are often difficult to schedule. One teacher, quoted below, got creative with the use of email and subsequently increased not only his knowledge span but also his resource base.

> I started a little email forum where if I had a question, I would just email a group of teachers and they'd all write back and they seemed to like it too because they got such a range of ways to do something. I have lots of experience as a teacher before, so when I ask questions, it comes from a place of being confident and nobody would think that I was incompetent or clueless. So I had a lot of confidence in asking those questions and I think if I didn't have some of those things in place, I would be extremely nervous about asking questions for fear of, 'I'm trying to build a place for myself in [this] department, what will you think of me if I have these questions?'

Finally, the last, and rather popular, venues for obtaining pedagogical resources were the communal areas for teachers where many of our interviewees sought consultation. One of the benefits associated with the lounge was that one usually conversed with teachers from different departments. This helped get fresh and varied perspectives, as well as reassure new teachers that they were not alone in their difficulties, that teachers from all departments experienced similar challenges. Another advantage, according to some of our interview subjects, was that engaging in discussions with people one barely knows gives one a certain sense of anonymity and consequently greater freedom of

expression. Lastly, the lounge was viewed as the ideal place to get immediate, ad-hoc, needs-based advice. This quote nicely sums up a view shared by many of the new teachers we interviewed:

> I really appreciate the teacher lounge areas, because they allow for an informal support which I think can be even more useful sometimes than formal support because it's so immediate.

Teachers' Suggestions

In terms of resources some new teachers felt were lacking and which could be of use to future incoming teachers, our interviewees had plenty of suggestions for their respective departments. They are:

- Set up mentoring system right away and follow through with it
- Have an informal buddy system
- Encourage the practice of teachers observing others teach
- On a Pedagogical Day, teachers could make presentations in order to allow new teachers to observe their teaching styles
- Have a resource person or committee in the department just for new teacher integration
- Have a transfer of knowledge session with veteran teachers and new teachers
- Provide information on what CEGEP is, who the students are
- Offer training on computer and online course management systems to new teachers immediately when they start

- Have a mini-conference after new teachers have already had some time in the classroom and now have questions/concerns, approximately a month or so into the semester.
- Have more email communication such as email forums; make them more formalized
- Have an online forum where teachers can post anonymously
- Encourage teachers to take PERFORMA courses:
    - Those with no previous teacher-training should especially do the first four courses
    - The courses teach rubrics, assessment, instructional strategies
- It would be useful if experienced teachers were more involved with the running of the department
- Have informal meetings with teachers on any given topic; include food to encourage participation
- Offer workshops:
    - On a weekly basis: divvy up 15 topics, one for each week of the semester
    - On preparing course outlines
    - On how to teach
    - On how to plan a lesson
    - On the basics of teaching introductory courses (lessons, texts, objectives, evaluation)
    - On what other teachers do in class; approaches they use

    - On course objectives
- Inform teachers of support and resources available to students on campus
- Provide information on the demographics and kinds of students at Vanier

5.2.3 Personal time management

One of the main impediments to pursuing pedagogical resources was **not having any time to spare for extracurricular activities**. Many new teachers found themselves overwhelmed by the amount of time and effort they had to put into course and lesson planning as well as marking assignments and exams. Thus, regardless of having the desire to attend workshops, read lengthy informative documents and consult with colleagues, many simply did not have the time to do so.

The following quotes highlight how lack of time prevented some of our interviewees from seeking pedagogical resources.

> The coordinators are very available. They really make themselves available for questions. And lots of the people in the department are open to giving suggestions, but I had been so busy with two kids at home and just coming in and working, I'm not sure I would've gone out of my way to make an appointment with another teacher. If I bumped into teacher, I would steer part of the conversation to 'how do you do this' or 'how do you cut back on all the marking you have to do,' or 'is it reasonable to take two weeks to hand back an assignment' or things like that. Part of it is, I may not have just taken the time to meet with people.
>
> I think there is this big assumption that you have time, you can go and audit someone's class,

> basically sit in and see how they run their courses before you try it in your own. But it's so hard to manage your schedule.

In other cases, new teachers shared with us how incredibly taxing the first couple of years of teaching can be due to the fact that tasks will take longer to complete than they will for a seasoned teacher, since one is still in the process of learning what the job entails.

> I think the workload for a cegep teacher is a little underestimated. I mean, you teach three classes, but there's so much grading and so much correcting in the beginning. I see it with other teachers, too. […] I think it takes so much energy out of you in the classroom, but you don't necessarily realize it when you're doing it all the time. […] It's only later that you find out that you're actually very overworked, so I think that was probably the hardest thing [when I first started]. It's just a lot of work.

> Probably time management [has been my biggest challenge]. Well, in my case, because I'm still new, this is my third year in a row that I'm frontloading,[20] so doing four courses in a semester is absolutely overwhelming, mostly for the extra time that you're putting in for the grading. I'd say that's probably my greatest challenge. And lesson planning, if I'm short of time, yes, gets very tense. There's nothing worse than coming into a class just not being ready, but again, that's just a question of time.

Teachers' Solutions

In this situation, of course, there weren't any quick-fix solutions teachers could employ. It was simply a matter of taking the time to complete tasks, all-the-while remaining optimistic that somewhere along the line it would ease up; eventually,

[20] "Frontloading" is when one takes on a heavy course load in the fall to compensate for the possibility of having fewer teaching options in the winter.

new teachers become veteran teachers and work that was previously time-consuming becomes second nature.

Teachers' Suggestions

Similarly, there were few suggestions to be made to departments to improve this situation without diminishing new teachers' workloads, which would inevitably have a detrimental effect on seniority and hiring priority.[21] Nonetheless, assuming that course preparation greatly consumes new teachers' time, the suggestions proposed under that category could also help alleviate the challenges felt in this one.

5.2.4 Level of students

With regards to course planning, work becomes more daunting, lengthy and seemingly endless when a new teacher realizes that lesson plans need to be adjusted and then continuously readjusted to accommodate the varying levels of learning the students are at. The themes in this category attest to the rather unpleasant surprise many of our interviewees got when they began to notice that their students' abilities did not always match their (the teachers') expectations.

Certain new teachers were from other provinces or countries and therefore had never been through the cegep system. As such, they did not know what students had learned in high school, nor what they could be expected to know by their second year in cegep. This lead to the creation of the first theme under this

[21] This will be discussed in the next chapter, Administrative Rubric.

category: **uncertainty regarding level and abilities of students**. The teachers quoted below explain the perplexity that comes with not being familiar with students' level and not knowing exactly who to gear a course towards.

> The one thing that concerned me most and still does is figuring out what the students know when they come here, because I'm not from Quebec and so I don't know what exactly they cover in high school, and it seems very difficult to find out that sort of information.
>
> [Regarding] what the expectations are for a textbook for a cegep introductory course, I really had no idea what level to draw from. And then, the levels of assignments that I should be setting for the students. So things are hit and miss a bit in that first semester as you work things out.
>
> I was thinking about what book I wanted to use, because it was the level I wasn't sure of, never having taught an [introductory course in the department] before. I didn't want to have unrealistic expectations, or present the students with material that's better suited for undergrads. [But in the end some students said] they found the book a bit babyish. […] But I would bring in supplementary material or information on the author; make the discussion a bit more sophisticated to retain those students.

The notion that some material may be better suited to some students than others brings us to the next theme under level of students: **varying levels of ability among students taking the same course**. While it was one thing to be unsure of what the students already know, it was another to have to deal with the fact that the students do not all know the same things, or comprehend them to the same extent. As shown below, in some cases teachers were caught off guard by differences between students in the same class; in others it was differences

between students in different sections, wherein teachers had developed certain expectations based on one section, only to discover that these expectations did not hold for the other group.

> I have a few students who like to talk and participate in [my Continuing Education] class and that's great, but then there's a few others who I have trouble reaching, who will disappear after the break.
>
> I was actually really surprised at how, first of all, the average age in my summer course was not only much higher than in the day courses, but also than what I had last winter [in Continuing Education]. It was a wonderful dynamic, but it wasn't what I had expected. I think, and there sort of is, a throwback to high school. I thought, 'okay, summer school is when you failed something and they're not terribly strong,' but I had the opposite. I had people who were organized enough to try and take a course in advance, and so I really quite enjoyed it. Last winter, that was not the case. It was a very mixed group, some strong, some weak, some students that had been in the college and were out and trying to get back in, and some who were working [during the day] so it was hard for them to get everything done. So pedagogy is more difficult there in the sense that you're covering a really wide range of abilities. Much wider than I ever got in day courses, in the limited ones that I've had.

Dealing with the challenges of unexpectedly weak students was a difficulty a large number of our interviewees faced. The teachers who contributed to the theme of **having high expectations for what turned out to be rather weak students** were primarily those who had taught or TA'ed at the university level. They tended to assume that their students would be at the same place as first year undergraduates, which essentially turned out to be far from the case.

In the interviews, we repeatedly heard stories of teachers having to scale back the level and scope of what they had prepared for their courses. These quotes suitably represent the surprise and adjustments some of our interviewees experienced with students who were much weaker than they had anticipated.

> As soon as I got out of teaching a university course, I taught a college course and I had very high expectations from our students. At one point I thought the textbook was so trivial I wasn't even going to use it. That's what I told the publisher – that it was just too easy, 'do you have anything harder?' So I thought, maybe my standards were incredibly high, my expectations were incredibly high, [the students] just felt it was too much of a hurdle to leap over. But I don't want to dumb down material to the point where they're not going to pass the next course.
>
> I was disheartened by the poor communication skills, the weak study skills, the non-existent test-taking skills; it's like you have to assume they know nothing, totally tabula rasa, and work from there. You have to tell them how to take notes, how to organize their notes, you have to show them how to take a test, and that's why I redesigned my tests this semester. I have a different perspective on things and I don't assume that I can give them an exam and say, 'plunge right in.' So I'm giving them more step-by-step coaching now.
>
> When I first started teaching my class, it was for second year cegep students, so I thought it would be university level. But if I were to do it again, I would put a lot more lessons into that. I was treating them like university, but that's not where they were at. I was actually reaching too far. So that was a little bit of a problem.
>
> [At first, teaching at cegep] was a very different experience [from university] and in some ways it was quite a big shock, you know, the level of students here. I knew that I had to go down in

> terms of what I could teach but I had grossly underestimated how much I had to go down. And for me that was very hard at first, that readjustment in level. And I think a lot of people have a lot of problems with that at first because it's basically adult education really and then it's sort of babyish. When you're not used to that, it's quite a big step. [And] you have to change your method as well because at university it's more of a lecture format where you basically talk most of the time and here you have to give them work, in groups, in projects. At first, for me, I was quite uncomfortable with that. Then I saw it wouldn't work because they just lose the attention, their attention span isn't there to listen to me for that long. But also the fact that I couldn't take the material very far at all, I found very limiting and hard at first. I think now I've sort of accepted it but I still must say I have a bit of difficulty with it.
>
> So initially when I came into class, I thought, 'they chose to be here, so of course they're going to be more at the university level – they're not going to be the students who don't like school.' So it really came as a shock to me to realize that just because I said to read up to page fifty in the book, didn't mean that everybody did. With that was getting a sense of level, of what's a reasonable amount to ask and I think at the beginning, I asked too much. Yet honing it down and at the same time keeping it at a level was going to be challenging.

Interestingly, two teachers who had taught at the high school level prior to Vanier, were well aware of the level to expect, yet both for completely different reasons.

> I remember being told when I was teaching grade ten in high school that [the students are still mentally in] grade nine until halfway through the year. And that, at the time, made me feel better. But here, what I thought to myself, after the first semester, is that these are high school kids. They're just three months away from being high school kids. That sort of changes your perspective. But I know by

> speaking to other teachers who have come here from university or PhDs that their expectations are just way too high. They just think they're going to teach university students. My expectations were nice and low. And it also gives you confidence. You go into the classroom with confidence in terms of dealing with them; it gives you confidence in the choices you have to make, that you wouldn't necessarily have if you came in.
>
> I expected that the level would be lower than at the high school. I taught at a private high school with all of these spoiled and very accomplished kids and the level there is higher than at Vanier. I was able to ask a lot more of the high school kids than I could of the Vanier students, though the best Vanier students are competitive with the best students everywhere. Nonetheless, my expectations were fairly realistic.

Teachers' Solutions

While some teachers, as the two quoted above, used previous knowledge of other levels of scholarship to gauge where cegep students would be, others relied on pedagogical modifications and on-campus sources. Here is a list of the solutions our interviewees used to help remedy their challenges with the level of students:

- Adjusted expectations as the semester progressed
- Referred students to the various student resource centres on campus
- Gave out tip sheets on learning and study skills
- Used online course management systems with students to help them understand material
- Took a step-by-step approach to teaching
- Used class time to reflect with students on mistakes they were making

- Asked colleagues and/or coordinator about student level and expectations
- Reviewed material to get a feel of what students know

Teachers' Suggestions

In terms of suggestions for how departments could better support new teachers struggling with varying student abilities, there was little to recommend other than ensuring that newly hired teachers are made aware of it. It was proposed in a couple of interviews that departmental hiring committees could explain and make clear to potential teachers what exactly the average student levels are. Another suggestion was to allow teachers to see samples of student work to give them an idea of students' capabilities before preparing their courses.

5.2.5 Student motivation

As much as some teachers had overestimated the level of their students, many were taken off guard by what they perceived to be a lack of motivation on the students' behalf. New teachers who had assumed that their students would be the equivalent of first-year undergraduates also figured their students would have the same motivation as university students. Although many cegep students are highly motivated, many new teachers were left somewhat stunned by the average student's apathy towards his education. As the next quote shows, students' levels of engagement in the classroom did not always comply with our interviewees' lesson plans.

> It surprised me that there wasn't self-motivation. So something that I have really, seriously tackled is I

> assumed if I said, 'all of you get into a group, here are some questions,' provided I asked interesting, thoughtful questions, naturally they would discuss those questions. And it came as a shock to me; I honestly expected this highly motivated university approach where we're here to learn. And so when I heard them talking about the weekend, it came as a little bit of a surprise.

Generally, lack of motivation translated into not doing work and being disinterested in class. Thus, assignments were not done or completed outside of class, and within the classroom they remained distant and disengaged. Being new, some of our interviewees **questioned whether their lack of ability as a teacher hampered students' initiative**. As the teacher below explained, motivating students is indeed part of a teacher's job, yet a teacher can only do so much before it is up to the student to put in the work, as the second teacher quoted so succinctly put it.

> There are the ones who are just not working. I do feel responsible because maybe I'm supposed to be a motivational factor, I'm supposed to make it look interesting, make it look like it's relevant to them, that's my part. And that's what I do a lot; I try to pull into what they want to learn about [for future schooling or career]. I bend over backwards to try to look for applications. So that's my end of the bargain and then whether or not they do the work… I think maybe sometimes I'm making it just too hard or I'm making it look so easy you don't even have to do it or say my applications are only targeting 3 or 4 people out of the 20 in the room. So it's just a matter of playing it by ear and sometimes it's just too late, after half a semester is gone you realize you've been targeting the wrong people and it's the other half that you've left out completely.
>
> If they don't show up to class, how good a teacher can you be, really?

The following quotes demonstrate that one of the main themes under student motivation was **trying to get inside the students' heads and understand the situation from their perspective**. Questions that arose included wanting to know why students were in a class, or just generally in school, when they clearly did not want to be, as well as trying to understand why they did not want to be in school or in a specific course. Through trying to understand what was going on in their students' heads, new teachers hoped to be able to find a way to reach out to students and motivate them.

> The students I have now, it's more of an eclectic mix. Some of them are motivated, but not everyone has the level of commitment that the students [in my first class] had. So there are some people who come in and haven't bought the book for the first two or three weeks. I said, 'you have to get the book, it must be boring to come here and listen to me speak about a text you haven't read.'
>
> Students, I find, have this image of teachers who want to fail them or that are against them. I find that very weird, that they have this image of this teacher who is going to do whatever it takes to fail them.
>
> A lot of them just feel like they don't want to be there. It's some course they have to take because if they don't take it they don't get to take another course or they won't get their DEC. So there's generally a lot of animosity, they just don't want to be there. Another thing is they probably think they're really bad in [the subject] when they're really not.

Teachers we interviewed had varying, at times opposing, views on the **differences between daytime and Continuing Education students regarding their motivation levels**. One view was that evening students were more motivated because they go to school of their own volition, usually after working

during the day. Another view was that because most of them work during the day, evening students tend to have less time to complete assignments and less energy to participate in class. Others saw similarities between the two, but with perhaps more dedication on the side of the Continuing Education students.

> Daytime students just don't know what's good for them. I mean, they just think they're doing the course for their mom or for their dad or for the teacher or for I don't know what. They just don't realize it's for them. If I have to pick one problem to work on or to magically change, it would be that. It would be to just, like, inject them with some experience or wisdom. It's like, 'you know, you're not doing this for me. […] What you do with your life is going to affect you.' I find that's the biggest problem. I mean, you find inspiring stories, like a mother of three who's working during the day and taking courses at night and she excels or like some cancer survivor that has to miss a class to go to chemo and then comes back and works really hard and passes the course – you find those, especially in the night courses. But, you know, most, I would say up to 40 per cent of the daytime students, have no motivation whatsoever.
>
> In Continuing Education I usually get people who are coming back so are a little bit more serious. In the day you get the serious students who don't want to waste time and get their degrees as quickly as possible. But you also get a lot of those who are, I don't know, hanging out, I guess. Whereas in Continuing Education they seem to be mostly serious. This does not necessarily translate to amazing grades but they are there for a purpose and they know they've wasted time before and they don't want to waste it again.
>
> I'd expect that there might be a challenge in terms of the demographic, that the students in Continuing Education might be a little more difficult in terms of behavior or ability or whatever. I don't find the ability to be significantly jarring, really. But the behavior, because they work during the day or study during

> the night, or whatever else, they use every excuse to leave the class early or cut the class short. They tend to be a lot less compliant with keeping up with their assignments. And now that I'm in my third year, I see this as consistent; it's not like a one shot deal.

Teachers' Solutions

The common thread running throughout was that there is indeed **a major challenge in trying to increase students' interest in and commitment to their studies**. Finding lasting solutions that would stick was not easy since a lot goes on in the life of a student from class to class, not the least of which being that a student has four, five, six or even seven other courses to tend to. Thus, to carry the motivational momentum through the semester, teachers we interviewed worked on a class-by-class basis. Consistency is an essential factor as it shows students that their teacher is dedicated.

There was a multitude of ways our interviewees went about engaging their students and/or trying to get a motivated group. The teacher quoted below was a strong believer in choosing the "right" time of day to teach at.

> I have quite a number of students with learning disabilities, and of course, their progress is painfully slow, but they're very motivated, they're there at 8:00 in the morning. That's why I always ask for the morning slot, it's because I know I'll get the best of the crop.

Perhaps the biggest challenge in this category was **making sure students did the work and came to class prepared**. Consequently, most of the solutions our

interviewees attempted pertained to this challenge. New teachers found clever ways to encourage their students to participate, like the one quoted here:

> A challenge I had in the class in the beginning was getting students to do the readings. And what I've done is now I make it a point to ask them a question pertaining to the reading the week before they have to do it. So they have to come to class prepared with their answer to the question based on the reading to have a class discussion about it. And their class participation grade is based on their preparation to answer those questions.

Other solutions to help increase student productivity were:

- Made explicit comments on students' work all the time
- Gave students a participation grade
- Assigned group work and continuously checked up on groups
- Set up individualized projects for students
- Gave students constant encouragement
- Talked about students' expectations
- Assigned bonus homework as chance to pass the course
- Related homework questions to exams
- Gave random quizzes
- Made themselves accessible to students
- Rewarded student effort with a potluck party at the end of the semester

Teachers' Suggestions

Similar to student level, there was not much to suggest for departments to better deal with students' motivation. Again, potential new teachers being interviewed

could be forewarned that part of their job will entail going to certain lengths to ensure students are engaged with the material.

5.2.6 Classroom management

There are also non-academic reasons for teachers to maintain at least a functioning level of motivation. It is undoubtedly in a teacher's best interest to have motivated students because those who are not interested in what is going on in the classroom, academically speaking, are likely to get bored and create disturbances.

In fact, regardless of the reasons why, many of them do indeed disrupt the class. Classroom management was the category our interviewees most struggled with. Themes associated with classroom management ranged from dealing with students lying to get out of class to severe discipline problems resulting in threats to the teacher. Regardless of the degree of severity or the extent to which a teacher's safety felt uncertain, the various problems with classroom management all had in common that they impeded the teacher's pedagogical agenda.

In many interviews, teachers repeatedly related horror stories of students misbehaving in class: talking or texting on their phones, making out, swearing, coming and going during the class, etc. Many of our interviewees experienced great stress over worrying about how to handle unruly students. There was, however, one group of teachers that formed a glaring exception. Virtually the

only teachers who did not complain about having discipline problems were the ones who had previously taught high school. This, it seemed, made for excellent training in the realm of classroom management. After dealing with rowdy high school adolescents, cegep students' behaviour seemed mild in comparison.

These are some of the things our interviewees who had previously taught at the high school level had to say about the differences between the behaviour of cegep and high school students.

> I don't have classroom management problems at Vanier because it doesn't even compare [to high school]. I mean, the first time I walked into a classroom at Vanier and I was speaking, I stopped after five minutes because I was kind of freaked out by the fact that everybody was so quiet. And I even asked them, 'why are you so quiet?' And they were just kind of surprised, because that was just kind of the standard. But high school isn't always that pleasant.
>
> If I hear colleagues complaining about discipline problems, I'm thinking, 'Cry me a river.' It's very nice here. […] I had so many problems with high school kids that here I probably put up with things that other people might consider to be a problem. For example, I don't mind a little chatter, but I'll speak up right away if they're interfering with me. You know, no talking when I'm talking, that kind of thing. I rarely get anything more problematic than a little bit of chatter.
>
> One of the semesters when I had only one class at Vanier, a night class, I needed to find more work and I ended up teaching full time at a high school. And that was actually the best teacher training I ever had. That was a completely different way of teaching. I was the fourth teacher that they had that year when I started because they had driven the other three away. We did well, I really liked it. I

> loved teaching there, which I didn't expect; I was doing it for the money. But when I came back to Vanier, I remember walking into classes and thinking, 'this is a joke, this is easy, this is beyond easy' now that I had that experience in high school. I never have discipline problems here, never, since then, never.
>
> [When I first started] there was a bit of a discussion about some of the things we would be facing and one of the comments made to us was, 'in some cases, you will have to worry about classroom management, but not you; you taught high school.' And that's really true. This is nothing, there's no classroom management issues at all, because I've seen so much worse. And I wasn't at a bad school, it just doesn't compare at all. And I had spoken to people who had never done any teaching until they started here, they were coming straight out of university, and it was very different for them because they sort of had that expectation that college was like the university classroom, and it's not at all the same. And of course they're seeing it with the perspective of having been a student in a university classroom.

The teacher quoted above illustrates that the recurring element of surprise linked to the level and motivation of students carried into classroom management. Indeed, some of our interviewees did express that they were not expecting to have to deal with misbehaviour in the classroom, or that they would have to deal with it to such an extent. Therefore, combined with the other areas[22] that put strain on new teachers, classroom management proved to be yet another cause of stress for many. It also, as some of these quotes represent, forced some to reflect on what had gone wrong to prevent it from recurring every semester.

[22] Such as lesson plans, time management and becoming familiar with a new working environment, as well as administrative and social factors, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

> Discipline came as a surprise. I figured I wasn't going to be dealing with discipline issues and that ended up not being the case. The beauty about the first semester being over is now I can look back and say, 'ah ha! You have to set up the classroom this way;' little things that I would've thought were almost condescending or insulting, like, 'you don't have your book, you can't be here,' make a statement. 'You're here to learn, you're here to be focused.' Before I thought that they're too mature. Students and teachers are obviously not equal, but we're more like at the university level, we're more equals, so I was not going to talk that way. But now, it's 'get to work. You're here or you're not here.' But my first semester, I felt like that would've been absurdly insulting.
>
> I didn't realize that discipline was going to be an important part of my role in the classroom. That was a real shock to me. I had one student who swore at me at one point, other students who acted disrespectfully, but most of the students, they were really fine. I had to realize that what I say goes; a lot of times, just stating straight up, 'don't do that.' That was probably the number one thing that needed to be tackled for the classroom to be as strong as it could be.
>
> I was expecting [from the students] a greater level of maturity and a greater level of self-restraint and a greater level of respect for me. I was not expecting them to treat me like a high-school substitute and that's how I felt.

One teacher pointed out that, somewhat ironically, new teachers, who are presumably less skilled and experienced at successfully controlling their classes, tend to end up with the most unruly classes. This is due to the fact that they are the ones assigned the last sections to be added on, which, as this teacher explained, tend to attract less academically inclined students.

> Unfortunately, one of the problems of being a new teacher is that you land the new sections that have been opened late, at ungodly hours. So sometimes this engenders a class dynamic that in and of itself goes beyond possibly what a seasoned old-timer in the college would have to face. So I would end up with the more unruly, less disciplined, less organized; the people who added the course late, the people who do not necessarily plan on continuing in the course. So I did have a very unruly class and it was extremely discouraging for me. […] I wasn't prepared for the 17- and 18-year-olds to be so hard to manage. It's really the issue of discipline. How do I interact with these students, what kind of figure of authority should I be, what kind of image of authority should I exude? […] Eventually I noticed that if I didn't have 100 % iron-clad control over a classroom, even the people who were disciplined at the outset would start getting the idea that it's a free-for-all. So I really had to put my foot down.

While most of the classroom management problems discussed were characteristic of the type of behaviour stereotypically associated with unruly students, what some teachers had to endure was considerably worse. In these cases, students moved away from what can be described as typical student misconduct and assumed behaviour that can be viewed as criminal. As these quotes show, there were instances where teachers experienced something no one should ever have to go through, especially at work where one generally expects, at the very least, to be in a safe environment. Regardless of whether or not these occurrences were intended to be real threats and indicate the possibility of actual harm being done, the effect on the recipients was nonetheless very real and won't soon be forgotten.

> I've had threats, I've had a posting on my office door that was a very subtle threat but laced with sexually

> derogatory language. Graffiti all over my office door, not spray painted on the door or anything, but Post-It notes.
>
> I had a theft in my classroom this semester from a student, I'm sure I know who it is and I worked really hard to make him come around. […] I was as I always was in the classroom, although I was on edge all the time. It really tainted the atmosphere and when he wasn't there, I was just like, 'whew!' When he was there, I was on pins and needles the whole time.
>
> I would say really, the first semester, discipline problems [were my biggest challenge]. I had two classes where I felt I had hostile students who were openly hostile on more than one occasion. And I had a couple of students in both classes, for example, who would swear, not like at me, but would swear using all sorts of words you can imagine in their descriptions or in their response to what I had said.

Whatever their motivation, students who display major discipline problems appear in great need of attention. They tend to use intimidation as a tool to paralyze or disarm their teachers, and take them off guard, thereby **allowing the students to hijack the class**. This was a relatively common theme in classroom management, even when the students did not go so far as to use hostility or aggression to seek attention. Many teachers spoke to us about students who tried to command the attention of the entire class.

> When some of the bad apples came [to class], you never got anything done because it's all trying to discipline them and I remember telling one of my colleagues that this guy walked in and he never comes but he came this particular day and it was horrible and I told him I thank my lucky stars that he skips my class.

There was one sort of class clown and when there's one student who's the squeaky wheel, it seems like it's more of the class than him, but I noticed when he left to go to the bathroom or something, the class would get very quiet and serious, so it was really him. I didn't deal with it well enough. I've heard other teachers say this too – I've always had this thing where it's just a small thing, just a little murmur in his corner of the room, what do you do? Come down hard? I kept saying, 'please be quiet,' so I would do that, but it's tiring. I would go after class to him while he was gathering his things and say, 'I need you to be quiet during class.' I think he was being a class clown because he really wanted to impress me somehow, because he would bring me doughnuts and stuff, it wasn't in a hostile way.

I hate the discipline thing, to be honest. I hate it. It wasn't such a problem, teaching at [university], the biggest problem you had was just people sleeping at the back of the room. And here, the problems have more to do with talking while I'm talking, disrupting the class that way, or being sort of challenging, being kind of rude. Students arriving late, that's another problem. That was the hardest thing for me, figuring out how to deal with those sorts of problems. I'm figuring it out more and more as I go along. I think overall it's getting easier. And I hope it would only continue to get easier. […] Just realizing, first of all, that the students are easy to embarrass and also that ultimately, I can take care of things. Ultimately it's my room. So I feel a lot better calling people out, telling them to talk to me after class has usually worked out very well. I don't know, just realizing that I don't have to ignore things. I can stop class, point things out, make a spectacle of somebody and then go back to teaching the class. And it has certain effects, you know. So I have more confidence in doing that.

Teachers' Solutions

This last teacher is an example of how many teachers do gain more control over their class as they gain more experience and confidence as a teacher. One of the best solutions for dealing with very problematic students was to turn to the manager of Student Services, Peggy McCoy, for assistance. As part of her dossier, Peggy sits down and talks with these students individually; she also offers workshops to teachers on classroom management.

In sharing with us the ways they attempted to discipline their students, our interviewees appeared very proud when they had succeeded. They were glad to share their success stories. In other cases, they were keen to offer tips in the hopes that they might reach other new teachers and be of help to them.

> I learned from some colleagues that it's really important to set the ground rules in the very first class. I wasn't really prepared at Vanier for the disciplinary issues that I faced in my first semester. Now, that being said, I also dealt with them, managed them and in the final analysis even the students I had to deal with were all fine at the end of the semester. But I don't like playing police officer, and I don't enjoy a situation where I feel like I'm baby-sitting. I don't want to be that kind of a teacher because I don't think you get much teaching done. You spend more time getting them in line than anything. So I had to finally just take them aside and talk to them about it, and they were fine after. And I did that rather quickly. But I decided I didn't really want to have to do that again, or try to avoid it. So this semester what I did is, I had a list of things, my ground rules for the students, and I prefaced it with, 'I'm sure we won't have any problems at all because you look like a fabulous bunch, but just so we all know where we stand...' And I basically gave read them the riot act. But not only the riot act but what I

> do for my students. You know, that I respect them and that I want them to do well, and that I'll do everything in my capacity to assist them in that process, and I expect the same respect in return and then I listed all of the issues that I'm particular about.
>
> I did have a problem with a student this term and I appealed to Peggy McCoy and that was the end of that. And it sent the message loud and clear that there's no nonsense in this classroom and discourteous behavior and fooling around will not be tolerated.
>
> I guess one of the big things that I did right from the start was – it took me a while to learn it when I taught high school, but it did work eventually – was to really just be quite strict in the beginning and ease up later. Try not to be everybody's friend at the start, because then you can't go back the other way. And they don't have any expectations really, the students. They don't start with the expectation that you're going to be that nice and friendly, so that anything you kind of give up later on is a bonus, as opposed to starting in one direction and having to clamp down. So I set up classroom rules that were relatively simple and I tried to stick to them, especially in that first month, really closely.

One teacher described an ongoing problem he had with a student who habitually came in late, causing a commotion in the process; rarely did any of the work; and openly criticized the textbook during class discussions, usually saying how he was happy he hadn't done the readings. After sharing with us the stress this student caused him, the teacher related how he remedied the situation:

> I sent an email to him and I outlined exactly all of the things that he had been doing in class that I felt were disruptive and distracting me from doing my job and I said to him that I didn't want him to come back to the class if he didn't feel he could make a commitment to the rest of the semester, and I told

> him in the email that I had copied the message to the coordinator and to the dean, and I did do that, and that was the end of it. From then on, he came to class, he did the reading.

Other ideas our interviewees had for managing students and creating a healthy learning environment were:

- Don't be their friend or equal; instead, be an authority without being an authoritarian
- Be consistent, don't bend; remain firm but friendly
- Remember that it is your classroom and you are in charge
- Do not expect that the behaviour of the students is the same as in university; realize they are still basically high school students
- Employ the 10-minute rule: if a student is ten minutes late, do not let them in
- Use peer pressure: students will quiet each other down
- Be clear about what you want and do not want students to do; set ground rules and boundaries immediately; read them the "riot act," but with humour
- Learn ground rules from colleagues in the teachers' lounge areas
- Know that you can remove a student from the class
- Create a student/teacher contract where the student comes up with expected mode of behaviour
- Take off a mark for every day an assignment is late

- When necessary, email students a list of things they've done wrong, and include the coordinator and dean on the email
- Ask for morning classes as they tend to attract better disciplined students
- Refer to the manager of Student Services
- Level with students about their behaviour
- Single out individual students and talk to them one-on-one when necessary
- Speak with coordinator about difficulties
- Use the "carrot and stick" approach to have students pay attention
- Maintain confidence
- Know you are not the only one with these problems

Teachers' Suggestions

In order for new teachers to get increased support from departments in dealing with classroom management issues, the following suggestions were made:

- Make it clear that there are discipline issues in the classroom so that teachers know it is not their fault
- Create a Frequently Asked Questions document on how to deal with different situations
- Have an information session with the manager of Student Services
- Make available classroom conduct policies

In addition, one interviewee emphasized the importance of new teachers being made well aware of on-campus resources to help them deal with difficult students:

> I think having a much closer connection to Student Services would be a real help. For example, when you're teaching in high school and you send a student out of class, the principal talks to the student. Well, I sent a student out of class my first semester and it never crossed my mind that I should establish with this student, 'before you come back to my class, we will have a meeting and we will establish appropriate behavior for in my class.' That's very, very important. But, I didn't think to do that; he did end up apologizing to me, but then a week later, he ended up copping an attitude. Then, I had talked to a teacher, who was like, 'you can send him to Peggy McCoy.' Well, if I hadn't known that, I would've gone like, 'what do I do now? I'm not sure.' Even now, I had two students that walked out of my class early because they hadn't done the reading, so they didn't think it would be helpful to be there and they did it once and they did it a second time. So I asked, 'how do I best handle this?' I ended up having a conference with them, but I thought, 'what if this continues? What's my next step?' And that's when I went to Student Services directly. So I would really love to see much more knowledge passed along about what options are available. A lot of times, with that knowledge, I don't even need to use them. It's a card I can pull.

Regardless of how well they know their subject matter, teachers facing serious discipline problems in the classroom were sometimes left questioning their ability to teach. Experiencing difficulties with classroom management attacks a teacher's self-confidence and puts to task his aptitude for guiding students in their construction of knowledge. In this respect, classroom management was a true pedagogical challenge for many of our interviewees. This is reinforced by

the fact that it was repeatedly presented to us as a widespread problem. However, as many new teachers underscored, it can be conquered by maintaining confidence and holding one's ground; intimidation is only successful insofar as one allows oneself to be intimidated.

5.2.7 Evaluation and grading

Our final category deals with troubles and issues related to evaluating students. Many new teachers enter cegep with little to no experience in grading, in translating demonstrated student ability and knowledge into a mark. The aforementioned lack of awareness of the level of students and, above all, being uncertain of how to set up a course and how much to cover in one semester only aggravated the process of deciding the number and type of assignments to give to students.

As our interviewees testified, delineating an evaluation scheme is a complex procedure. One must first figure out objectives: what should the students know at the moment of evaluation? Related to this is the scope and level of difficulty: how long should an exam or assignment be and how much should it cover? Then, a teacher must decide the percentages to allot to different tasks. Lastly, there is the matter of knowing when to hold exams or set project/assignment due dates; this seemingly simple task can prove to be an uncertain feat for someone who is unsure of how exactly a course will unfold, having never taught it before.

The main theme in this category was that the **absence of standardized grading for different sections of the same course** makes it difficult for new teachers to know whether their evaluation scheme is acceptable and on par with the way students are graded in other sections. This was particularly relevant where assignments were concerned as their evaluation tends to be more subjective than, say, a multiple choice exam. For this, many of our interviewees stated that it would have been helpful to have had a point of reference; to have seen what a 90% assignment looks like versus 70% or 50% for a given course.

Since all of our interviewees had already been at Vanier for at least one full semester, discussion of evaluation and grading was mostly reflective; participants shared insights on how they handled marking conundrums. Furthermore, offering a valuable perspective as new teachers with a certain, albeit limited, degree of experience meant that our interview subjects were in an ideal position to think about and suggest the best ways departments could prepare new members for evaluating students.

Teachers' Solutions

Solutions often came in the form of employing a trial and error technique, such as this teacher did:

> I have a general guideline that if it takes me 12 to 15 minutes to write a test, then it'll take a student somewhere between 70 and 85. So I write up a test, I do the test and if I can do it in roughly, you know, 12 to 15 minutes, then I think it's acceptable. I have botched that a couple of times this semester. For

> one of my tests half the class was done in 60 minutes. In another class, nobody was done in 80. […] I mean, it's tough to gauge how to evaluate but I'd rather evaluate too difficultly and then grade generously than evaluate too easily and then have to find some way to lower the marks because then the students, when they look at it, say 'wait a minute, this should be worth more' so that's more difficult. So if you going to err, err on the side of too difficult, not on the side of too simple.

In addition to testing out various methods, our interviewees relied on available resources, their personal skills and experiences, and the help of others to cope with the challenges of evaluation. This list details the specifics of the solutions employed for this category:

- Used Omnivox[23] to get feedback to students faster
- Never completely marked up a paper and/or never used red ink to avoid jarring students
- Appraised students' midterm assessments to gauge progress
- Used previous teaching experience to set out evaluation scheme
- Relied on university training and/or TA experience to figure out how to grade
- Used the "Bell Curve"
- Used course objectives as a rubric for grading
- Had a colleague review evaluations before returning them to students
- Spoke with colleagues about different methods of evaluation

[23] A college-wide computer system used by teachers and students.

- Used the end-of-semester evaluations from previous semester(s) of teaching to improve future courses
- Sought out individual help for syllabus design
- Used personal time management to get grading done in a timely fashion

Teachers' Suggestions

With regards to evaluations, some new teachers were in favour of implementing standardized marking, or at the very least explicit guidelines for what constitutes an A, B, C, and so on, as well as simply a pass and fail. In short, teachers wanted standards for what passes or fails an assignment. Interviewees claimed that having such a system would help them feel more secure and confident in their grading.

Perhaps the most popular suggestion among our interview subjects was to **disseminate information on grading grids**, including model assignments, types of assignment topics and an exam bank. As the quotes below highlight, a workshop on grading procedures might be the best venue to pass this information on to teachers.

> I think what would be useful is a workshop on how the department expects work to be graded and how the department expects the semester to be divided in terms of the percentage of evaluations. All I was told was, 'well, it's up to you.' Well, it's great that it's up to me but it would be nice to have some type of general guideline as to what it is that is expected. […] But there's nothing, there's no guidelines at all for how you should break all this up. So it's a little bit ad hoc or so it seemed.

> I talked to a few teachers and one of my colleagues told me that in all the tests if you have just one competency that you want to test for, put a question that everyone can get and put one that's slightly challenging. At least you'll know the class will pass, most of them will get it and the ones who think a little more will pass and get a better mark. But I mean that came in December when the tests were over. [But I'm] trying it now. I just wish all of this was told to me right at the beginning before I even started teaching rather than sort of piecemeal and from a hundred different sources and during a span of like, a year as opposed to right at the beginning.
>
> We were thinking about doing a workshop on marking criteria which was eventually cancelled because of the snow day. That would have definitely helped because if we had it department wide then at least the teachers would be able to assess what they should be looking for in terms of grading. […] Advice would have been great if it was from seasoned teachers who've been working with the students for quite a while. They know what they're looking for and how to be in the middle in terms of grading, not too easy but not too hard. Unfortunately, it fell through so we never got to see that.

5.3 Review of needs assessment results for the pedagogical rubric

Reviewing the various challenges this rubric presented to our interview subjects, one gets a sense of how overwhelming it can be for new teachers in the cegep network. A new teacher could potentially face a series of pedagogical trials that span an entire semester. Before the course ever begins and the new teacher ever steps into the classroom, difficulties could arise during the course

preparation process. Furthermore, pedagogical resources could prove difficult to locate. A new set of problems could occur once the teacher gets in front of the class; the students can be unmanageable, their level might be lower than the teacher planned for, they might be unmotivated and therefore unwilling to do the worked asked of them. Finally, in between each class, the new teacher could encounter challenges with time management and find himself continuously burdened with marking. In short, departments that systemically offer strong pedagogical support to their teachers might save their newest members a great deal of stress.

We found that many of the challenges faced within the pedagogical rubric stemmed from a lack of information; the need to adapt to, settle into and become familiar with the profession; and/or inaccurate preconceived notions of what to expect in the classroom.

The first category, **course preparation**, highlighted the difficulties new teachers can encounter when their course planning skills are only nascent. It can be quite difficult knowing what to teach and when during the semester to teach it, when one has not taught the course before. Course outlines frequently had to be amended to make adjustments. Though it can be viewed as a gradually-acquired skill, receiving guidance from colleagues on how to develop a course is extremely beneficial.

Guidance from colleagues was also a key element of the second category, **pedagogical resources**. This category demonstrated the importance and value of being part of a cohesive department. Learning about pedagogical resources and acquiring necessary information is a vital part of new teacher integration. Colleagues and coordinators were the main sources of knowledge with regards to this category; difficulties were minimal when new teachers felt they were part of an inclusive, sharing department.

Course preparations, teaching and marking can all seem overwhelming to a new teacher. In category three, **personal time management**, we saw how time-consuming it can be to for new teachers to carry out tasks they are still unfamiliar with. Becoming acquainted with everything the profession entails is a lengthy learning process and good time management skills are very useful to help new teachers stay afloat.

The next three categories within the pedagogical rubric were **level of students**, **student motivation**, and **classroom management**. These three categories are connected insofar as challenges encountered herein were primarily due to preconceived notions that turned out to be false.

The students' academic levels and abilities posed a challenge to teachers who had unrealistically high expectations. These teachers found themselves having to adjust the curriculum throughout the semester in order to get through to

students. Varying abilities among students was an additional source of difficulty for some. Further to bringing the material to the level of the students, new teachers regularly faced having to teach to a wide range of skill and ability, aiming to ensure the weaker students understood the material while not alienating or boring the higher achieving students.

Regarding the academic level of the students, the shock of the reality often lay in the fact that new teachers had expected cegep students to be like university students. The same can be said pertaining to student motivation. Many of our interviewees had anticipated that their students would be keen learners. Instead, they were often disheartened to see their students were not as motivated as they (the teachers) had expected. Trying to engage apathetic students became an added source of stress and difficulty for some of our interview subjects.

In addition to being surprised by students' level and lack of motivation, realizing the extent to which they would have to discipline students came as a shock to many teachers. Classroom management proved to be a major issue among new teachers, most of whom had to find out the hard way that it is best to establish a set of ground rules on the first day of class. Dealing with unruly students was a cause of great stress and frustration for many of our interviewees. Based on our needs assessment, it would seem that the best way to avoid being phased by students' behaviour is to teach at the high school level prior to teaching cegep.

Finally, the seventh pedagogical category to emerge from our needs assessment was **evaluation and grading**. Many of our interviewees lacked previous experience in marking and were uncertain as to how to navigate their way through the various steps of producing an evaluation scheme. Some new teachers expressed an interest in standardized grading among sections of the same course, believing this would facilitate matters. As none of these categories exist in isolation, evaluation matters were further complicated by adjustments in course preparation, as well curriculum modifications based on student level.

5.4 Implementing action

Within the scope of this project, it was understandably not feasible to address every new teacher's pedagogical concerns with action. Deciding where to place emphasis and develop action was a task requiring careful scrutiny and reflection. To achieve this, we met with each facilitator from departments A, B and C to discuss the results from their respective department's needs assessment. Taking into account the level of importance of the issues, as well as time constraints, resources and logistics, each facilitator developed an action plan tailored to their department's needs and culture.

Department A

5.4.1 New teacher luncheon meeting

About half-way through A07, the facilitator and coordinator of department A held a luncheon meeting geared at newly hired teachers. Despite the focus on new teachers, all department members were welcome (and even encouraged) to attend. In addition to familiarizing new teachers with their colleagues, the presence of experienced and non-tenured teachers was valuable in terms of the insight and suggestions they could offer the novices.

The meeting had no fixed agenda, preferring instead to allow conversation to unfold organically according to the topics raised by new teachers. While the discussion also covered administrative issues new teachers were facing, there was still enough time for pedagogical dialogue; exchanges took place regarding student attendance, discipline issues and student level.

Within the context of student attendance, more seasoned teachers were able to offer advice pertaining to failing students who miss a stipulated number of classes. Many teachers include a note on their course outlines stating that students who miss more than a given number of classes will automatically fail. Experienced teachers were quick to warn their new counterparts that, although weak attendance can be a problem, this is not the way to ensure student attendance. In fact, it could backfire, as new teachers were counseled; should a

student complain about failing a course due to absenteeism, the College would challenge the teacher's policy. In addition to forewarning new teachers, those present at the luncheon gave advice as to how students could make up marks lost due to extended absences, such as an extra assignment.

As was the case with our needs assessment, discipline in the classroom was a key issue for the new teachers at department A's luncheon meeting. They were given advice in terms of seeking help from Student Services when necessary, trying to use humour to defuse discipline issues and using Omnivox to inform students when marks are taken away for disciplinary reasons.

Finally, one participant brought up student level, stating that he was unsure whether his students were understanding much of what they were being asked to read. Upon mention of the textbook being used, others present had suggestions concerning supplementary texts that could be used to help heighten students' level of understanding.

The facilitator was pleased with the luncheon meeting, noting in his logbook that "the attendees certainly supported each other with narration of their own experiences in relation to particular problems brought up by the new teachers as well as indications of what worked/did not work for them and what resources might be available to all of us in dealing with these issues."

5.4.2 Mentoring directory and mentoring of two new teachers

The next action department A's facilitator developed from the needs assessment was the mentoring directory. At a departmental meeting, the facilitator explained the need for a mentoring system and asked if any teachers wanted to volunteer as mentors. Six teachers, including the facilitator, stepped forward to add their names to the mentoring list. The facilitator asked the volunteer mentors to submit their contact information along with a brief summary of their research interests. The facilitator created the list with the intention of adding it to the new teacher kit[24] that was in the works, instructing new teachers to contact the mentor of their choice should they want one.

Mentoring can be a powerful pedagogical tool, allowing for the transfer of knowledge all-the-while helping a new teacher build a connection with an experienced colleague. This was definitely the intention as department A's facilitator reached out to two new colleagues, who had been hired after our needs assessment.

The facilitator contacted the two teachers separately via email, introducing himself and suggesting that they get together in the near future to discuss any problems or questions they might have thus far. The email was worded as such to not make the new teachers feel obliged or pressured to partake in the help of a mentor. Both were pleased to have a mentor and took up the facilitator on the offer for help. Throughout the course of the semester, the mentor and two

[24] More on this shortly.

mentees had the opportunity to discuss various topics, which the new teachers found to be quite supportive. The facilitator supplied the mentees with information on a needs basis. That is, as issues or questions arose, they would discuss possible solutions. The following list details the pedagogical assistance the facilitator provided the new teachers:

- Feedback on design of first test and advice on evaluation scheme
- Suggestions for assignments and possible course readings
- What to do when students hand work in late
- Pedagogical information to be included on course outlines and assignment handouts
- How to respond to suspected plagiarism
- How to react to dwindling attendance in the classroom
- Department-specific information, such as agendas for departmental meetings (particularly handy since one of the mentees was teaching an evening course and was unable to attend meetings)

5.4.3 New teacher kit

In an attempt to answer many of the questions new teachers have, before they need to ask them, department A's facilitator put together a department-specific new teacher kit based on the information garnered in the needs assessment. While the kit predominantly features administrative information, there is a section devoted to pedagogical issues.

The pedagogical section of the guide features an explanation of the department's history at Vanier. This write-up is useful to help new teachers, particularly those from outside Quebec, better understand both the cegep system and department A's objectives and mandate. The kit also included:

- Information on the different levels of courses in the department
- Sample course outlines for the different levels of courses
- Objectives and standards for the different levels of courses
- Advice on assignments: how to space them out throughout the semester; marking schemes
- Sample pedagogical handouts on "working the material" that teachers frequently give to students
- Samples of student work to help new teachers preview the level of students

5.4.4 Departmental book fair

Lastly, the facilitator organized a departmental book fair. The idea originated as a way for retiring teachers to get rid of some of their books; this would be of benefit to both the retiring teachers and the new ones who would inherit the books. Due to interest in the book fair, the concept expanded to include books that anyone in the department wanted to give away. Light refreshments were served in order to entice more participants. Those in attendance were grateful for the event, particularly as it allowed department members to peruse materials used by colleagues and get a better glimpse into others' teaching tools. As

documented in the facilitator's logbook, "Although we did not have a formal pedagogical discussion, looking at the books provided an excellent springboard for conversation about past and present pedagogical and academic interests."

Although the participants in the events organized by the facilitator were pleased with the outcomes and happy to have attended, the facilitator wished to have been able to reach out to more people. He wrote in his logbook "What I have found repeatedly is that I can have a variety of ideas about interesting things to do [for this project], but the realization of them is another matter since [this] department is difficult in general to engage with enthusiasm and a high participation rate for just about any activity." In short, as much as people expressed that activities were a good idea, it did not always mean that they were going to attend, whether it be due to conflicting schedules or apathy.

Department B

5.4.5 Guidebook for new teachers

Scheduling difficulties also plagued department B. Despite the expressed need for additional pedagogical support, members of department B, including the facilitator, seemed to have the most time constraints. Consequently, organizing activities that would be at a suitable time and well-attended proved to be quite

difficult. Therefore, in order to address pedagogical concerns,[25] department B's facilitator deemed it best to produce a document that colleagues could peruse at their leisure and when their schedules would permit.

Like department A, the facilitator for department B opted to put together a department-specific guidebook for new teachers. This guide mostly offers administrative information, but has a section reserved for the all-important issue of classroom management. In it, new teachers will find:

- Vanier's official policy on student misconduct in the classroom
- A sample pamphlet for students on how to behave in the classroom
- Several informative handouts from Peggy McCoy's workshop on classroom management[26]
- An intervention guide for faculty on how to deal with emotionally distressed students

These documents, all of them useful tools for teachers, offer detailed, step-by-step advice on how to respond to a number of situations in which conduct leads to a classroom environment that is not conducive to learning.

[25] As well as administrative, as shown in the following chapter.
[26] Discussed later in this chapter.

Department C

5.4.6 Wine and cheese

The facilitator for department C organized a wine and cheese to provide a relaxed atmosphere in which new teachers could meet or become better acquainted with their colleagues. This primarily social event deliberately maintained an informal structure in order to allow new teachers to feel at ease and comfortable enough to share their concerns. In his logbook, the facilitator commented on the pedagogical aspects of the event. He wrote, "There was a lot of talk about classroom management, teaching strategies and teacher self-care. The new teachers really wanted suggestions about ground rules for classes as well as innovative ways for teaching and marking. All in all, it was an excellent activity."

5.4.7 Orientation session for new teachers

In May of 2008 an orientation session was held for new teachers beginning in the summer and fall of that year. This new initiative was strategically scheduled for May in order to allow in-coming teachers to participate prior to commencing their teaching.[27] In addition to scheduled periods of informal socializing, the agenda was comprised of:

- A two-hour curriculum workshop to go over the department's mandate, curriculum grid, departmental and ministerial policies; review the contents

[27] Though it should be acknowledged that, unfortunately, this orientation did not accommodate last-minute hires.

of model course outlines; look over a sample schedule of assignments and class rules; and allow new teachers to ask questions on this subject.

- A forty-five minute open discussion animated by one of the department's senior members
- A forty-five minute workshop entitled "Classroom Management: How to devise in-class assignments to encourage good discussion and good behaviour" developed and animated by two experienced teachers
- An hour-long workshop on the differing challenges between teaching summer, daytime and evening courses animated by the facilitator.

Reflecting on the event in his logbook, the facilitator noted that "it was well attended and got a lot of really positive feedback." After the then-new teachers had begun teaching, the facilitator noted that, in retrospect, "All said they valued the May orientation because it was held in enough time for them to make use of the information to develop their courses."

5.4.8 Mentoring directory

The facilitator for department C set up an informal mentoring program. Similar to department A, teachers interested in being mentors volunteered their names for the directory. Following this, mentors were not forcibly assigned to new teachers; rather, new teachers interested in being mentored could choose and contact the person in the directory most suitable to them. As noted in the facilitator's logbook,

> The idea is to create an apparatus for mentoring that does not require a specific pairing of new teacher with experienced teacher; we want it to be individually driven, to have a list of mentors and their specialties available to new teachers. This can be posted on [department-specific online network]. New teachers can then contact more senior members of the department with questions and can decide if they would like to have a specific mentor or simply make use of the various mentors as resources.

In addition to the numerous pedagogical benefits that could stem from mentoring, this individualized system could help assuage some of the difficulties new teachers in this department faced in the pedagogical resources category.

5.4.9 Pedagogical guide

The facilitator developed a guide to teaching one of the various levels of the department's introductory course. In the effort of maintaining the department's anonymity, we unfortunately cannot share explicit details of the guide's content because it is primarily department-specific. Nonetheless, we can offer the guide's outline:

- An introduction to the guide, informing readers of our project as the context in which the guide was created
- A thorough list of the books used in the course by past and present teachers. In addition, there is a note on books that teachers have found problematic in terms of surpassing the level of the students.
- A comprehensive list of types of assignments to give students, along with a description of what each assignment entails and its targeted objectives

- Suggestions for how to teach certain elements of the course, how to reach out to and engage the students
- A section on marking which includes general comments, sample evaluation schemes and different examples of how teachers could set up the mark breakdown for the entire course
- A segment on classroom management detailing common types of difficulties and how to deal with them
- A list of tips for teaching the course, based on the suggestions of past and present teachers

This project had the very good fortune of coinciding with action the assistant coordinator was undertaking. Throughout and following department C's involvement in the project, he was in the process of revamping services and materials for incoming teachers. These complimented our objectives very nicely, namely the smooth integration of new teachers. The following delineates the assistant coordinator's highly successful accomplishments.

5.4.10 Office hours for new teachers

Providing further assistance in the pedagogical resources category were the regular office hours held by the department's assistant coordinator. The goal was to provide new teachers with ongoing support that stretched beyond the new teacher orientation session and spanned the academic year. The activity worked in a manner similar to the office hours teachers have to see students. One hour

per week was set aside in the department's resource room for new teachers to drop in when they had questions and/or were seeking information. This new initiative was successful and according to the assistant coordinator, "I discovered that the mere fact that I was regularly available to them made a huge difference; the teachers felt completely integrated and supported, which made their transition an easier one."

5.4.11 Monthly workshops

Over the course of one semester, three workshops were offered to new teachers on a monthly basis; the first two were pedagogical and the third administrative in theme.[28] The first of the pedagogical workshops, which was held early in the semester, dealt with marking/grading issues. The goal of the workshop was to provide grading templates for those who did not already have any and were in need. Furthermore, the workshop discussed differences in the quality of students' work. To help illustrate this, grading grids were distributed, as were sample student assigments whose grades ranged from 50% to 90%.

The second workshop was animated by two senior faculty members and dealt with issues surrounding plagiarism and "problem" students. The teachers offered examples of real-life cases that they had encountered, accompanied by advice on how to respond to these issues. As this workshop tended to attract teachers who were dealing with these issues first-hand, participants found the workshop very helpful.

[28] It will be addressed in the next chapter.

Departments A, B and C jointly

5.4.12 Classroom management workshop

Due to the prevalence of classroom management issues among all our targeted departments, the three facilitators decided to hold a tri-departmental workshop addressing the topic. Peggy McCoy of Student Services was contacted to see if she'd be interested in offering her classroom management workshop to departments A, B and C as part of this project. Peggy agreed and we (researchers and facilitators) met with her to discuss the format and content of the workshop, as well as set a date that would be convenient for all and draw as a large a crowd as possible. It was unanimously agreed that the best time would be a week before the start of classes, so that teachers could implement what they learned in the workshop as of the first day of class.

Each facilitator sent email invitations to all (new and experienced) members of his department encouraging them to attend. In total, there were over twenty teachers present, with only a slightly higher number of new teachers than experienced ones in attendance. Peggy began her workshop by asking participants what types of student behaviour bothers them in class. Some people mentioned:

- The need to reinforce boundaries at all times
- Omnipresence of cell phones
- Use of computers and laptops

- Disrespectful language
- The lack of consistency between teachers in terms of demands (e.g. no cell phones, punctuality, language); some teachers are more lenient than others
- Stereo headphones/listening to music in class
- Talking
- Too much silence
- Students arriving late and/or leaving early

From here, new teachers were able to get the sense that the problems that they have in class happen in other people's classes (and not just with new teachers, but more seasoned ones as well). This was underscored by the presence of the experienced teachers at the workshop.

Peggy then moved on to discuss the type of students now populating cegeps: the "millennials," born between 1980 and 1995. These are people who, for the most part, have grown up with a sense of entitlement. She suggested that in order to curb some of the above-mentioned behaviors, teachers should do the following:

- Make outlines more specific. Write down the expectations that they have of their students in terms of punctuality, respect for others, language, etc.
- For laptops in the class: suggest to the owner that if they want to keep their computers on, then they will be designated the secretary for that day's class notes.

- Be aware of their own body language when talking to students. For example, when a student is talking in close proximity, stand at an angle and leave some space between them and the student.

Peggy also suggested that when teachers are in uncomfortable situations and/or confronting a student, they should:

- Be aware of their body's response to anger
- Decide if they want to speak up (sometimes it's just not worth bringing attention to the situation)
- Be direct, precise and specific if they do decide to speak up
- Listen to the student's response and be reasonable when they are forthcoming about why they are acting out
- Have a plan ready, such as a clear exit path from the desk to the door in the event of an emergency
- Have a team approach ready. If something seems out of control, or the situation has escalated, contact the departmental coordinator or faculty dean
- Do a positive self-talk and try to reason out the chain of events that have led up to the confrontation
- Recognize their own limits

One of the other points that Peggy raised was the fact that many new teachers feel that if they report such incidents, then it will appear as though they are not

very good at their job. However, she emphasized that the truth is, if they don't report incidents, then no one will know about the problems they are dealing with. Reporting an incident is the first step in taking action. Peggy stressed that teachers need to be aware of College policies on student conduct, as well as what their own rights are.

Furthermore, along with input from other teachers (both new and veteran) valuable advice was dispensed on how to react to cyber bullying, how to cope with lack of formality (i.e. students addressing teachers by first name, using slang in e-mails). Peggy also showed a video on how to react in certain situations. The video portrayed different scenarios and sent the message that when teachers keep their cool, they can be more effective at diffusing a situation. Finally, participants received several handouts containing useful information about how to achieve successful verbal intervention with disruptive students and how to recognize and deal with signs of escalating tension and violence in a student.

The facilitators all agreed that the workshop was highly successful, so much so that it left teachers wanting more. As one facilitator noted, "The reactions to the workshop were overwhelmingly positive, although some attendees would have liked to engage in role-playing scenarios." There are definitely enough issues and problems to warrant an entire series of classroom management workshops.

5.5 Chapter summary

Teaching does not merely entail having knowledge of a subject and relating this knowledge to students; rather, the profession requires, in addition to knowledge of a subject, the possession of an extensive network of pedagogical skills and ability. Working from the needs assessment, we unearthed seven categories of pedagogical issues that had, to varying degrees, been problematic for new teachers in our three targeted departments. The seven categories were: (1) course preparation; (2) pedagogical resources; (3) personal time management; (4) level of students; (5) student motivation; (6) classroom management; and (7) evaluation and grading. The categories span a timeframe of before a new teacher's course starts to after the course has ended, with certain categories containing issues that can arise at any point during this period.

Facilitators analyzed the results of the needs assessment with the goal of producing a list of activities and documents that could be developed and offered as a means of alleviating and remedying some of the pedagogical strains on new teachers. The facilitators teamed up to offer a workshop on classroom management as this was one of the most crucial and widespread obstacles. Elsewhere, facilitators based action development on what was most needed in and appropriate to the culture of their respective departments. Though garnering participation proved challenging at times due to teachers' full schedules, the

activities and documents resulting from the pedagogical rubric proved beneficial to those in need of them and were certainly much appreciated.

While pedagogical matters comprise a large percentage of a teacher's professional obligations, it is not the only element that defines one's role as teacher. As we move on to the following chapter, we get a sense of the time and effort occupied by issues existing outside of the classroom. More specifically, as new teachers make their way over the pedagogical hurdles they encounter, they are simultaneously navigating through a dense administrative system. The next chapter explores this context.

CHAPTER 6
Administrative Rubric

Colleges are large work environments, housing hundreds of faculty, staff and managers in a wide array of departments. These groups of people tend to work separately, but together; most of their time might be spent within their own departments, yet they work for the same institution, and thus towards the same goals, aiming to fulfill the same mission statement. In order to keep these groups unified and ensure that they stay on path towards the same goals, rules and procedures need to be in place. Consequently, colleges are bureaucratic institutions and administration can play a significant role in one's work.

As this chapter shall demonstrate, administrative policies, rules and tasks have a decisive impact on teachers' careers, particularly in terms of seniority and tenure. For new teachers, administrative duties can be viewed as time-consuming at a moment when they might perhaps prefer to spend time on pedagogical matters, such as course preparation. However, factoring both the important, determining role of the administrative aspect of teaching and the reality that administrative tasks are necessary and need to get done, it is critical that administrative knowledge be incorporated into new teacher integration. Put simply, there are many rules and procedures that new teachers need to be aware of.

While the term administrative can be quite vast, for the purposes of this project we are using it to refer to all aspects of a cegep teacher's work outside the realm

of pedagogy. This is not to say that there is never overlap between pedagogy and administrative work; indeed, a great deal of administrative work goes into the planning and organization of pedagogy, making the latter a frequent and regular subject of administrative duties. Beyond this, the administrative world of cegep teachers also consists of being familiar with the ins and outs of the work environment.

Our needs assessment produced a specific list of administrative areas that presented varying degrees of concern for our interviewees. This list ultimately became the categories under the administrative rubric; they are presented in table 6.1 below.

Administrative Rubric: Categories
1. On-campus resources and services
2. Acquiring accurate, timely information
3. Bookstore
4. Differing procedures and policies in place between daytime teaching and evening Continuing Education teaching
5. Human Resources
6. Computer systems
7. Logistics

Table 6.1 Administrative categories

6.1 Administrative support

It should, of course, be noted that administrative categories were not only discussed in negative contexts. Many of the new teachers we interviewed had a smooth entry into Vanier, administratively speaking. The following is a list of the assistance some of our interviewees received:

- Received copy of student handbook with IPESA[29]
- Received memos in mailbox
- Pamphlets were given out at orientation sessions for daytime and Continuing Education
- Director of Continuing Education was helpful
- Received help from colleagues
- Asked questions as issues sprung up and received guidance from friendly colleagues
- Received help from departmental coordinator
- The department verified and gave feedback on course outlines
- Attended a department meeting prior to the start of classes
- Received documents with phone extensions and office numbers of department members
- People in the Printshop were helpful
- People in the Bookstore were helpful

[29] Institutional Policy on Evaluation of Student Achievement

- People in Human Resources were helpful
- Attended a workshop on C.I. calculation by the VCTA
- Attended a welcoming lunch for all new teachers
- Was given a tour of the campus and introduced to people along the way
- Retrieved valuable information from the Vanier website
- Was made aware of the process of ordering books

As the following quotes demonstrate, receiving the above-listed help was very useful for new teachers:

> In terms of incorporating me and showing me where everything is, the introduction to Vanier was good because it's not so easy to get around actually. Once you get here it's okay but going from building to building is a bit confusing. Everything else is also on the website, and it's a good website too.
>
> [My coordinator] took me for a great tour and introduced me to a bunch of people, and I promptly forgot most of their names! But what was really good about that is, even if I didn't remember where these people were or what they did, whenever I needed to go back there, I'd remember them, or I'd remember the place. So having that tour really helped.
>
> I was given an extensive tour by [my coordinator]. He was extremely helpful in that regard.
>
> My coordinator gave a tour of the whole complex: the buildings and also the departments, and introduced me to everyone who I would be dealing with.
>
> The semester that I started, there was a welcoming lunch for new teachers. The Director General was there and so was the manager of Student Services. They gave us a copy of the student handbook, which was good because it has a copy of the IPESA and various other things in it.

> There was a brief orientation session and I was put in touch with some teachers who had previously taught [the course I was going to be teaching]. I really didn't know what to expect since it was my first time, but the orientation was pretty good. […] I think Vanier is very good at orientation and support for new teachers generally.
>
> The chair of the department set up a little tour where we went around and they showed us where the library was, where to get the ID card, the N building, and so on. So that was helpful. And then we got a little map, so there was some information that we were given. But what I think was good was that I actually had time to sort of hunt the necessary people down. I had the pack with all the different extensions and everyone to contact, so I actually had the time to really do that, so it wasn't left to the last minute. What I found was useful here at Vanier was that they don't just give you phone extensions, they actually give you office numbers. So in that case, I wasn't just speaking to people's voicemail, which is very, very frustrating. I was actually able to go to the office. As a result, I was able to get much more done, to tie together all the loose knots and to get all that sorted out.

All of the above-mentioned services, documents, sharing of information and kindness of others were greatly appreciated by those who were on the receiving end. Unfortunately, it was also sorely missed by those who were not. Concern was raised over the fact that not everyone we interviewed received, partook in or even knew of these services, resources and documents. This, in turn, tends to point to the idea that a full administrative orientation is not systemically offered to all incoming teachers, or at least those in departments A, B and C. We can look to the categories and corresponding themes under the administrative rubric to get a glimpse of what such an orientation would consist of.

6.2 Administrative categories and themes

6.2.1 On-campus resources and services

Beginning with basic information regarding familiarity with the college, we can look to the first category: on-campus resources and services. There is a great deal to be said about the value of being aware of and moving freely about your work environment. It can help give a new teacher confidence at a time when he might feel self-conscious or plagued by thoughts of self-doubt. Conversely, not knowing where to go, who to see for assistance and generally feeling lost can create stress and make someone feel unwelcome. Therefore, perhaps the best place to start integrating a new teacher is with a **thorough tour of the campus**.

During a tour of the campus, a new teacher not only gets to learn more about his surroundings, but also gets to meet key contacts and resource people. Without this, a teacher starts off at a disadvantage and could go without crucial information for some time. Some of our interviewees explained the types of information they lacked (and in some cases did not even know they needed) because they had never received a tour.

One person summed up all the vital knowledge one misses out on at the beginning when a guided tour around campus is not offered:

> Where is the washroom? Where is the photocopier?
> Where are these essential services like Student Services?
> What does Student Services offer? What does The
> Learning Centre do on campus? Where is Admissions?

> Where is Academic Advising? All of those things that, unless you went to Vanier [as a student], you wouldn't know.

In a few cases, not receiving a tour meant being unaware of the workings of major services, such as the photocopying and mail services:

> For printing, I wasn't actually aware exactly how to go about doing that. I had an office at the time, but I didn't know where I could go to use a computer and print things off and things like that. I wasn't really shown around the college to know what was where - the hierarchy of the college, still figuring it out.
>
> For the internal mailing, even to this day, if I have something to drop off in someone's mailbox, I'm not sure if I can just put it in the slot for internal mail, or if I have to go inside [the Printshop] before 5:00 when people are in and give it to them, or if I can just write the person's name on the top.
>
> I didn't know I had a mailbox. Somebody told me that in the first week of fall [after an entire semester], that I had a departmental mailbox.

In order to be fully and independently functional, it is necessary for teachers to be made aware of services like these; they are indispensable tools. On a similar note, one interviewee who began teaching during the summer session was in an equally disadvantageous position regarding essential teacher information:

> On my first day, I had to call Continuing Education to figure out where my class was because nobody knew where it was. I found out about 10 minutes after class had started that I was in the wrong building.

Starting in the summer session and finding oneself somewhat lost did not only affect the interviewee referred to above. Because the campus tends to be

relatively quiet over the summer, new teachers are left with few, if any, resource or support people. It is only when the fall session begins that they are offered an orientation, which, as one teacher who started in the summer stated, might be too late.

> There was an orientation session [in time for the fall semester] with the first big department conference. Although, as I said to another teacher hired at the same time [as me], 'Well, fat lot of good that does me now, I've already figured out where the copy shop is. I already figured out how many assignments to give them in a term. This isn't really helpful now; this would've been helpful in June.'

This predicament also tended to apply to those who teach in Continuing Education for a semester or more, and then only receive an orientation package once they begin teaching in the day stream, at which point they may no longer need it. One interviewee who had started at Vanier teaching evening Continuing Education courses discussed the orientation he received upon entering the day stream:

> It was everything from a tour to a folder of Human
>
> Resources information. So in that way, that's really solid.
>
> But it came too late. And everybody enters the way I did.
>
> Nobody enters into the full-time day, you know.

Despite the fact that pedagogical concerns tend to be at the forefront for new teachers, at least one teacher felt that the administrative side of teaching posed the biggest challenge. The teacher told us,

> I feel that on the administrative side of things they could have shown me around a bit more, told [me] where things are, how things work, things like that. That was really sort of the biggest learning curve.

6.2.2 Acquiring accurate, timely information

One of the reasons why the administrative aspect might present such a learning curve can be the sheer volume of information a new teacher must absorb. Not only is there a great deal of information, but a lot of it is not obvious and cannot be figured out relying solely on one's common sense. Further, some pieces of information are contingent on other pieces of information; so, every piece of the puzzle, if you will, needs to be accounted for. For these reasons, as well as a desire for work to operate smoothly, our second category (acquiring accurate, timely information) was one that new teachers were passionate about; it spawned many different themes.

The themes associated with acquiring accurate, timely information can be divided into **two types of information: college-wide and department-specific**. While the focus of this project was on departments, we did not want to limit new teachers' discussions of the acquisition (or lack thereof) of college-wide information; using grounded theory, we were unable, at such an early point, to determine whether or not such discussions would lead to or overlap with department-specific information. Thus, limiting the interviewees' scope of conversation so narrowly would have also limited the reach of the project.

Furthermore, we can see in retrospect that college-wide information could be channeled down to new teachers via their department.

The main challenge new teachers faced in terms of college-wide information was either **not receiving it, or receiving it too late**. In some cases, while the college was indeed setting up venues through which to transmit information regarding policies and procedures, new teachers had already chased after the information out of need. As one teacher explained,

> Most workshops were advertised, but when I really needed them right at the beginning they weren't happening. There were some later on but I didn't need them as much anymore. […] I guess the trick would be to implement things right away.

What we found happened when information was not disseminated punctually was that new teachers **either went without or had to accumulate information from various sources**, which at times resulted in a patchwork of conflicting ideas. The following quotes illustrate areas in which teachers were lacking accurate information and the frustration that often resulted from this.

> [In terms of] subbing for a teacher, I didn't know that the first day wasn't paid so your best interest is to swap with someone as opposed to just canceling the class. I didn't know; I was completely lost. In terms of the snow day […] they decided to close the college at noon but my class started at 11:30 so I didn't know if I was going to cancel or what. I actually had to call someone about it, because I feel incompetent in terms of even making the more trivial decisions.
>
> One of the problems is that we get a lot of different information at once and from a lot of conflicting sources. I only figured out, for instance, how C.I. and all that tenure

and post stuff works yesterday because of an informal conversation. I just ran into a teacher who finally said, 'Well, it's really not that hard.' And I was like, 'Really?' And he actually explained it in about ten minutes after I had gone to see maybe a dozen different people trying to find out. […] And I think a lot of different people will have different understandings of a lot of different topics in a cegep and I think maybe that's why communication is the biggest problem.

Our [departmental] attendance policy, the one that's in the IPESA document and the one that's constantly being talked about at various different meetings – they're three different things and they don't necessarily achieve the same end. So yes, I think there should be a little more emphasis on that kind of thing.

Information came to me accidentally. There are a lot of gaps that are not filled in, that people don't know that may cost them in terms of getting work or getting what they should be getting. I think more effort should be put into that to make sure people have precise information about these sorts of things, not just 'roughly this' or 'roughly that.' People should pay more attention in terms of letting new teachers know.

The main situation where I really needed some help was things like absences, because the College has some policies that people don't really follow. […] But the new teachers aren't told that and you're afraid of doing something wrong, so you do exactly what the policy says. […] So in those kinds of situations, I found, when people have found an official way to deal with the policy – it's not written in the handbook, it's not written anywhere really – so you just have to happen to be sharing an office with someone who knows, or happen to ask.

[Regarding making photocopies] if you're doing more than just a single sheet, you're taking up valuable photocopy time. So [the Printshop] really wants you to get your photocopies done [by a Printshop employee]. Give it to them over twenty-four hours, and it's cheaper for the department. But at first, I didn't really know that, so I was racking up these bills, hogging the photocopiers. And with the old photocopiers, when you do back to back, they got very tired, so I kept breaking the photocopier because I

> was trying to save paper. So there was a bit of an adjustment there.

Most administrative information is college-wide as it applies to all departments, rather than each department having disparate policies, which would clearly cause confusion and create unnecessary work. There were, however a few instances of department-specific information not reaching, or only partly reaching, new teachers.

As fewer sections are offered in the winter session, many new teachers who enter either in the summer or fall are without courses in the winter. Some felt that this semester-long absence lent itself to the creation of **a gap in attaining information**. Some of our interviewees expressed feeling out of the loop and coming back in the summer or fall needing to re-learn or update their knowledge of administrative policies. One suggestion was to include teachers without work in the winter semester at departmental meetings. This would also help in terms of pedagogy, though one teacher emphasized how being away for one semester has administrative impacts:

> It is a concern for me because things happen: regulations change, [and for] the placement of different students in different levels of [introductory courses], some of those rules change as well, so again, I always need to keep up to snuff.

In one unique instance, an extremely important piece of information failed to properly reach a new teacher:

> I didn't even know I got the job because I think there was some breakdown in communication. My department coordinator called me but I wasn't home. Then 48 hours before I started teaching, I had to make a course outline, which I didn't know I had to make.

Course outlines were a source of stress for many teachers. As we saw in the previous chapter, many new teachers had created outlines that later needed to be modified due to misestimating the level of their students. In this next quote, we see the **administrative side to course outline challenges**. The teacher in question set about finding out the mandatory information that must be included on all course outlines.

> One thing that was frustrating was setting a course outline. I asked if there was any specific information that needs to be on there, any rules and regulations as to allotting percentages for tests and things like that. And I was directed to IPESA, which is this massive document that really takes a long time to go through and find just very simple information that you would think somebody would be able to tell you. It wasn't very useful because it took a long time to sift through.

Indeed, not receiving accurate, timely information tended to cost many of our interviewees a great deal of time, which they did not have to spare. The acquisition of both departmental and college-wide information, its importance and how it should be done was nicely summed up by an interviewee:

> I think the first few weeks are crucial and some institutional structure has to be put in place to coach people and help them and if they don't ask the right questions or if they are really new at this, then they would also be given some hints and help, because not everyone comes here knowing what to ask.

6.2.3 Bookstore

Some of the questions new teachers did not know to ask, thereby resulting in misinformation, pertained to policies and procedures in the Bookstore, our third category. The staff of the Bookstore was praised for being very friendly and helpful.

> People in the bookstore are beyond helpful, semester after semester, definitely.
>
> People at the Bookstore were a big help; they were wonderful and patient and did everything they could to get things done for me on time and were really understanding that I was new and didn't know what was going on.
>
> In terms of the Bookstore, I've never been refused anything I need. I've never asked for anything big either but I've never been refused anything.

Nonetheless, some new teachers encountered **difficulties before ever even entering the Bookstore (regarding the process of ordering books) or in relation to being unaware of Bookstore procedures**.

Our interviews demonstrated the need for a full orientation on Bookstore procedures in order to prevent incoming teachers from encountering the same obstacles some of our interviewees faced. As one teacher explained, simply being brought down to see the Bookstore is not sufficient:

> Even ordering books or office supplies from the Bookstore [was difficult]. Even though I was sort of introduced [to Bookstore staff by a colleague] it wasn't necessarily made super clear exactly what the process was. I was taken down to the Bookstore and they said, 'This is [interviewee's name], add his name to the list,' and that's it.

This teacher was then left alone to figure out how to go about making use of the Bookstore. Similarly, another teacher described an incident that occurred because he was **unaware of different types of problems that could occur when ordering books**. This teacher told us:

> That's another thing - the challenges of the Bookstore. Finding your book, ordering it, and following up on if the order has come in. I had a situation where I ordered a book and went to pick it up a few days before the course started, and only then did they go back and find out that it was out of print. It had gone out of print between ordering it and expecting it to come in. That was bad luck. I ended up putting together a course-pack over three very long days. And that wasn't the Bookstore's fault, but just knowing that some of these things sometimes happen. And certainly this happens every fall too, if you all of a sudden have new teachers who are hired a week or two before the beginning of the semester, they don't have a book ordered. So if they order a book that someone else is using, then the Bookstore already ordered it for that teacher [and the new teacher's students might end up buying books designated for the other teacher's students].

Some teachers **avoided ordering books because they anticipated potential problems**. In these instances, the preferred course text was a course-pack. Other teachers opted for both and had smooth book-ordering experiences. Teachers in both of these groups, however, were sometimes subject to glitches with their course-pack caused by a **lack of familiarity with the course-pack printing process**. One teacher shared an experience that prompted a pedagogical adjustment:

> I found out the hard way that they under-print course-packs. And then after that, I learned to revamp the first week or the first three lessons and do something else that doesn't require the course-pack, to give the students at least a week to stand in line and buy the thing and then

> when I get the course-pack, I use it every single class. […]
> I try to avoid courses where I have to order books,
> because I'm always worried the books won't come through.

Unfortunately for a couple of the teachers we interviewed, the experience of having books not come through is exactly what happened. Both, each for their own reason, did not have to order textbooks in their first semester of teaching. Then, in their second semester, they were oblivious to the book-ordering process, and even to the idea that they indeed had to order books.

While the above-mentioned cases were unique to those two teachers, several teachers passed from Continuing Education (where the books are ordered for the teachers) to the regular day stream (where one must order one's own books). These teachers often found themselves at a loss their first semester in the day stream because they were unaware of the different book-ordering policies of the day and evening divisions. For many, especially those hired at the last minute, it was a great convenience to have their books pre-ordered in Continuing Education. However, what happened when someone had gotten used to this service and had it unexpectedly revoked when a move was made to the day division? One teacher gave us a glimpse of a prime example:

> [The fact that books are ordered by Continuing Education actually came back to haunt me in the fall semester [when I entered the day stream]. I assumed that the books were already pre-ordered every single semester. Then I got a phone call from the Bookstore telling me that my students were buying someone else's textbook, some other course's. I had absolutely no idea that you had to order books on your own because Continuing Education and day have different procedures.

6.2.4 Differing procedures and policies in place between daytime teaching and Continuing Education teaching

Ordering books is not the only area where new teachers felt confusion over differing daytime and Continuing Education policies and procedures. In fact, this was such a popular topic, primarily because the majority of the teachers we interviewed entered Vanier via Continuing Education, that it led to the creation of our fourth category, differing procedures and policies in place between daytime teaching and Continuing Education teaching.

The main theme to fall under this category was **photocopying procedures**. Teachers in the day stream are given a departmental photocopying code. This gives them access to the Printshop where they can make copies themselves anytime between 8:30 and 5:00 or they could hand in materials at the front desk for the staff to photocopy. Conversely, teachers in Continuing Education do not receive a code; instead, they have to submit all materials to be photocopied to the Continuing Education office, for which they have a specified time frame. The teachers we interviewed had a clear preference for the day method, which they felt offered them more freedom and allowed them to make copies at the last minute when needed.

Interviewees spoke to us about the frustration that can result from the Continuing Education policy on photocopying. As one teacher explained, it can make things particularly difficult for the novice teacher preparing a course for the first time:

> Continuing Education is not a good experience because [of] this photocopying business, that you actually have to hand in the photocopies and they do them for you. What it means is that you have to plan ahead, which is all good and fine if you've taught a course before and you know how it unfolds and you're all prepared, but I was preparing day by day.

The teacher went on to explain how this photocopying system at times served as a barrier to making adjustments to the curriculum of the course. Other teachers were also prompted by the photocopy system to amend their course structure.

> I don't have a photocopy code, which means I have to take things to them to get them copied. They say we should be giving them a week's notice. Often I'll be reviewing my notes and think, 'Oh, what could I do to make this even better than it already is?' Or, 'What could I add to get this moving a little bit more?' And this semester, I've given no handouts beyond what I have already. I've given no handouts because it's just been too difficult, to me it's a barrier for me to [not be able to make my own copies]. I'd like just to have access to a photocopier.

Another new teacher found the system a nuisance, but recognized that the people running it do try to accommodate teachers:

> It's a little bit awkward if you have to have [photocopies] go through [the office], especially if you're new coming into Continuing Education. You don't always know in advance if you're going to use something and want to run off copies twenty minutes before class. But they were very helpful in Continuing Education.

Other teachers faced a different confusion because they worked in both streams. So they simultaneously had a photocopy code for their day course(s) and had to process photocopies through Continuing Education for their evening course(s). In one respect, this was inconvenient in that they couldn't do all of their

photocopying in one place, at one time. In another respect, they had to make sure to be vigilant about budgets and using the correct photocopying means corresponding to the material to be copied. This was especially demanding when someone was teaching the same course during the day as at night, thereby meaning that photocopies of the same material had to go in two different directions and charged to two different budgets. One day stream teacher in particular experienced confusion over photocopy codes when teaching over the summer, which is under the jurisdiction of Continuing Education:

> I had no idea that over the summer, we were given our own [photocopy] code for summer school, so I was using [my department's] code. So little things like that would have been very helpful [to know].

The remainder of the themes in this category pertained to **challenges faced in light of Continuing Education policies** and **not receiving information**.

As mentioned above under the first category, some teachers felt that Continuing Education was lacking an orientation system and that when teachers were given courses in the day division, the orientation they received (if and when they received one) was somewhat too late. These sentiments are echoed in this present category. In general, some felt that Continuing Education was not an ideal place to begin one's teaching career at Vanier because teachers are often left to fend for themselves.

> When you enter in either as a substitute or through Continuing Education, you're really just slipping through the cracks. Like there is no formal sort of introductory initiation or tour or anything.

> Continuing Education doesn't have anything set up to introduce new teachers into the process. I mean, they give you this list of rules or guidelines and that kind of thing, like don't end your classes early and you can't cancel classes and that kind of thing. But it's just really impersonal and not that useful. The last thing I would have thought of to do was [end class early]. I mean, I killed myself, you know, to the last minute [of class time] until my daytime colleagues were telling me, 'Well, let them out early!' And I was like, 'Oh, I can do that!'

As evidenced in the above quote, some of the teachers spoke about concerns over not being able to make scheduling adjustments. This is primarily because most Continuing Education classes meet only once a week, leaving very little room for changes to the course syllabus. For the most part, these concerns dealt with not knowing what to do in the event that they should ever have to cancel a class. The following quotes reflect some of the scheduling issues new teachers in Continuing Education discussed with us:

> I've never cancelled a class, except once this semester, and I had to make the course up. At night that's hard because it means making the students either come in on a separate day or going from 6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

> Canceling classes is a pain because you can't cancel a class because there's no opportunity to make it up. So I still don't know what to do if I'm going to fall sick. I've tried asking other people and they come up with various ideas, but nothing really sticks. [Officially] you're supposed to put it in writing, you're supposed to have [the academic coordinator of Continuing Education] read the letter and approve it and I'm not sure if everyone who has ever cancelled a class has done that.

Other Continuing Education teachers, such as the two quoted below, experienced **difficulties due to miscommunication**:

> There are many policies in place that I didn't know about. So certain things like you're supposed to turn in your course outlines within the first two weeks of the class, I had no idea of. So I would get this email or phone call saying, 'We haven't received your course outline.' I thought it was a reminder; I didn't realize they were letting me know I was late.
>
> Issues with the key. Apparently there was a key made for me all summer, but because I didn't ever use my office - I didn't know I had an office - it had been waiting for me. I think it was just assigned, but it seems the keys had been there waiting for me for months. […] I'm still a bit confused as to what happened there.

6.2.5 Human Resources

Regardless of whether our interviewees were teaching during the day, in the evening or both, or which of the three departments they teach in, they all, with very few exceptions, experienced some degree of difficulty with our fifth category, Human Resources.

By far, the single most challenging administrative theme as described by our interviewees was **figuring out how C.I. is calculated**. Interview after interview, teachers cited problems with understanding C.I. Briefly, C.I. affects one's pay and status in terms of seniority. It is calculated by taking into account how many preps a teacher has,[30] as well as how many students are registered in each course. C.I. has a significant impact on cegep teachers' careers, particularly when they can get tenure and, before that, their hiring priority. It follows then that every teacher should have a strong grasp of what C.I. is and how it is calculated.

[30] I.e.: how many different courses a teacher has to *prepare for*, as opposed to how many courses one actually teaches in a semester.

As demonstrated by the following quotes, this was not the case; indeed, most of our interviewees viewed C.I. as an enigma.

> I didn't know how to calculate my workload. I had no idea. I thought if I have four courses, that was it. I can't emphasize this enough. It's important for people to know that if they have three different courses they have more of a chance of getting a full course load than if they have two different courses even if they teach four courses. So how do you calculate this? I was wondering about this for a long time. I heard about it. I had no idea. At one point I asked [someone in Human Resources] to show me. It was completely useless, the way [the person] went over it. So I actually got it from another teacher. I emailed [the teacher] and he was kind enough to explain it to me by email. It was just a simple formula. If you're given the formula you can do it. It didn't take that long. But I really had to chase after this information. Then I actually sent it on to a few other new teachers to let them know about it. These sorts of things need more attention.
>
> There's unbelievable confusion surrounding C.I. I kind of understand it, but I think it's just Human Resources. It's just very confusing. When you have to send letters in for different things. And they do tell you, but you just have this strange sense of impending doom over you. And there's different numbers that get thrown at you. There's your C.I., and there's the other one, I can't remember the other one. There's one number that ends up being the maximum of 80 for the year, and there's another one that's a percentage of one, or one hundred percent… It's just kind of confusing; they don't correspond apparently, but they do correspond, but not really. There's this little gossip mill of horror stories that goes through the college of people who were three students short of having a fulltime load and ending up having to teach a course in the summer to basically make no money.
>
> C.I. is still quite confusing to me. I've just decided not to worry about it. But we're sort of told that it's really a big deal. And we're told that from the union, but when I really looked at it, I can't really control it, so what's the point of worrying about it? I guess you just try to make sure that you are teaching enough different courses, and if they ask you to apply to Continuing Education, you apply to

> Continuing Education and if they ask you if you want to teach in the summer, you do teach in the summer until you know you don't have to anymore. Because the point at which you can calculate C.I. is more than halfway through the semester, when you know which students have dropped out. At that point, it's too late to decide which courses you're going to take, so at that point you have no control. So that, to me, didn't seem like it was worth worrying about. But there are teachers who have experienced negative effects on their C.I. because, as new teachers, they didn't realize certain things, like somebody else passed them on the seniority list.
>
> I just thought that was a necessary evil, trying to work through contract stuff. After two years, I figured out C.I. and how to go on the computer and calculate my own. So the C.I. thing now finally makes sense to me.
>
> C.I. calculation - teachers need to know how to do this themselves. I taught myself. I went and got the formula. That was the first thing I learned. Because I knew that nobody is going to look out for my interests the way I can. And it's like you're pegged: your workload, everything, is contingent upon your C.I., and for teachers, it's a bit of a mystery. It seems a bit complicated.

Beyond the complications of C.I., some people found **the information coming from Human Resources to be confusing**:

> It is just totally a mystery as to how Human Resources works.
>
> I find the Human Resources here very mysterious, which doesn't put me at ease. Like, they seem to make changes that I don't really understand. My paycheque has almost never been the same twice in a row and I find that kind of thing is too serious for me to feel good about. I'd like to know more clearly what's going on right now. [At one point] my pay got doubled up because of a mix-up in the systems. So then I got docked like $2,000 midterm.

However, considering that others, as the teacher quoted below, have had positive experiences with Human Resources, one can question whether discrediting Human Resources because of one negative experience would be premature. Furthermore, new teachers do have to be accountable for themselves. One can adopt the view that if new teachers were not satisfied with an answer they received from Human Resources, it was their responsibility to ask for a more thorough response. Clearly, this worked for at least one new teacher:

> I tend to give precedence to what Human Resources say because they're going to give me the job in the end; they'll decide what my seniority is. And they've been helpful, [the person] who I've spoken to there has been helpful in giving me details and all that. Then if I just have a little question I might ask a colleague.

In order to facilitate communication between teachers and Human Resources, and in turn put new teachers more at ease with them with regards to seeking useful responses, one teacher suggested that departments should "maybe develop some sort of closer ties with the administration." The teacher went on to explain:

> I think there's this kind of divide between us and them. Especially Human Resources. There's a very strange gap there, because [of the way] we view Human Resources or they view us, there's a little bit of a tension there I think.

Another difficulty expressed by our interviewees was that being new means being at the bottom of the pool of teachers in their respective departments. In this

respect, the biggest challenges and inconveniences were related to **lack of job security and having to repeatedly re-apply to their position**.

> The only administrative challenges [I've had] are the same ones everybody faces: not knowing semester to semester whether or not you're going to get work. Upstairs in my office right now I have another envelope with another CV and cover letter that goes over to HR so that I can apply to teach Continuing Education, which is kind of a headache. And the not knowing until the last minute part. Officially right now I have three backup courses for the winter semester. Unofficially, I know that I will have three courses because there's somebody who has to wait to find out whether or not their leave is approved.
>
> The problem with being new teachers is that they hire in the fall, and then we don't have work in the winter. I still don't have any guarantee that I have work in the winter, and I'm not that close to the bottom anymore.
>
> Reminders should be sent to new teachers when the job postings come up. It's not necessarily clear that one must continue to apply to the postings even when one is already teaching here. Also, it would be great to know how contract signing and the pay-scale work, offer of service, benefits, transfer of availability – things like this.

Some of the new teachers we interviewed, it should be noted, had no difficulty understanding the workings of Human Resources. Others, as we've documented, found it more of a challenge. This reflects the idea that people adapt differently to situations and makes it futile to attempt an all-encompassing, "one-size-fits-all" approach to integration. Another area where this was clear, where teachers had various perspectives and levels of ability, was with the use of computer systems as course supplements and/or complements, our sixth category.

6.2.6 Computer systems

Although the use of computer systems[31] is not mandatory, it is becoming increasingly common. The various systems that are available to teachers are valuable pedagogical tools; they can contribute greatly to students' knowledge and also help teachers save time. Before becoming time-savers, however, teachers must first **invest time in learning how computer systems work**. This proved to be a challenge for some, like the teacher quoted below who could not spare time for computer systems at the very start of his teaching career at Vanier.

> I only just now, in my third year, started finally doing Omnivox for the first time. That's a good administrative tool. I'm attempting [another, department-specific computer system] for the first time. I don't have enough time to put things up as often as I would like to, but at least I was taught the rudiments of it. I attended a PowerPoint presentation. In this, my third year, I finally had the time and the energy to even attempt technology.

Once teachers found the time to learn computer systems, they were grateful for it. Indeed, time spent discovering computer systems was always viewed as time well invested. For other teachers, it was not so much a matter of time as it was a **matter of skill**. These interviewees were willing to learn, but cited a lack in resources and available help as a deterrent.

> [I would like to know] how to use computer systems, how to set up a webpage for a course, how to give students access to all of these sorts of things. […] I was directed towards [an I.T. technician] that first semester I was here but I don't remember exactly. He set up a First Class[32]

[31] Because different departments use different computer systems, and to varying degrees, we have opted not to name department-specific computer systems out of respect for anonymity.
[32] Another college-wide system, used primarily for email.

> account for me, but even in that, he didn't really show me how to use it or anything like that.
>
> I wanted to learn how to make a webpage after the fall semester because my paper consumption was quite high but there weren't any workshops on it.
>
> Omnivox looked pretty intimidating at the beginning with all those buttons and menus. Someone told me I had to submit my marks online. I was like, 'Oh my God. Have to call someone else for that one.'

6.2.7 Logistics

Computers were also a source of stress in our seventh and final category, logistics. In this category, the dominant theme was **booking computer labs to hold classes in**. Our interviewees who had incorporated technology in their lesson plans found it difficult to always secure a wired venue to teach in. Challenges associated with booking labs and ensuring students' access to computers at times led teachers to modify their syllabi. To avoid that, it would seem one would have to book labs at the start of the semester; in this case, one would have to have the entire semester planned out and know on which date(s) a computer lab would be needed. This might be a fairly easy task for an experienced teacher to do, but someone who is teaching a course for only the first, second or even third time might need to alter the course as the semester progresses.

These quotes offer a reflection on the situation some of the new teachers in departments A, B and C found themselves in:

> Getting labs was impossible. I didn't know how to book a lab in the fall. So using computers was basically out of the question.
>
> I'd like to have a little bit more access to computer labs. There's only a certain number of computer labs. All the teachers want them for one time or another so it's not always easy to book. And it's a little bit frustrating when you walk around some floors of the college and you peek into a lab and there are six people in a lab built for thirty and well, I could have used that space more effectively. But then I guess it becomes a politics game about certain programmes having priority over computers or computer labs. They want us to use Smart Boards, [but] try booking a room with Smart Boards! And it's partly my fault, because it's not always easy to prep that far in advance. So it'd be nicer if I could just have four, five courses beforehand, not have to try to think three weeks ahead of time because it doesn't always land at the time when you need it.

Other themes in the logistics category were also scheduling-related. Some expressed that it was very **difficult to find common meeting times with colleagues** as everyone is busy and has different schedules. This became problematic for new teachers who wanted to meet with colleagues to get information or solicit feedback on best practices. Consequently, it seemed like the best time to engage in such discussions was in impromptu meetings with colleagues or casual conversations in the teachers' lounge.

The **scheduling of final exams** was another area of concern in the logistics category. As the interviewee below explained, not all new teachers were informed about the process of scheduling a final exam. While no one else we interviewed shared details of final exam scheduling fiascos, it is easy to envision

how problems could result from not knowing the final exam scheduling procedure.

> I didn't know that I had to contact [someone] in order to schedule a final exam. I figured it out because I knew that timetables for final exams had to be submitted so I looked for it and I actually actively started asking around, 'What do I do for a final exam?' I know it's not just a question of, 'Well, I'm having a final exam.' I knew there was more to it than that. So I took the initiative to actually figure out what I needed to do. But it's not like someone ever said to me, 'Oh and by the way, if you want a final exam, contact [this person]' – no, it wasn't like that at all.

This summary of administrative challenges our interviewees faced demonstrates the broad spectrum of potential problems new teachers can encounter outside the classroom. Administrative challenges can range from very minor (getting lost in search of the bathroom) to considerably major (losing seniority due to a C.I. miscalculation). Furthermore, the dissemination of administrative information is a duty shared by Human Resources and departments. When scrutinizing the needs assessment with facilitators, we had to carefully choose which areas of the administrative rubric were most in need of attention; in short, the areas in which action was most warranted.

6.3 Implementing action

Clearly, there was not much we could do in terms of making adjustments to the bureaucracy of cegeps; the administrative process is college-wide and is a

fundamental aspect of its structure and foundation. Furthermore, it was not our objective to attempt structural readjustments. The goal of this project was to uncover the best means by which new teachers could adapt to their professional environment, not for the environment to adapt itself to new teachers. Thus, rather than modify situations new teachers found themselves in, we opted instead to try to help inform them of ways to avoid getting into predicaments or, in cases where they might be unavoidable, to give them the tools to emerge out of such predicaments unscathed.

Department A

6.3.1 New teacher luncheon meeting

As discussed in the previous chapter, this department held a luncheon meeting to allow new teachers to voice their concerns and ask questions. During this open forum, roundtable discussion, new teachers raised some administrative concerns pertaining to the categories of Continuing Education procedures, Bookstore and logistics.

The new teachers who were present at the meeting voiced interest in attending a workshop on Continuing Education procedures, citing confusion over some of the policies, particularly photocopying and what to do when it needs to get done at the last minute.

Regarding the Bookstore, a new teacher had encountered problems because they had under-ordered books for his class. Being new, this teacher did not know that this was common procedure; the Bookstore opts to order fewer books than necessary to avoid having too many books on its hands in the event that students drop out of courses (as they inevitably do).

Finally, logistics were at the forefront when a teacher asked whether and where teachers in department A could put their students' work on display. The coordinator offered two possible places on campus and also suggested the department's page on the Vanier website.

This luncheon meeting was rated successful by the facilitator for department A. Of course, not all administrative issues could be solved immediately during the course of one lunch. Nonetheless, it was helpful for new teachers to share their concerns and hear feedback from departmental colleagues. Even more reassuring, as noted in the facilitator's logbook, was the fact that these new teachers got to find out that the problems they had encountered "are common ones voiced by many people, not just [department A] teachers who are new." Lastly, it also helped that the coordinator was present as this demonstrates interest in new teachers' professional lives and also suggests that, even though many administrative issues are not part of the department's jurisdiction, the department is nonetheless interested in listening to new teachers' concerns and offering solutions where possible.

6.3.2 Mentoring directory and mentoring of two new teachers

Following the luncheon meeting, the facilitator for department A put together the mentoring directory. During the course of the project, this facilitator mentored two newly hired teachers. While mentoring encompassed all rubrics, it was quite interesting to see the number of administrative concerns addressed throughout the mentoring process. The facilitator compiled the following list of administrative information that was provided to the two newly hired, mentored teachers.

- Showed new teachers around campus, introducing them to such places as the teachers' lounge and staff bathrooms. (Category 1: On-campus resources and services)
- Informed them of the various computer systems used at Vanier, discussing their features, as well as keeping them informed regarding whether the College would eventually phase out all systems except for one. (Category 6: Computer Systems)
- Discussed format and contents of course outlines. (Category 2: Acquiring accurate, timely information)
- Advised the mentored teachers about Bookstore rush orders and deadlines for summer courses. (Category 3: Bookstore)
- Pointed out key resource people in the Bookstore and Library. (Categories 1: On-campus resources and services and 3: Bookstore)

- One of the mentored teachers was hired late enough to receive the facilitator's completed department-specific new teacher kit. (A combination of various categories within the pedagogical and administrative rubrics)

The facilitator was pleased to get positive feedback from the two new teachers regarding the mentoring experience. As documented in the facilitator's logbook, one of the teachers "told me our time together was very helpful. I also enjoy it very much when I feel that I have been able to help someone." This illustrates how mentoring can be dually beneficial. It is our hope that the facilitator's positive experience will encourage more teachers in department A to volunteer as mentors.

6.3.3 New teacher kit

The new teacher kit compiled by department A's facilitator contains a wealth of department-specific administrative information. It answers many of the questions our interviewees had when they first started. The following list details administrative information delivered in the new teacher kit for department A:

- Online course management systems:
  - The various systems being used at Vanier
  - The possibility that the College will be phasing out most and simplifying the process by only having one (following by a recommendation to use the one main, preferred system)

- Statement of professional responsibilities of Department A teachers:
  - A key document providing guidelines for all department members in the execution of their responsibilities as teachers and department members.
- Departmental meetings:
  - Meeting schedule: when and how often meetings occur
  - Meeting procedures and formalities
  - Types of discussions
- A list of different committees within the department and the members who sit on them.
- Seminar Series:
  - Background information on this seminar which features discussions by department members on their research and work outside of the classroom
  - A list of the topics that were featured during the 2007 – 2008 academic year
- Description of the new teacher luncheon (as detailed above).
- Procedures for getting a substitute teacher in the event of one's absence from one or more classes.
- Formative course evaluations:
  - Copy of the evaluation questionnaire
  - How the process works
  - When evaluations take place
  - How evaluations benefit teachers
- The location and uses of the department's resource room

- Information on the mentoring program:
  - The process of contacting mentors
  - Names and contact information of mentors
- The Printshop:
  - How to obtain budget codes for photocopying
  - Hints and tips on how to cut down on photocopying costs and usage of paper
  - Printshop protocols
- The Bookstore:
  - How to order textbooks
  - How to put together course packs
  - Name and contact information for Bookstore resource person
- How to book guest speakers for one's class or College-wide event
- List of major College-wide committees and the positions on each committee
- Professional development leaves of absence and funds:
  - The required forms one must fill out
  - Amount of money available
- Description of services provided by The Learning Centre
- Services provided by and website for The Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence
- The Employee Fitness program
- The Master Teacher Program - PERFORMA:
  - Website where one can obtain information on the program

- The name and contact information of a department member who is an enthusiastic student in the program, should anyone want to hear about the program from a student's point of view.

The actions developed and offered in department A performed a great service for its new teachers. The information provided answered many questions before they needed to be asked, and indeed in some cases, probably answered questions new teachers do not know to ask. In other instances where questions still needed to be asked, new teachers were pointed in the direction of the relevant person to ask. Finally, much of department A's action worked to simply familiarize new teachers with the department and make them feel at ease.

Department B

The facilitator for department B implemented two actions specifically targeting administrative concerns raised in the needs assessment. The first was a tutorial demonstrating how to use the computer system most actively used in department B; the second was the guide for new teachers.

6.3.4 Computer system tutorial

The computer system tutorial, an electronic document done in PowerPoint, goes into great detail regarding the workings and uses of the system. This online

component is heavily used in department B and nothing of this sort existed prior to this project. Thus, teachers have been heavily encouraged to use this system, but left to learn it on their own. This can be challenging to new teachers simply with respect to finding the time to learn the program well enough to incorporate it into courses and show their students how it works. Furthermore, this can be all-the-more challenging to teachers who are not necessarily computer savvy. It is from these two basic ideas that this tutorial was born.

The tutorial consists of a thorough presentation dedicated to understanding and effectively employing the system within a course. Specifically, the tutorial covers the following points step-by-step:

- Overview of the computer system
- Features for teachers
- Features for students
- Navigating the system
- How to create an assignment
- Key tools of the system
- The student's perspective of the system
- Tips and tricks

This tutorial is available to new teachers in two ways. First, two cds (one in PowerPoint 2003, the other in PowerPoint 2007) containing the presentation were included in the guide for new teachers. Secondly, new teachers can

approach department B's facilitator if they are interested in borrowing or burning a copy (similarly, the facilitator can email the document if this method is preferred). Of course, the tutorial is not limited to incoming teachers; anyone in the department who wants a refresher course or who has yet to make the leap to incorporating the system within coursework is welcome to peruse the document.

6.3.5 Guidebook for new teachers

The guide for new teachers developed by the facilitator of department B was primarily administrative with a few pedagogical elements. Not including the pedagogical elements discussed in the previous chapter, department B's guide for new teachers consisted of:

- An administrative checklist detailing the names and contact information of the people one must see for:
  - A photocopy code
  - A mailbox key
  - A parking decal
  - An office key
  - Elevator access
  - Office telephone extension
  - Vanier email address
  - Sample course outlines
  - Lab bookings
  - Access to online course management systems

- A faculty identification card

- Directory of key contacts on campus including:
  - A campus map to illustrate where said contacts can be found
  - A list of everyone in department B, along with their office number, telephone extension and email address.
  - A list of department B committees, along with the names of the people who sit on them.
- Business cards of five major textbook dealers
- Sample forms, how to fill them out and who to submit them to:
  - how to order from the Bookstore, along with suggested texts (handy for last-minute hires)
  - Course request form
  - Work requisition form
  - Request for substitute teacher payment form
- Section on teacher evaluation:
  - Description of each type of evaluation
  - Sample formative evaluation, where the teacher is evaluated by students
  - Sample summative evaluation, conducted by the faculty dean
  - Explanation of how evaluations work in both the day and evening divisions
- General information section, consisting of photocopies of key pamphlets from the VCTA:
  - “Important Information for New Teachers and Non-Tenured Teachers at Vanier”

- "Information on Leaves and Workload Reduction Program."

o A guide to computer systems:

- detailed account of the uses and workings of computer systems

o Course outlines:

- Copy of Vanier's policy on content in course outlines
- Fifteen different department-specific course outline samples

The guide for new teachers and computer system tutorial were much needed in department B, according to our needs assessment. They both cover the administrative points of concern raised by the interviewees from this department. These two documents will be of great assistance to incoming teachers and prevent them from encountering the same administrative challenges our interview subjects faced.

Departments A and B jointly

6.3.6 C.I. calculation workshop

The facilitators could not, of course, ignore the single most area of stress and confusion as identified by our needs assessment: C.I. calculation. Because of the high demand for this information, the facilitators from departments A and B[33]

[33] Note: Department C's project schedule was one semester behind A and B's involvement.

decided to join forces and jointly offer a C.I. calculation workshop to new and non-tenured members of their departments.

The workshop was strategically offered in A07 just prior to H08 course allocations in order to allow new teachers to make a more informed decision when choosing which courses they wanted to teach the following semester. While, of course, this decision is ultimately the coordinator's, at the very least the workshop helped new teachers know what to request, as well as the consequences on their C.I. of what they do end up teaching.

There was some discussion about who should animate the workshop. The two top choices were the former president of the VCTA and the head of Human Resources. They were both approached and it was agreed that the coordinator of Human Resources would briefly address new teachers at the start of the workshop and then the past president of the VCTA would animate the workshop, guiding participants through the calculation process.

All new teachers in departments A and B, including Continuing Education teachers, were sent invitations, as were all department members, particularly the untenured ones, who might require further C.I. clarification. The coordinator of department A further sent a separate email to new teachers encouraging them to attend, emphasizing the importance of knowing one's C.I.

In attendance were 5 members from department A (including the facilitator); the facilitator was a bit disappointed by the turnout and had hoped more would attend. There were 7 department B teachers (including the facilitator) in attendance. As well, the animator from the VCTA asked if a new teacher from his department could attend. We obliged, knowing how crucial this information is. Thus, including the new teacher from that department, a total of 13 teachers attended, in addition to our speaker from Human Resources and animator from the VCTA. Overall, we were quite pleased with this turnout, particularly since, chronologically speaking, this was the first action implemented by this project.

The workshop was hands-on; it took place in a computer lab to allow people to calculate their own C.I. in the process, rather than simply hearing about what it is and receiving a theoretical explanation of how it's calculated. Plus, they were not simply told how to download the worksheet, but were guided through it step by step. To make this possible, attendees were asked to bring three things to the workshop: (1) the number of courses they were teaching, (2) the number of contact hours associated with each course and (3) the number of students registered in each. With this, they were able to calculate their own C.I. during the workshop.

The evaluations of the workshop revealed that most attendees found it useful. Even if C.I. still held an air of mystery for some of the workshop participants, much of it had been demystified. One member of department A, for example,

participated actively in the workshop, yet still appeared to be somewhat confused about C.I. At this point, however, this new teacher still had more knowledge than before and, even more importantly, had now made contact with key people on campus who are very knowledgeable on the subject of C.I. and its calculation. The workshop animator offered to email material to interested participants. Reflecting over the workshop in a logbook entry, the facilitator from department A wrote, “I think this kind of encouragement and follow-up is very important in reinforcing what the participants have learned and adds to the success of a workshop.”

Further adding to the success of the workshop is the fact that it will continue to be accessible to new teachers as the facilitator from department B documented the event on video for future use. The workshop is on a cd which has been placed on reserve in the library for members of department A and B who were not able to attend or who have been hired since the workshop.

The video of the C.I. calculation workshop was also made available to members of department C who had yet to join the project at the time of the workshop. However, since this was such a major issue for new teachers, department C held its own C.I. calculation workshop[34] to discuss C.I. and pay issues. At the workshop, the teachers were also made aware of the c.d. on reserve in the library.

[34] This being the third of the monthly workshops series discussed in the previous chapter.

Department C

During department C's participation in the project, the coordination team was in the process of reviewing what it had in place for new teachers. Thus, rather fortuitously, there were four actions that were implemented by the facilitator and coordination team combined. While some of these actions affected all teachers, they all worked to the benefit of new and incoming teachers. The four actions were: (1) mentoring directory, (2) mini-conference, (3) revision and updating of departmental model course outlines, (4) booklet on ministerial and departmental policies.

6.3.7 Mentoring directory

As discussed in the previous chapter, the facilitator from department C implemented a mentoring directory for new teachers seeking one-on-one guidance. Administrative aspects of mentoring include, but are not limited to, a variety of non-pedagogical concerns such as logistics (finding out where things are, how to go about scheduling or arranging things); how to have access to and operate computer systems; C.I. and other Human Resources matters; developing a course outline that is in accordance with departmental guidelines; and so on. The mentoring directory was distributed to all newly hired teachers prior to the start of E08 and A08. It was also made available online on a forum shared by teachers in department C.

6.3.8 Mini-conference

Prior to the start of A08, department C's coordination team, along with the input of the facilitator, organized a mini-conference. The conference is an annual event; this one, however, was unique in that a portion devoted to new teachers was added to the roster by the facilitator. The focus of the mini-conference was to familiarize new teachers with the administrative aspects of their new job. They were given a handout containing information on assigned offices and their locations, key orders and pick up dates, contract and pay information, Printshop codes, as well as other crucial information such as where and how to order books and course packs. The new teachers were guided on a tour of the campus where they were shown important rooms and locations. Furthermore, meetings had been scheduled along the tour with key resource people, such as the president of the VCTA and a member of Human Resources. The goal of the tour was to orient the new teachers and make them feel comfortable before the start of classes.

6.3.9 Revision and updating of departmental model course outlines

Members of department C's curriculum committee revised and updated model course outlines for the department. The revised model course outlines were distributed to all members of the department, as well as Continuing Education and the faculty dean. It is also available electronically on the department's website. The purpose of this endeavor was to provide new teachers with all the documents needed to prepare their courses.

6.3.10 Booklet on ministerial and departmental policies

Further reviewing policies and procedures in place for new teachers, the curriculum coordinator compiled all department, college and ministerial policies and created an electronic master copy. From this, a booklet was made in both hard and electronic format. Again, the document was distributed to department members, the faculty dean and Continuing Education. It can be anticipated that this booklet will answer many new teachers' questions before they arise.

The factor that perhaps most rendered department C's action successful is that most of the materials produced were given to new teachers before their first semester began. This is crucial because, as the needs assessment attests, it is not always the case that information is not provided, but sometimes that it is provided too late. The material was also made very accessible to new teachers, which further facilitates the transmission of knowledge and information.

6.3.11 "Winter Teaching Concerns" meeting

Finally, department C concluded its pedagogical action with a meeting for first semester and non-tenured teachers at the end of A08 organized and animated by the department's assistant coordinator. New teachers are often without work during the winter semesters when fewer sections are offered; understandably, this is a concern for those who face the possibility of being unemployed and disconnected from their department for a few months. The purpose of the meeting was two-fold. First, the department wanted to make it clear to new

teachers that they would most-likely not be teaching in the upcoming winter semester. Secondly, they wanted to ensure new teachers that there would be work available in the summer and fall ahead. Teachers were invited to express their concerns and all relevant information was distributed to them.

6.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has aimed to demonstrate the extent to which administrative issues, although not always directly linked to teaching, have an impact on new teachers. At a time when many new teachers are focused on pedagogy and mostly pre-occupied with what is happening in the classroom, they are simultaneously learning to navigate their way through a dense bureaucracy. This bureaucracy houses a plethora of potential obstacles for new teachers, the effects of which range from relatively insignificant to possible career-long impacts. The administrative concerns detailed in this chapter speak for themselves and make a clear case for the vital place administrative information has in new teacher integration and on-going professional development.

While the pedagogical rubric looked at new teachers in their role as educators, the administrative rubric focused more on teachers as employees within the cegep system. As we continue to move ahead, our next and final rubric transcends the roles of teacher and college employee in favour of looking at new

teachers as social beings. The social rubric places emphasis on the role human qualities play in new teacher integration.

CHAPTER 7
Social Rubric

Any career in which one is required to perform within a larger group of associates inevitably consists of a social element. Teaching at the cegep level is definitely not an exception; one regularly interacts with others, whether it be with students, staff or fellow teachers. Teachers form part of the cegep community and are a strong presence on campus: sitting on various committees; partaking in projects; attending department, faculty and college-wide meetings; and much more. It naturally follows, then, that strong social support would greatly facilitate one's job as cegep teacher.

Lauzon's study (2006), which explored the development of cegep teachers' professional identity, looked at the extent to which teaching at the cegep level requires one to work in collaboration with colleagues. She states that developing a rapport with colleagues constitutes a learning process. At first, one must learn how to insert oneself into a pre-existing group: getting to know colleagues and their practices, building friendships with them to help facilitate communication and consultations, and learning to express oneself among experienced colleagues. If one is successful in these endeavors, the results could be widely beneficial and have an impact on the department as a whole (as well as the college) insofar as the new teacher will feel motivated to take on new initiatives and develop projects, further cementing his place among colleagues and within the department (Lauzon, 2006).

As seen above, learning from colleagues can help a new teacher fit into a department. This does not, however, constitute the sole extent to which one can learn from fellow teachers. Lauzon (2006) affirms that professional development is itself a social construct and that at every level there are opportunities to learn from and with colleagues. An example of this is found in her discussion of the effect of teaching a course that is also taught by others. Lauzon (2006) writes that teaching a course places one within a community of teachers who have taught and/or are teaching the same course; this community, she emphasizes, helps alleviate some of the stress that can stem from teaching.

In summary, Lauzon (2006) asserts that the social element of the construction of one's professional competencies and identity suggests that an emphasis on collegiality and consultations among colleagues are fundamental to professional development. What happens, then, when new teachers enter an environment where collegiality and consultations are not favoured? Our interviews gave us a glimpse of some of the difficulties that could result when certain aspects of social support are lacking.

The categories that fell under the social rubric, listed in table 7.1, will be explored one by one in this chapter, as will be their correlating themes.

Social Rubric: Categories
1. Isolation
2. Perceived lack of collegiality
3. Lack of time to socialize

Table 7.1 Social categories

7.1 Social support

To begin, however, our interviews generally revealed that the majority of new teachers in departments A, B and C feel well surrounded and supported. They listed numerous positive points about their departmental social life:

- Department is nice, collegial, organized
- Department members go out after departmental meetings
- Colleagues sometimes meet up outside of the College
- Department is friendly, cohesive
- There are impromptu, casual meetings
- Colleagues are warm, welcoming
- Social support is strong
- Department feels like a community
- Coordinator offered a tour of the campus which included introductions to people in various departments.

Other teachers, however, disclosed tribulations they faced. While they may be a minority, it is necessary to explore all aspects of the social rubric, particularly the challenging ones, as they help reinforce the importance of strong social support.

7.2 Social categories and themes

7.2.1 Isolation

Within the social realm, isolation is perhaps the most daunting challenge one can face. Much of this has to do with the fact that many problems in the pedagogical and administrative rubrics were solved specifically because of a lack of isolation; people felt colleagues were accessible enough to reach out to with their questions and concerns or, in some cases, their colleagues reached out to them without needing to be asked.

In the isolation category, the main theme to emerge pertained to **problems resulting from not having an office near other department members**. This affected members of all three of our targeted departments. The Vanier campus is comprised of two buildings housing classrooms and teachers' offices.[35] The larger of these two buildings is further divided into a series of seven lettered "buildings." In short, this building is quite large, and someone with an office in the A-building will be quite removed from someone whose office is in the K-building. The other one, the N-building, is across the campus. It was difficult for

[35] In addition to the Sports Complex and Administration/Registrars building.

new teachers to find themselves in an office that was separated from colleagues, particularly at times when they most could have benefited from having friendly allies close by to answer their questions.

The following quotes demonstrate how some of the teachers we interviewed reacted to being physically alienated from fellow department members:

> I thought at the time [of being hired] that in the department all the teachers would be right next to each other, the offices would be in one building, on one floor. And this was not the case. We were all mixed up and I never really saw anybody.
>
> I didn't really know anyone and my office is in the N-building, so it's not with the majority of [my department's] teachers, and it's not even near the majority of [my department's] teachers who are in the N-building. So I was completely isolated. Now I like the fact that it's isolated; you can get a lot of work done there. But in the beginning, I didn't have any contact with people who I could just casually ask a question to.
>
> Where I'm situated, there are only two [department name] offices in my corridor and everyone else is [from other departments], so it's not like you can actually go get help.

For the most part, being distanced from colleagues made it difficult for these new teachers to reach out to colleagues, which in turn made it difficult for them to feel part of their department. If this was the case for teachers with faraway offices, one can only imagine that the situation would have felt even direr for the few teachers in our sample who found themselves with no office at all.

One eacher who entered the college as a replacement had taken over the replaced teacher's office. When this teacher returned the office was no longer

available, and, as it turned out, there was none available at all. The teacher told us,

> I had this office that I could use for that term, but then I had to move out again and then for a while I didn't have an office at all, I just had this rolling suitcase. For one or two terms I didn't have an office, so I had no base.

Not having a "base" can be particularly challenging at a time when you are trying to make a place for yourself, trying to find solid ground. The period when one is just starting out might very well be the time when one most needs to have that "base."

In other cases, however, being without an office inadvertently worked to the new teacher's advantage. As one new teacher stated, "There were some clerical errors, so I was homeless for about two weeks into the semester and I ended up sharing an office with [a teacher in the same department] in the end and I'm still there." This turned out to be extremely beneficial as the new teacher's officemate became a trusty resource, someone who had answers to the new teacher's many questions.

Another new teacher in a different department shared a similar story. This teacher was without an office and ended up temporarily partaking in an office shared by two senior faculty members in the same department. This set-up proved to be advantageous, particularly since the two senior teachers were in an excellent position to answer questions. Indeed the new teacher told us, "It was

just natural for me to go to the two of them for random questions. That was a big help actually – being in close proximity to the two of them."

While office locations were the source of isolation for some, another theme to emerge from this category dealt with the **isolation experienced by those who taught in Continuing Education**. These teachers tended to feel distanced from the majority of their colleagues, who teach in the day division and typically have the summers off.

One teacher related to us the near panic he experienced when his first time teaching at Vanier was during the summer session. No one was around and this teacher, being brand new to the school, obviously had many questions, not the least of which being where the classroom was. One day, when searching for someone to get information from, "I basically had to knock on every single door in this building until I found someone. […] In terms of getting help, it was virtually impossible." This teacher ended up fortuitously bumping into someone he had gone to university with who was also teaching that summer, but had previous experience at Vanier. This teacher considered himself "extremely lucky" to have found a familiar face that day; however, regarding the dissemination of pertinent information, luck should ultimately not be a factor.

Another teacher we interviewed offered a perspective on how both teaching evening Continuing Education courses and office location can lead to isolation for new teachers:

> There are new teachers who are sharing an office together, which I think is really unfortunate because they don't have an officemate that they can go to with questions. Often new teachers are just given whatever office is available, so they're off somewhere nowhere near anyone else. And also, a lot of them are teaching Continuing Education so they aren't around during the day, so it's not easy to know who to ask [questions to].

As these testimonials demonstrate, one of the results of isolation could be that the isolated person in question feels disconnected from his department and lacks information pertinent to a new teacher's survival. In short, this scenario tended to stem from, or was viewed as stemming from, a lack of outreach to new teachers on the part of experienced ones. In this respect, there is a definite overlap between the first two categories in the social rubric: isolation and perceived lack of collegiality.

7.2.2 Perceived lack of collegiality

For most of our interviewees, instances of lack of collegiality were just that: instances. That is, they did not necessarily get an over-arching, all-encompassing view of their department as unfriendly or unhelpful; instead, there were singular incidents or only certain, limited aspects of their department that they may have deemed unsupportive.

This category yielded three main themes that can be summed up as a **lack of outreach and/or transmission of information**, **lack of cohesiveness among**

department members and **a sense of tension between new and senior teachers**.

For the most part, the new teachers we interviewed who self-identified as viewing their department as non-collegiate were disillusioned by what they felt was a lack of outreach and transmission of information. Inevitably, there is a great amount of information a new teacher in the cegep system must absorb. Some of our interviewees found it difficult at times to find information and expressed that it would have been helpful to have had colleagues fill them in on some of the things they needed to know. As one teacher put it, "I basically found out all this information on my own. […] Eventually it all came together." This sentiment was echoed in other interviews as well:

> I wouldn't say there's no support, but I still feel lost today and I've been here for three semesters.
>
> Every time I asked a question, people were like 'how come you don't know that?' I [would reply] 'there wasn't an orientation guide.'
>
> Overall, I would have expected by the end of the first year to have a very strong understanding of how the college works […] but I still don't.

In addition to potentially being without pertinent information directly affecting their status as teachers, a lack of transmission of information could also mean that new teachers were unaware of resources available to their students. A teacher we interviewed related a conversation he had had with a newer colleague: "I

mentioned [a student resource] to [a new teacher] and he said, 'Wow, we have something like that?!' He didn't know."

In other situations, lack of information was not a problem; in fact, it was the opposite: there was almost too much information to digest all at once. One teacher used this situation to express how having a community of colleagues can offer support in such a situation.

> There's a lot of information that's put out there [when one is newly hired]. It's just that sometimes it can be pretty overwhelming. […] And sometimes all you need to know is that you're not the only one trying to stay afloat.

Here we see how connecting with others does not always serve to *solve* one's problems, but can help alleviate some of the burden. This was also felt by a teacher who was not lacking information, but rather that sense of community:

> It's been a while now, but one thing I remember feeling back then was the isolation. I felt very isolated, both in terms of being able to talk about my experience with people and just collegiality, just seeing people.

In general, everyone agreed that having the support of a community of colleagues was wholly beneficial. Indeed, one can see how problems related to not having the necessary information could be diminished or altogether avoided when new teachers are well-surrounded by people looking out for their best interests. Of course, further speculation beyond the scope of this project would be required to fully investigate departmental dynamics and inter-relations. Nonetheless, some teachers tended to point to a lack of cohesiveness within

their department as a possible explanation for a department's difficulty in reaching its maximum social potential, which could, in turn, increase its potential for outreach.

Demonstrating the lack of cohesiveness some felt existed in their departments, one teacher told us, "There are teachers I never see in our department. I've never met them. I've never seen them." Interviewees expressed that it was difficult to become fully integrated into a department where some teachers appeared to be apathetic towards their colleagues and/or departmental matters. One teacher reported, "In department meetings, you do get to meet some of your colleagues, but they're only the people that come and that's only about fifty percent of the department."

Consequently, on one hand a department can be faced with new teachers who want to be part of a departmental community, and on the other a group of possibly more experienced teachers who'd rather distance themselves from said community. This can unfortunately lead to a perceived wedge between new teachers and older ones at a time when new teachers would perhaps most need the support of their experienced cohorts. In comparison to other themes within the broader social rubric, a relatively high number of teachers in our sample felt there was a division between new and experienced teachers.

> I don't think I would necessarily have told the truth to some senior teachers here, how I really felt, because I would have felt they think I'm just not the right person for this [job and that they] should just get rid of me or something. So I

> would not have said [that I was experiencing difficulties] to anybody. I think there should be some sort of set up where people can ask other teachers in a safe environment, where you don't have to feel embarrassed about looking stupid or not up to task.
>
> Most of the help actually came more from my peers, […] people who were recently hired, not so much senior staff or faculty. I think overall there is a bit of this tension now that – and I'm sure it's like this in most departments – you have almost half of the people [in the department] in their thirties and then you have half of the people who are just before retirement. I feel, and maybe it's just my imagination or maybe it's just me who's projecting, I feel there's this generational tension or gap and also a bit of power play too, because I find in departmental meetings, it's really the people who are close to retirement that dominate, that speak the most and make most of the decisions. Most people that haven't been here for very long don't say anything, they just listen. Sometimes they will ask a question, but they are very much submissive in relation to the people who have been here a long time.
>
> I don't think I would have told [experienced teachers] absolutely everything [regarding new teacher-related difficulties], the truth of how I felt, because I was too insecure. You don't want them to know. You don't want to look incompetent.
>
> The young teachers are approachable […] but some of the older ones just kind of stick to their offices and I don't see them that much.

Of course, it is difficult to assess whether this really is the case, or whether, as one teacher put it, these impressions were the result of the new teachers projecting their own worries, fears and insecurities onto the department. For many, if not most, of the teachers we interviewed, however, there were no social problems or perceived lack of collegiality in their department simply because they possessed outgoing personalities. As such, they felt at ease networking with

colleagues and asking questions whenever they sprung up. Conversely, when departments were described as somewhat unhelpful or unfriendly, it was frequently because new teachers had expected department members to come to *them* and volunteer information before it was solicited. Thus, while department members may have been available, they were probably waiting to be approached by newer members when needed, and this resulted in new teachers viewing their department as non-collegiate. Individual personality can play a role in one's integration into a new environment, as this interviewee stated:

> I know some people are more sociable; they'll go to everything and chat with everybody. I'm social but I'm also a bit of an introvert so I'm not going to every function right away or sitting on every committee, so it took me longer [to integrate into the department] because of that.

7.2.3 Lack of time to socialize

The social rubric was affected by personal circumstances in other ways as well. The final category to emerge pertains to difficulty in finding time to attend departmental/social activities. While this category was not widespread among our participants, it is nonetheless noteworthy, particularly when one considers how busy new teachers are. All teachers in our sample testified that socializing with colleagues is one of the key factors to new teacher survival; however, it becomes problematic when time constraints interfere with one's ability to integrate into the department. Two teachers in two different departments had to forgo social activities at the start of their cegep careers as they juggled other work demands put upon them.

> I really felt kind of pressed for time […] so I would almost never make a special trip up to the college [for a workshop or other activity] if it wasn't my day to be teaching.
>
> I come, I finish what I have to do, finish my office hours and leave. [My colleagues] are very helpful, but when I see them.

7.3 Social solutions

In their discussions of difficulties they had faced, or in some cases of how they avoided social-related difficulties, new teachers shared with us means they employed to integrate themselves into their departments, as well as the greater college environment. Collectively, they produced the following list:

- Talked with colleagues in the teachers' lounge (this was by far the most popular)
- Sought informal support (help from other teachers; informal mentoring)
- Attended college-wide and department-specific social events – Barbeque and Happy Hour,[36] Annual Women's Breakfast,[37] Christmas party, departmental dinners
- Held informal meetings with coordinators, colleagues
- Partook in informal exchanges of info between old and new teachers
- Attended a gathering at a department member's house
- Joined department members for supper after a departmental meeting
- Made friends through common interests
- Got involved on committees

[36] Organized by the VCTA
[37] Organized by the Women's Week planning team

- Attended events/workshops/guest lectures organized by colleagues

7.4 Implementing action

Not all new teachers may be outgoing or resourceful enough to partake in such activities as listed above, nor might they be fully informed that such events are taking place. In light of this, it was important to implement action addressing the concerns listed in the three categories. The interviews we conducted highlighted the necessity of socializing with colleagues within the realm of integration. In general, however, there was comparatively little social-specific action developed simply because the needs assessment revealed that the pedagogical and administrative rubrics contained the areas most in need of attention. Thus, while socializing is crucial, it is an area departments are already tending to with considerable success.

Nonetheless, each department did plan social activities in an attempt to address some of the concerns raised in interviews. Obviously there was nothing we could do to remedy the contentious issue of office location; however the idea that events would bring people together worked to help alleviate isolation resulting from an office disconnected from colleagues.

It should be noted that, despite little social-specific action, socializing stemmed from planned action in various forms. With the exception of the production of documents, all action undertaken, regardless of which rubric it targeted, contained a social element. Department members interacted and mingled with one another (new and experienced teachers) at the various workshops and events that were implemented by the facilitators. The mentoring programs created in departments A and C were partly social as well; they gave new teachers the opportunity to develop camaraderie with an experienced teacher.

Department A

7.4.1 New teacher luncheon meeting

This event primarily served pedagogical and administrative means; however, the format was very conducive to socializing. The purpose of the luncheon was for department members to get to know their new teachers and address any concerns they may have. The format consisted of an unstructured roundtable discussion. With three senior department members present (including the facilitator) and seven whose experience at Vanier ranged from one semester to four years, this was a prime venue for new teachers to seek advice and support. In his logbook, the facilitator commented on the how the event fostered a sense of community and thrived on collegiality:

> From my point of view, the meeting went well; discussion was lively and a wide range of issues was covered. It became abundantly clear that the subjects being brought up were scarcely unique to an individual teacher but, on the contrary, were shared concerns.

7.4.2 End-of-semester/holiday party

In light of the success of the luncheon, the facilitator for department A decided it would be a good idea to throw an end-of-semester/holiday party for all department members. The party was held at the home of one of the department members. In total, nineteen people attended, including spouses and one retired teacher. The facilitator was pleased to note that five of the teachers in attendance were new teachers, all with four years or less experience at Vanier. Naturally, this event was completely unstructured and without evaluation forms. Nonetheless, by all accounts, the party was successful and helped forge ties among department members.

Department B

7.4.3 Informal, post-meeting gatherings

Members of department B were the ones who expressed having the most time constraints and deemed busy schedules as one of the major factors inhibiting

more inter-departmental socializing. To a certain extent, it was therefore easier to allow social interaction to occur organically rather than to try to plan it or structure it too rigidly. What followed was that, according to the facilitator's logbook, four department members (including two new teachers) started going on casual outings after department meetings. These informal, off-the-record gatherings proved to be an effective way for the new teachers to discuss pedagogy and college policies in a non-judgmental atmosphere. This was supported by the fact that they chose locations far from campus to help separate work from socializing. Further, being removed from campus allowed the members of the group to be themselves without feeling judged by others, particularly those with more authority. As written in the facilitator's logbook, "Group dynamics change depending on who is present in the room." In addition to discussing work-related matters, these excursions also served to create and enforce bonds between the four teachers, something which will be of benefit to them and which they will be able to rely on in the face of potential future challenges.

Department C

The new teachers we interviewed from department C spoke favourably about the social climate in their department. Because the teachers we interviewed were already considerably well-integrated socially, the activities planned by

department C's facilitator were geared to the most recently-hired teachers in that department (that is, teachers who had been hired since the needs assessment). The department had two events with a focus on social integration: a wine and cheese and an orientation day for new teachers.

7.4.4 Wine and cheese

The wine and cheese was primarily for new teachers, however all department members and the faculty dean were also invited. Attendance was affected by flu season, yet this event was nonetheless worthwhile. In total, there were three new teachers, the facilitator, four experienced teachers and the faculty dean. While the conversation naturally drifted to work-related topics,[38] discussions were informal and unstructured. The wine and cheese offered a relaxed atmosphere in which new teachers could mingle with experienced staff and their dean, as well as seek answers to pedagogical and administrative queries. One of the main benefits of having a group event (as opposed to new and experienced teachers having one-on-one conversations), was that new teachers were able to hear answers to other people's questions – questions they may not have known to ask. Furthermore, new teachers were able to get a variety of different perspectives because the event had been opened to experienced teachers.

7.4.5 Orientation session for new teachers

In May 2008, before the start of the summer session, the facilitator for department C offered an orientation session to newly-hired teachers starting in

[38] This was, after all, the point of common interest among the participants.

E08. Although the event dealt with issues beyond the social realm, primarily pedagogical ones, the day began with an hour for coffee, bagels and socializing; there was also a one-hour lunch period and time set aside for open discussion. Thus, the orientation session made a point of including interaction, thereby highlighting its importance within the department. In attendance, there were the four new teachers hired for the summer, as well as eight teachers who were no longer new, but untenured.

Department C's integration activities usually take place in time for the start of the fall semester; thus, a pre-summer meeting such as this one had never happened before. The convenient timing, along with the input and help of experienced teachers made this a winning event. The facilitator used the logbook to ponder how such sessions are beneficial to everyone involved, not just new teachers. In reference to how greatly experienced teachers contributed to the orientation session, the facilitator wrote,

> These types of activities might be worthwhile to more experienced teachers in that they have the opportunity to think through their teaching in a way that doesn't normally happen. It forces the more experienced teachers to process their experiences and make use of them to aid and educate others. Through listening to the newer teachers, it also allows for the enrichment of tried and true pedagogical techniques.

This insight emphasizes the idea that everyone in the department can be an essential contributor to new teacher integration, that everyone's experiences are valuable and informative.

7.5 Chapter summary

The social rubric confirmed the impact social integration (or lack thereof) could have on a new teacher. In addition to making one feel perhaps less enthusiastic about their work (and, more specifically, their workplace) feelings of isolation and lack of collegiality among colleagues could also mean that new teachers are missing out on pertinent information. We found that one's individual personality plays a key role in determining whether, or to what extent, a new teacher will actively seek information or wait for the information to be offered to him. For the most part, our three targeted departments proved to be successfully socially integrating their new teachers. The effort put into social integration at Vanier was also reflected in the way experienced teachers volunteered their time at social events organized by their department's facilitator, whether as a participant or animator. Given the results of the needs assessment, the participation of senior members in the social integration of new teachers could help lessen thoughts some new teachers expressed regarding lack of collegiality between new and experienced teachers. Finally, despite a limited offering of social-specific activities, the facilitators were able to draw from the needs assessment and bring department members together to help minimize any feelings of isolation and lack of collegiality.

We have now explored the three rubrics, their categories and corresponding themes. Working from the needs assessment conducted at the start of the

project, action was planned and implemented to address some of the challenges faced by the new teachers in our three targeted departments. At the end of the project, we revisited these departments to verify the kind of impact our project had, particularly the aforementioned action. The next chapter discusses the results stemming from the project.

CHAPTER 8
Project Results

At this point, we have discussed in detail the needs assessment and the action that manifested from it. What remained at the end of the project was to determine the impact it had on how departments A, B and C integrate new teachers.

We were interested in finding out whether newly hired teachers in our targeted departments had partaken in the activities and materials produced during the project's action phases. If not, what were their reasons? If so, were they helpful? Did the actions have a lasting effect? Were the teachers who were hired after our needs assessment facing the same challenges as those we interviewed? We sought answers to these questions to help assess the project's contribution to new teacher integration.

We conducted post-project focus groups with newly hired teachers in each of the three departments. First, we contacted each department's coordinator requesting a list of names of the teachers who had been hired after A07 for departments A and B, and after H08 for department C. We then emailed these teachers, explaining our project and inviting them to partake in a focus group with other newly hired teachers from their department. Those who were able to attend were pleased to have the opportunity to discuss their integration into the department with their peers.

8.1 Focus group results

8.1.1 Department A

Five newly hired teachers from department A participated in our focus group. Three of the participants were in their first semester of teaching at Vanier, one was in his second, and the fifth had been teaching in a different faculty at Vanier for a number of years before deciding on a change of focus and transferring to department A. Regarding the latter, despite being a seasoned teacher, he chose to participate in the focus group because he very much felt "new" in relation to department A (where he was in his first semester).

Three of the teachers had received the facilitator's new teacher kit, for which they were thankful. The other two teachers remembered having been told that there was a booklet they could pick up; however, being very busy and not knowing exactly what it was, they had not yet collected the document. The elements of the kit the three teachers found most useful were:

- The samples of student work, which gave them a glimpse of the level(s) to expect. The samples also gave them an idea of how to grade.
- The sample course outlines; one teacher in particular was perplexed by the amount of information that could potentially be included on an outline. Although these samples did help, he was still left with questions on a few specific matters.
- Advice on assignments and marking schemes

- Information on course modules

The new teachers received the mentoring directory set up by department A's facilitator. One participant had made use of it. Discussion of this participant's experience with acquiring a mentor revealed a flaw in the system. In short, the focus group participant had approached a teacher who was not aware that his name was in the mentoring directory and was not willing to act as a mentor. This raises the point that, in order for a mentoring system to function, it is of the utmost importance that all parties are in agreement and aware that they have committed to the project.

Fortunately, the new teacher was not discouraged from approaching someone else listed in the directory. All was not lost as the focus group participant found a mentor in another department member. Explaining what he sought in a mentor, the new teacher told us,

> I wanted reassurance in my first couple of weeks, such as in terms of the student-teacher dynamic or little things like do they use PowerPoint [in the classroom] or the expectations for what level to teach at. I basically wanted a more detailed model to go by. In that case it was very positive. [I got] some good suggestions and ideas for active learning.

One suggestion to come out of this focus group was that it might be useful to have a monthly lunch for new teachers and the mentors listed in the directory. This would allow for informal exchanges and offer new teachers various perspectives. Furthermore, it would provide an opportunity for new teachers to

get to know the mentors, which would help them make an informed decision should they choose to select one for individual mentoring. It remains uncertain, however, whether such monthly gatherings are realistic, logistically speaking, primarily due to time constraints.

In the semester following department A's involvement in the project, the coordinator resumed the new teacher luncheon meeting. All of our focus group participants attended and enjoyed the get-together. Since the mentoring directory had been created by this time, the meeting had the added benefit of including some of the teachers who had volunteered to be mentors, thus allowing new teachers to attach faces to the names in the directory.

The focus group was also beneficial to these five teachers insofar as it allowed them to get to know one another better. The discussion lasted well over an hour and it was clear that, although they found their experienced colleagues to be very helpful and generous with materials, they valued the bonding time with their fellow new department members. They shared stories of challenging aspects of their work, as well as tips for how to deal with these.

8.1.2 Department B

Throughout the project, it was a difficult task enticing department B's busy teachers to events, and the focus group was no exception. Due to a weak turnout, our intended focus group was actually an interview because there was

only one participant. It was his first semester and he was finding the pace rather hectic, particularly as he had been hired at the last minute and had little time to prepare for his courses. Consequently, this new teacher devoted most of his time to class preparations and had little time to spare for such activities as workshops. As the participant stated, “I know [my department] has offered some activities, but I’ve been very busy.” Nonetheless, he found his department to be very welcoming and accommodating.

Our participant had received a copy of the computer system tutorial created by department B’s facilitator, which he described as having been very useful. The tutorial saved him the time of having to learn the system on his own, which he may not have bothered doing, given his full schedule. Learning the system in this efficient manner allowed him to be comfortable enough with the system to be able to employ it in his first semester of teaching. The main benefit of the computer system can be seen as familiarizing new teachers with a practical tool that helps render their schedules a little less hectic.

Overall, in spite of having been hired at the last minute and finding his schedule particularly “chaotic” in the first few weeks of the semester, the participant ended the session on a positive note, stating, “I think I got the best possible treatment under the circumstances.”

8.1.3 Department C

We met with three newly hired teachers from department C. Although their integration was not wholly free of challenges, they were all pleased with the various orientation activities and outreach recently put into place in the department. The three focus group participants, all of whom were in their first semester at Vanier, took part in several integration activities, which they found helpful.

Before starting in A08, our focus group participants attended department C's mini-conference. They received a tour of the various administrative and resource offices on campus, and found it a relief to be told that they were free to ask any and all questions. It was also useful for them to review sample course outlines, the design of which, as we have seen, can be a source of stress for new teachers. One teacher was particularly grateful for the opportunity to discuss teacher evaluations with a Human Resources representative.

These new teachers had also made use of the office hours for new teachers, stating that they liked having a place to drop in with their questions. The department's new monthly workshops for new teachers received favourable reviews as well, particularly the ones on marking and plagiarism.

The new teachers had also been sent the mentoring directory via email, which one teacher made use of, saying,

> They sent us an email with all the teachers in the department who offered to be mentors and I've certainly taken up [teacher's name] on that, and that was really helpful. […] The only thing is that when you get really busy and really overwhelmed, it's sometimes hard to just even think clearly enough to call someone [to ask for] help."

This quote touches upon the fact that, regardless of what is put in place by departments, it is unlikely to minimize every possible challenge that new teachers could face.

Overall, department C's new teachers found their department to be very welcoming and supportive. Emails sent to coordinators and colleagues received prompt replies containing answers to questions on such topics as the curriculum, texts and materials. One participant told us,

> I never found myself wanting information and not having it within, like, twenty minutes. So that's been great. […] I think they've done an excellent job.

Our participants found that many of their colleagues were willing to go out of their way to assist them, which was greatly appreciated.

8.2 Post-project meeting with Continuing Education

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, our pilot interviews with department D led us to conduct an interview with the academic coordinator of Continuing

Education (ACCE). Our pilot subjects had all entered Vanier via this department and we foresaw the possibility of this also being the case for many of our potential subjects in departments A, B and C. During our interview, the ACCE discussed the services and materials in place for Continuing Education teachers, such as:

- Meeting for all teachers at the start of each semester
- Continuing Education handbook
- Information pamphlets
- Calendar specifying important dates
- Ongoing workshops throughout the semester

In addition, we were informed that teachers are encouraged to ask any questions they may have.

Throughout our needs assessment, we found that some of our interviewees had partaken in and benefited from these services and materials. However, we also found that a significant number of our interviewees felt isolated and in need of better support in Continuing Education. In particular, some of the more common issues new teachers in Continuing Education felt challenged by were:

- Not having an orientation
- The lack of colleagues who are on campus in the evenings and during the summer
- Problems with the photocopying system

- Not having an office, and therefore being unable to hold office hours

Taking into account the apparent discrepancy between the services in place in Continuing Education and what the teachers routinely and systemically received, we decided to conduct a follow-up interview with the ACCE. The purpose of the interview was to share the new teachers' concerns and discuss possible ways they could be addressed. The meeting was very positive, with the ACCE clarifying certain points and, best of all, explaining improvements that had been put in place in Continuing Education since the completion of our needs assessment.

Regarding an orientation session for new teachers, the ACCE explained that the most practical way to provide one was on an individual and/or ad hoc basis. There were two main issues that prevented the department from offering an official new teacher orientation session: last minute hires and different starting dates for different programs and sections. Many of the teachers in Continuing Education are hired at the last minute; it would be obviously impossible for them to attend an orientation session that took place before they were hired. Similarly, it would be logistically difficult to offer an orientation session after the start of the semester when teachers' schedules vary and are already hectic. Furthermore, orientations tend to provide information that would better serve new teachers before they begin teaching. Finally, the fact that not all courses start on the same date adds to the complications associated with setting an orientation date.

The ACCE maintained that the best that could be done is to encourage new teachers to meet with him as soon as they are hired.

Despite not being offered a formal orientation session, new teachers in Continuing Education have the opportunity to meet and mingle with their colleagues at a meeting organized every semester by the ACCE. Our three focus group participants in department C, all of whom were teaching one or more courses in Continuing Education, attended this meeting. They found it worthwhile and got to meet others who teach in the evening. One of the benefits of knowing one's evening colleagues is that it helps diminish the isolation of working when most teachers have already gone home for the day. One department C teacher, whose course had not yet started at the time of the meeting, was able to get suggestions for his first class, such as good ice-breakers to use with the students.

Further addressing the issue of isolation, as well as those surrounding office and photocopying matters, the ACCE informed us of a new initiative in the department. Teachers in Continuing Education now have a lounge/work room where they can interact with one another, meet with their students and do individual work, such as marking and lesson planning. The next phase, the ACCE stated, is to get a photocopy machine for this room, which would solve the many photocopy-related problems Continuing Education teachers face, as

detailed in chapter 6. In the meantime, schedules have been adjusted to improve photocopying conditions for teachers. As stated in the Administrative Rubric chapter, one of the challenges was that the Continuing Education office (where documents are to be dropped off for photocopying) opened at the same time that classes start, meaning teachers could not make last-minute photocopies. The ACCE told us that this had changed; the Continuing Education office now opens half an hour prior to the start of classes, thereby allowing teachers to have photocopies made immediately before the start of class.

8.3 Key findings, action taken and recommendations

The following consists of a breakdown of the key findings from the needs assessment. By this we mean categories that affected a substantial number of new teachers in all three departments. All of the key findings fall under the pedagogical and administrative rubrics; they are accompanied here by the action that was taken to address them, as well as recommendations for how to keep problems stemming from them to a minimal.

8.3.1 Classroom management

Findings:

Most of our interviewees, with the notable exception of former high school teachers, expressed having problems with unruly students. Generally, they had

expected their students to be more mature and more akin to university students than to high school ones. Instead, they were faced with pupils who spoke out of turn, did not pay attention and were not keen on keeping up with readings and assignments.

Action:

Because of the gravity of the situation among all three departments, the facilitators of departments A, B and C decided to hold a joint classroom management workshop for all members of their departments. The workshop animator discussed why some students misbehave in class and offered suggestions for constructive ways of dealing with disruptive students. Department A and department B's facilitators both included the documents from this workshop in their new teacher information packages in order for the message to reach incoming teachers.

Recommendation:

It would be useful to inform teachers when they are hired that they could potentially encounter classroom management issues. This could be undertaken in a way that does not alarm new teachers, but rather makes them aware. This information could include the coordinates of the manager of Student Services, whom teachers can consult with when dealing with problematic students, and to whom teachers can send students with discipline problems.

8.3.2 Course preparation/Level of students /Evaluation

Findings:

These three pedagogical categories have been joined together here on the basis that they share similar qualities insofar as they are all founded on a lack of pre-existing knowledge regarding the curriculum.

Having perhaps not yet interacted with cegep students and being unaware of level-appropriate curricula made it quite challenging for numerous new teachers to plan out a course. In particular, the course outline theme within the course preparation category proved to be an obstacle for some.

Similar to preconceived notions regarding classroom management, many of the new teachers we interviewed, primarily teachers who had taught and/or TA'ed at the university level, had expected students to be at a much more advanced level than they actually were. They faced significant discrepancies between the material and their students' abilities.

In addition to exchanges in the classroom, many teachers became aware that the curriculum surpassed the average student's level through various means of evaluation.

Syllabi, course content and evaluation schemes often had to be amended while courses were already in progress, thereby adding time and stress to new teachers' already demanding schedules.

Action:

The facilitators from departments A and C addressed this challenge in the documents they created. In the new teacher kit for department A, the facilitator included samples of student work as a means of helping new teachers gauge the level they should be teaching at. A bank of sample course outlines was also included, allowing new teachers to see how outlines can be structured, as well as methods of evaluation used by departmental colleagues. Meanwhile, department C's pedagogical guide was an effort to familiarize incoming teachers with the department's introductory level courses, thereby allowing them to see the types of material, assignments and mark breakdown possibilities appropriate for the level.

Recommendation:

Prior to developing course outlines, incoming teachers can be made aware of the level and type of curriculum most conducive to learning at the cegep level. This could occur as early as during the job interview; it would not only give potential teachers guidance for their future courses, but also allow them to get an accurate view of the realities of the job.

8.3.3 C.I. calculation

Findings:

Within the administrative rubric, the C.I. calculation theme under the Human Resources category posed the greatest challenge to our interviewees. There are numerous factors that contribute to one's C.I. and we found that it was commonplace for new teachers to often be uninformed as to what those factors are and the repercussions they have on one's seniority and salary. Even in instances where interviewees were familiar with the elements that affect C.I., they did not always know how to carry out the calculation.

Action:

The facilitators for departments A and B jointly offered a C.I. calculation workshop to help demystify the process. After a brief talk from the head of Human Resources, the VCTA past president animated the workshop, presenting participants with an online calculation form and guiding them through the process as they inputted their individual information. The session was videotaped for future use.

Recommendation:

Department coordinators could advise newly hired teachers to meet with someone from Human Resources as soon as possible in order for them to know what C.I. is and how to calculate it. This could take the form of an

announcement at the first departmental meeting of the semester, or a mass email sent to all new hires.

8.3.4 Continuing Education

Findings:

The majority of new teachers we interviewed entered Vanier via Continuing Education, to teach either summer or evening courses. There was a range of Continuing Education-related issues new teachers dealt with. The ones most discussed in interviews pertained to the isolation of teaching when most teachers (particularly experienced ones) are not, confusion over the class cancellation policy and photocopying procedures, and not having an office.

Action:

Due to the fact that Continuing Education was not one of our three targeted departments, action was minimal. We did, however, feel the need to give these concerns the attention they deserve. Thus, we met with the academic coordinator of Continuing Education to discuss our findings. In addition to noting our comments, he informed us of positive changes that were underway in the department, dealing primarily with office space, isolation and photocopying.

Recommendation:

Perhaps the best strategy for a smooth integration is to ensure that there is ongoing, healthy communication between Continuing Education and academic

departments. This would help ensure that newly hired teachers receive all pertinent information and feel part of a cohesive team.

8.3.5 Lack of orientation

Findings:

An orientation should be the first step of new teacher integration. The dissemination of information and sense of belonging that an orientation provides could have an impact on all three rubrics. While a significant number of interviewees received an orientation in one capacity or another, we found that they were not systemically and routinely offered. Consequently, some new teachers were unfamiliar with the campus layout, its services and centres. This generally resulted in additional, time-consuming obstacles.

Action:

All three facilitators implemented action addressing new teachers' orientation needs. In their department-specific guides for new teachers, the facilitators from departments A and B both included pertinent information to help a new teacher get started, such as campus maps, who resource people are on campus and where to find them. In addition, department A's facilitator provided an orientation to the two newly hired teachers he had mentored. Department C covered this ground in their mini-conference: the afternoon session was devoted to an orientation for new teachers, offering them a guided tour of the campus and introductions to staff members of various offices and centres.

Recommendation:

Ideally, every new teacher should receive an orientation to the College. However, this is often complicated by the fact that some teachers are hired at the last minute, arriving after the other newly hired teachers have already received a tour. It is primarily these last-minute hires who fall through the cracks. A useful suggestion might be to offer a thorough orientation after all new teachers have been hired for the semester. This could take place as late as the first or second week of the semester: this would still be early enough to address pertinent information in a timely fashion and not too late so as to cause new teachers to feel like they have been left to fend for themselves.

8.4 Chapter summary

To summarize, we conducted post-project focus groups with teachers in departments A, B and C who had been hired after our needs assessment. Our aim was to uncover whether these recently-hired teachers had benefited from the action that had followed the needs assessment. We found that for each department, to varying degrees, activities and materials implemented by the facilitators[39] had served our participants. New teachers in department A had

[39] And assistant coordinator, in department C's case.

attended the new teacher luncheon meeting. They had also received the new teacher kit, elements of which they found quite useful. Finally, despite an initial setback with the mentoring directory, one teacher was successful in finding a helpful mentor. The one new teacher we spoke to in department B had made use of the tutorial on the department's most widely used online computer system. Focus group participants in department C had attended the mini-conference, receiving a tour of the campus and visiting administrative offices and resource centres. They also attended the assistant coordinator's office hours for new teachers and monthly thematic workshops. One of the department's new teachers had reached out to someone on the mentoring list. Finally, the participants from department C all attended Continuing Education's meeting for teachers.

Lastly, we looked at a summary of key findings that emerged from the needs assessment, how we addressed these findings by implementing action, and recommendations stemming from the data for how they might be dealt with post-project.

Having now explored the positive results this project has had on new teachers in departments A, B and C, in the next chapter we turn our attention to the project's limitations. We will explore obstacles we faced in terms of conducting the project, as well as the boundaries on the extent to which new initiatives could be implemented in the three departments.

CHAPTER 9
Limitations of the Research

As might be expected from a project spanning three years, there were moments when we were faced with challenges and setbacks. Although these obstacles did not prevent the project from unfolding, they may have affected the project in terms of its potential. Of course, there is no way of knowing what the project results would have been under different circumstances. At this point, the most constructive approach to the limitations we faced consists of understanding what the main impediments were in an effort to understand their contribution to the project and to learn from them for future research.

9.1 Challenges

The challenges we faced fall into two main categories: those associated with us, the research team, conducting research with teachers when we ourselves are not teachers; and secondly, those associated with garnering interest and participation in the project. While it is plausible the two may have been interconnected, we have no reasonable cause to believe that was the case. In addition to these two main limitations, a more minor third one stems from our use of qualitative research.

9.1.1 Brief set-back

The realization that we were going to have to deal with certain reservations because we were non-teachers examining the experiences of new teachers first became apparent at the Association Council meeting with members of the VCTA. As mentioned in chapter two, at the start of our project we were asked by the executive committee of the VCTA to present the project at an Association Council meeting. At the meeting, the 15 or so teachers in attendance voiced their concerns regarding the project.

To summarize, their concerns primarily hinged around the notion that they felt we were overstepping boundaries. They were initially under the impression that we were doing research that teachers should be doing themselves, and that it would ultimately result in us advising departments on how they should conduct their business. Furthermore, they questioned whether the project was implying that departments need to change and that ergo they are not doing a sufficient job. We addressed their concerns by assuring them that our aim was not to alter departments, but rather to research how current resources and conditions in departments could better accommodate the high numbers of new teachers entering Vanier College. We also clarified the fact that the departments were willing participants in the project and that the participation of individual teachers was voluntary, anonymous and could be discontinued at any time.

At the end of the meeting it was resolved that the VCTA would approve the project. Therefore, the meeting did not have long-term consequences on the project. It did, however, create a short-term set-back. The meeting resulted in an approximate two – three week delay in the commencement of the needs assessment.

9.1.2 Participants

Our difficulties with acquiring participants began with the needs assessment. When few teachers in departments A and B[40] came forward to participate, we immediately acknowledged that, in order to meet our targets, we would have to actively recruit participants, all-the-while ensuring that teachers partook of their own choice. Thus, active recruitment took the form of presenting the invitation and all accompanying, relevant information to as many eligible people as possible. First, two emails (an initial invitation, followed by a friendly reminder) were sent to new teachers in both departments. Secondly, we asked the departments' facilitators to approach new teachers and encourage them to participate; the facilitators also made announcements at departmental meetings. Finally, we asked those who did volunteer to spread the word to their colleagues in hopes of increasing our numbers. Although it required considerable effort and time, the employment of these tactics allowed us to meet our targets.

Unfortunately, when we entered the action phase of the project, members of departments A, B and C did not become as involved as we had anticipated. For

[40] Department C's needs assessment took place one semester later.

two main reasons, we had expected activities to be well-attended. First, the type of information and/or support the activities sought to offer were specifically expressed by needs assessment participants as being in demand. Related to this is the fact that, during the process of finding out what new teachers were in need of, we had already reached out to and connected with new teachers in the three departments. Thus, we assumed that they would be willing to partake in activities based on their expressed needs. Secondly, the facilitators selected the topics[41] and designed the activities. Therefore, since the facilitators were immersed in and in tune with their respective departments' cultures, the activities were tailored specifically to suit the prospective attendees. With both of these points combined, we felt participation would be stronger.

There are a multitude of possible reasons why we had difficulty attracting significant numbers of participants. For the most part, it can be assumed that time constraints were primarily responsible for preventing teachers from participating in the activities offered by the facilitators. It was well demonstrated by the needs assessment that new teachers are often overwhelmed with course preparations and marking. Furthermore, new teachers in Continuing Education who teach in the evenings may have other commitments during the day, thereby preventing them from attending these activities, all of which were scheduled either in the morning or afternoon.

[41] From the list of needs that emerged from the needs assessment.

Another possibility is that attendance was affected by a lack of continuity in many new teachers' schedules from semester to semester. It often happens that new teachers will be hired to teach in the summer or fall semesters and then are laid off in the winter because there are fewer course sections offered. Therefore, many of the new teachers who participated in the needs assessment (as well as those who did not) were not at Vanier to partake in the activities offered during the winter semesters. Indeed, the sense of detachment caused by this temporary break from the department was mentioned by some of our interviewees. Thus, as much as possible, we attempted to contact and invite the teachers who were on hiatus during the winter semester. This often proved to be futile as most had found work elsewhere during this period and were not available to attend. Nonetheless, we do feel it was important to keep them informed and that this was a positive gesture helping new teachers feel that, despite the physical separation, they were still very much part of the department.

Finally, other factors to consider pertain to the idea that some department members may have deliberately elected not to attend activities and events. Some might simply have not been interested in the subject matter being dealt with, possibly regarding it as irrelevant to their particular situation. Similarly, others may not have felt like new teachers anymore, and so might not have felt that they could benefit much from something geared to this demographic.

As soon as it became clear that participation in the activities would actually be more difficult to secure than for the needs assessment, we took action. Although many of the above-listed factors were beyond our control, we nevertheless brainstormed ways to increase attendance at the project's events. We opened the activities to all department members, new and experienced. This yielded positive results as seasoned teachers made up approximately a third of the participants at most events. The facilitators from departments B and C both noted in their logbooks that they were pleased to see tenured teachers attend such workshops as the one on classroom management, primarily because this showed new teachers that professional development is a career-long endeavour. Other initiatives entailed ensuring that events were well-publicized and that all department members were well-aware of the project's action phase offerings. This included announcements at departmental meetings, as well as emails and phone calls to individual members. Similarly, we made sure that Continuing Education teachers working in the evening, who had made claims of isolation in the interviews, were kept routinely informed of the workshops and documents the facilitators were presenting. Finally, at the suggestion of department A's facilitator, we decided to offer food as an additional incentive at some of the events as this tends to attract people. These efforts did seem to help increase attendance somewhat, though in general, problems associated with participation persisted and turnout rates were not commensurate with the interest expressed by survey respondents and interviewees.

9.1.3 Qualitative research

A final limitation to consider pertains to the main disadvantage of qualitative research. That is, our research can only account for the experiences of those who partook in the needs assessment and subsequent action. Therefore, a possible drawback is that our data failed to represent department members who did not fill out an online survey or who were not interviewed. Due to the overlap among responses from the needs assessment participants, however, we strongly feel that it is safe to assume that others had similar experiences. Nonetheless, we have to consider the likelihood that participation in the action phase might have been affected by a selection of activities that did not appeal to teachers who had not contributed to the needs assessment.

Taking into consideration the manner in which the project unfolded, in retrospect we can observe how the project, post needs assessment, contained elements that were beyond our immediate control. There were significant variables influencing the project's outcome that were inevitable. Such variables included the extent to which department members would involve themselves in the action phase; how greatly the action stemming from the needs assessment would reflect a global portrait of department members' needs and experiences as new teachers; and how much the facilitators' release time would allow them to do in the span of two semesters.

9.2 Benefits of the challenges

Essentially, these limitations did not negatively impact the project; instead, they informed the situation we were working within. As we were not aiming to change departments' cultures, we had to work around what we had initially perceived as set-backs. These so-called limitations had more to do with our pre-conceived notions of how the project would unfold. Departments, however, do not exist in vacuums and certainly cannot be treated as part of a control group study. In this respect, action research and grounded theory were key to allowing flexibility and helping us work around difficulties. Thus, the project's "limitations" did not prevent us from obtaining our objectives, but rather helped us view our objectives in a more realistic light.

CHAPTER 10
Conclusions and Recommendations

Now that *Factors Promoting the Effective Integration and Professional Development of New Teachers by Academic Departments* has come to an end, we can undertake a different type of reflection. Throughout the project, we practiced "reflection in action" (Schön, 1983) which allowed us to contemplate the situation as we were immersed in it. Thus, we employed reflection as a means of assessing project components, seeing how they fit with preceding elements and verifying that we were adhering to our objectives. At this point, however, we have the big picture and are no longer approaching the project on a components basis; we can now step outside of the project and reflect on the whole.

Approaching the project from this privileged omniscient position, this final chapter will survey the project's trajectory. We will present an overview of the five steps that guide action research and end with suggestions for further research on this subject.

10.1 Reviewing the 5 steps of action research

10.1.1 Step 1: Clarification of the situation

This step served as the foundation of our project insofar as it eventually indicated the path we needed to follow. The main focus of step one was the needs

assessment, consisting of the online questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. The purpose of using these data-gathering tools was to gain insight into and thus develop a portrait of the situation new teachers are faced with. Prior to the launch of the needs assessment, we sought and received approval from the Vanier College Ethics Committee to conduct research with human subjects. This entailed presenting the committee with the questions we were going to use in the needs assessment, as well as a copy of the consent form for participants.

We developed two sets of questions for the online survey: one for experienced teachers, the other for new teachers. The questions in both sets were primarily aimed at soliciting information regarding departmental activities and services in place for new teachers and how department members felt about these. Although questions were created for the semi-structured interviews, they served more as guides to prevent us from veering off-topic. Being "semi-structured," the interviews allowed participants much leeway to explore different aspects of their integration; as such, it was also crucial that the questions did not lead interviewees and/or suggest pre-determined responses.

Once the data-gathering tools had been created, they needed to be pilot tested before being used on departments A, B and C. The needs assessment was pilot tested on department D, which was otherwise not associated with the project. Members of this department were asked to fill out the online survey and provide feedback regarding whether the questions were clear and whether other

questions on the subject should be asked. Six experienced and nine new teachers[42] responded to the questionnaire. In addition, we conducted interviews with three new teachers from department D. The pilot testing led to minor changes, particularly in the phrasing of questions and also allowed us to hone our interview skills. No major adjustments were necessary.

Following the success of the pilot test, we conducted the needs assessment with departments A, B and C. Despite encountering initial difficulties garnering participation, as discussed in the previous chapter, we were able to meet our target number of interviews (five – ten) for all departments: six interviews each with new teachers from departments A and B, and ten interviews from department C. The surveys also yielded sufficient numbers of respondents. In terms of experienced teachers, there were six from department A, seven from department B and eight from department C who filled it out. The new teachers who responded to the questionnaire amounted to four, seven and twelve from departments A, B and C, respectively.

10.1.2 Step 2: Planning of the action

With the data accumulated in step one, we were able to proceed to the analysis that would direct the project's action. Guided by grounded theory, we carefully read, coded and analyzed the interviews; along the way, we compared our notes to verify similarities and differences. From this rigorous process our categories and themes emerged. Categories fell into one of three pre-established rubrics:

[42] "New" defined as 0 – 5 years of experience.

pedagogical, administrative and social. These rubrics preceded the needs assessment on the basis that all elements of a teacher's career are contained within these three areas.

To review, the categories that fell under each rubric were:

Pedagogical:

1. Course preparation
2. Pedagogical resources
3. Personal time management
4. Level of students
5. Student motivation
6. Classroom management
7. Evaluation and grading

Administrative:

1. On-campus resources and services
2. Acquiring accurate, timely information
3. Bookstore
4. Differing procedures and policies in place between daytime teaching and Continuing Education teaching
5. Human Resources
6. Computer systems
7. Logistics

Social:

1. Isolation
2. Perceived lack of collegiality
3. Lack of time to socialize

In order to offer action that would be beneficial to new teachers, it was logical to focus predominantly on areas that new teachers identified as challenging. Clearly, there was no need for facilitators to get involved where matters were unproblematic and functioning smoothly. With this in mind, we compiled our analyses for the facilitators.

Meeting individually with each facilitator, we went over department-specific data and the process by which we had arrived at categories and themes. We invited them to study the data in the event that they could further code the information. During this meeting, we also explained the purpose of the logbook and the type of documentation and reflection they were expected to use it for.

Following this meeting, each facilitator produced a list of possible activities and materials for new teachers in their respective departments. Together with the facilitators, we selected from the lists the items which appeared to be the most in need and the most feasible given the resources and time frame.

10.1.3 Step 3: Implementation of action

At this point in the project, the facilitators knew the direction the research was going in and it was time to put ideas into action. The manner in which action was implemented differed depending on whether action took the form of an activity or a document.

For activities, which primarily consisted of workshops, the first step was to organize logistics: when, where and how. As soon as the date, time and location had been arranged, facilitators were able to undertake the second component, which consisted of the all-important task of inviting department members. Once the invitations were underway, they still had to address the "how" of the activity. Publicity for the event and the planning of event specifics took place simultaneously. In short, specifics encompassed the components of the activity, how it would all unfold, the materials needed to actualize it and the selection of an animator. On the day of the activity, focus was on ensuring that everything ran smoothly.

The process was somewhat less complex for the production of materials as this did not require a web of logistics and time-consuming publicity. Facilitators gathered information and, depending on the type of document,[43] asked departmental colleagues for contributions. Following this research period, facilitators wrote drafts and asked us (the researchers) for feedback. Upon

[43] Such as a bank of sample course outlines.

completion of the final draft, the document was ready for dissemination to new and incoming members of the department it was created for.

10.1.4 Step 4: Observation during action

The task of observing was done by the facilitators. Observation was active in the sense that it was ongoing and sought to pick up on nuances that might not be readily apparent. Also, observing was accompanied by detailed note-taking. The focus of observation, and consequently of note-taking, hinged on two main factors. First, the facilitators noted how participants responded to an activity and whether it was useful to them. Second, they scrutinized the organization of the event, paying attention to whether elements could be improved upon for subsequent activities. Overall, this step was a key factor to rendering the fifth step successful.

10.1.5 Step 5: Reflection and evaluation

Reflection is a fundamental aspect of action research. Though listed as an individual step, reflection was present throughout and took many forms. Facilitators reflected both in their logbooks and with us at regularly scheduled meetings; the research team also met frequently to reflect on the status of the project, whether adjustments were necessary and if so, what they should consist of. Reflection allowed us to see beyond the surface of the needs assessment and therefore permitted categories to materialize from the 22 interviews we conducted. Once we reached the action phase of the project, reflection and

evaluation were primarily focused on how to reach out to and engage the maximum number of participants for activities. In addition to using facilitators' observations as a means of evaluating an event, we also used evaluation forms in cases where participants had been asked to complete one.

The need to reflect on the project's progress (as well as why it was developing as it was) also helped us become aware of the challenges we faced. Using a method that called for regular evaluation necessitated a degree of flexibility, which in turn facilitated troubleshooting when challenges arose. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, reflection was a valuable tool in terms of ensuring that the project remained focused on its goal and objectives.

10.2 How the research addressed the project's goal and objectives

As discussed in chapter one, the project's general goal was to analyze and determine the conditions under which academic departments can most effectively integrate new teachers and contribute to their professional development. This first consisted of finding out the needs of new teachers and the types of activities and materials that respond to those needs and assist with integration. Secondly, we sought to explore how departments could provide the desired activities and materials within their capacity and resources.

The research successfully addressed the first component of the goal via the needs assessment. In particular, the semi-structured interviews were a very rich resource and offered a wealth of information. The data gathered from them offered great insight into new teachers' experiences, the challenges they often face and the areas in which they could benefit from additional support. From this, the facilitators were able to develop activities and materials geared at the specific needs of the new teachers in their respective departments.

Fulfilling the second component of the goal, facilitators worked within the means of their departments to produce pertinent documents and offer informative workshops. This undertaking was successful in terms of addressing relevant issues; also, because they were implemented from within the department, it is feasible to assume that departments have the capacity and resources to respond to these needs. As discussed in chapter nine, however, ensuring strong attendance rates was a challenge. Often feeling overwhelmed and still adjusting to their new work environment, many new teachers have difficulty finding time to devote to integration and professional development activities. Thus, while we feel the project accomplished its main goal, there were complications in terms of the number of participants that materials and workshops were able to reach.

In addition to the above-mentioned goal, the research sought to fulfill four objectives. Table 10.1 below demonstrates the project results with regards to these objectives.

Objective	Result
To review the extent to which departments are meeting the needs of their new faculty in terms of integration and professional development	This was addressed in the needs assessment. Although we focused on areas in need of improvement, it needs to be noted that departments A, B and C were all shown to be deeply committed to new teacher integration and professional development.
To identify and describe the critical factors that will promote or prevent the necessary developments within departments to assume a more proactive role with new teachers	The research revealed that the main hindrance departments face is time constraints; people and resources are stretched to maximum use. Otherwise, the will and desire are in place to support new teachers.
To determine what actions and materials are necessary for departments to sustain and support new teachers	Via the needs assessment, we were able to identify categories and themes that affect new teachers. From there, we were able to determine what needed to be put in place in order to accommodate new teachers' needs that were not being addressed.
To make recommendations for the successful integration and professional development of new teachers by their departments, to be disseminated throughout the cegep network	Throughout chapters 5, 6 and 7, we have aimed to transmit the results of our research in the hopes that they are transferable to other departments and colleges. In particular, section 8.3 of chapter 8 delineates key findings and recommendations for how to minimize the negative impact they could have on new teachers.

Table 10.1: Objectives and results

10.3 Suggestions for further research

Research of this nature can be taken to many different levels. What follows are suggestions for possible ways to expand on the work we have done.

10.3.1 Incorporate quantitative research

Qualitative research served us well throughout this project. Nonetheless, there existed an uncertainty, however minimal, regarding the extent to which the results produced were reflective of the larger population of new teachers, and not only our collective group of participants. Therefore, a more extensive study might benefit from incorporating quantitative research. This would include acquiring a larger group of participants with whom results from action research and grounded theory could be verified.

10.3.2 Broaden the scope

In addition to integrating other means of research, the scope of the project could be broadened by conducting research on a wider scale than three departments. Countless combinations of departments are possible, as is a college-wide endeavour. Of course, the wider the scale, the greater the need for time and resources (human, financial and spatial). Including an extensive range of departments offers a more detailed assortment of perspectives and possibilities for action. A more inclusive group of participants would also allow for a more decisively global portrait of the situation facing new teachers.

10.3.3 Narrow the focus

On a different level, research of this nature can be done on a smaller, more focused scale and still yield valuable results. For example, a single department could undertake research on the effectiveness of new teacher integration and

professional development by, for and within itself. In this instance, everything within the project would be custom tailored to suit the needs and culture of that department. Such research would be very useful to the department in question; however, the results might not be easily transferable to other departments and/or colleges.

10.3.4 Research team members

As discussed in the previous chapter, we faced a certain level of reservation from the VCTA due to the fact that we were non-teachers conducting research on and for teachers. To minimize or prevent this from happening, we recommend to professionals involved in projects concerning teachers that they present the project proposal to their school's teachers' association for approval prior to submitting it and/or they include teachers on their research team. While it was clearly not our intention to deliberately exclude teachers (indeed, the facilitators were teachers), the project might have unfolded differently, and/or received stronger support, had teachers been implicated beyond the facilitator and participant roles.

10.3.5 Working with Facilitators

When a researcher or research team works in conjunction with others to carry out research, it is imperative that strong lines of communication are established and maintained throughout. Instituting a set of guiding principles at the onset of

the project could be fundamental to its success. Such guidelines should include the following points:

- In order to have an effective working relationship between researchers and facilitators, all parties must share a clearly established, common goal and work toward the same objectives.
- When difficulties arise, they should be addressed immediately, rather than allow them to become intertwined in the fabric of the project.
- When including additional groups in the research process, such as facilitators, their participation ought to be fuelled by genuine interest in the research topic.

10.4 Final conclusions

This project found that a balance must be carried out between new teachers not receiving enough information, or not receiving it in a timely manner, and new teachers being bombarded with too much information at once. While one needs a certain amount of information to begin teaching, it can be overwhelming to receive more information than one can process at a time. Lifelong learning happens gradually and people ease into the profession of teaching. One does not immediately start out an expert teacher; there are procedures to be learned, methods to be established and skills to be developed.

Using action research and grounded theory allowed us to distinguish between information that could be acquired gradually and information that new teachers should have as soon as possible. Being able to identify more “urgent” factors meant that we could prioritize action and offer pertinent information to teachers who entered departments A, B and C while the project was already underway.

The integration and professional development of new teachers in the cegep network is a lengthy process. A great deal of information must be absorbed and expertise acquired. Upon entering a career as cegep teacher, one is both teacher and student; the new teacher educates his students all-the-while being a student himself, a student of his profession. Overall, the key element to emerge from this project is that, above all information and knowledge, a supportive, nurturing and dependable department is the most crucial factor to new teacher integration. In all three of the departments we worked with, we found that they took great pride in providing new teachers with a positive working environment and making them feel integral to the department, and this was one of the qualities new teachers most preferred. When a teacher enters an accommodating environment, all the information he needs to feel secure in his career is just a phone call, email or knock on the door away.

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APPENDIX 1: Online questionnaire for new and experienced teachers

Integration & Professional Development of New Teachers by Academic Departments

Welcome to the online questionnaire for the project, *Factors Promoting the Effective Integration and Professional Development of New Teachers by Academic Departments.*

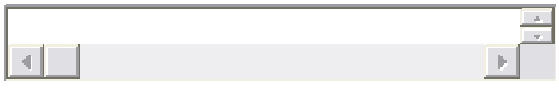
Please remember that your responses on this questionnaire will remain confidential, and will not be identified with you personally. If any information identifies you with anyone outside of our research group, it will not be shared. Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty should you choose not to participate.

By completing this questionnaire, you are consenting to the collection of the information you give.

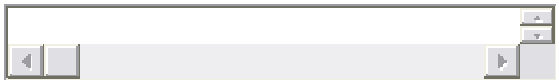
1. How many years have you been teaching at Vanier? (Full or part time)
(Please note that based on your response, you will be directed to either question #2 or #7 of the questionnaire.)

- ☐ 1 - 5 years
- ☐ 6 - 10 years
- ☐ 11 - 20 years
- ☐ 21+ years

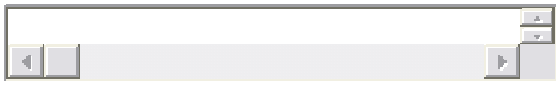
2. What activities does your department have in place for new teachers that you are aware of?
After each response you give, please indicate how helpful you feel these activities are using a scale of 1 - 5. (1=least useful, 5 = most useful)



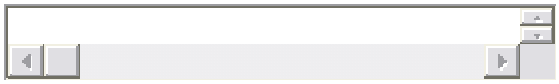
3. Would you like your department to offer additional activities to integrate and provide professional development to new teachers?
If yes, what other activities, or kinds of activities, would you like to see in place?



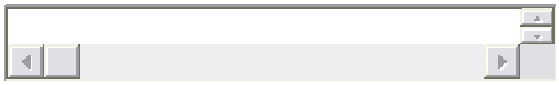
4. What would be the greatest challenges to your department in trying to offer additional services?



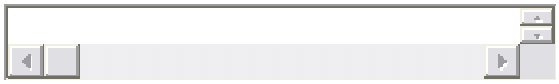
5. Would you as an individual be willing to participate in activities that would offer support and advice to new teachers? If so, what kind of activities would you be willing to participate in?
(Please note that this is a hypothetical question, and answering "yes" will not result in an obligation to participate).



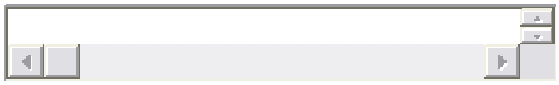
6. In the past, have you participated in teacher integration activities? If so, which ones?



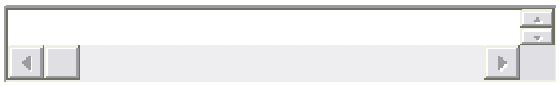
7. Have you had any teacher training? If so, please specify.



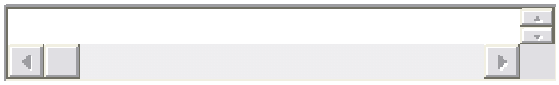
8. How many semesters have you been teaching at Vanier?



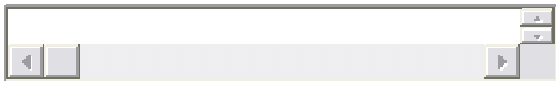
9. Did you start by teaching in Continuing Education? If so, for how long?



10. What has your department done to help with your integration into the department and into teaching?
After each response you give, please indicate how useful these activities have been for you, using a scale of 1 - 5. (1=least useful, 5 = most useful)



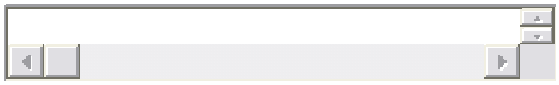
11. Are there other services/activities that you feel could be of assistance to you that are currently not available?
After each response you give, please indicate how needed these activities/services have been for you, using a scale of 1 - 5. (1=not needed, 5 = really needed)



12. To what extent have the challenges you have faced as a new teacher been:

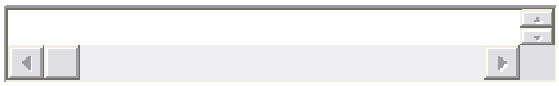
	A great deal	Very much	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all
Pedagogical	A great deal	Very much	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all
Administrative	A great deal	Very much	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all
Social	A great deal	Very much	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all

13. Would you like your department to offer additional activities to integrate and provide professional development to new teachers? Please explain.



14. Is there anything else you would like to add that wasn't already addressed in the questionnaire?

We welcome and appreciate all additional comments.



Thank you for your time in responding to this questionnaire.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Marilyn Caplan at caplanm@vaniercollege.qc.ca

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APPENDIX 2: Consent form for semi-structured interviews

Consent Form

Factors Promoting the Effective Integration and Professional Development of New Teachers by Academic Departments

A team from The Learning Centre at Vanier is researching how academic departments can offer new teachers additional support regarding integration into the collegial work environment and professional development. In order for this project to move forward, the research team requires the participation of new teachers (0 – 5 years of teaching experience at Vanier), experienced teachers (6+ years) and departmental coordinators.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and your decision to assist in this effort will in no way influence your status within your department or your job security. In no way can the data collected in this study be used in the teacher evaluation process. All data from this study will be kept strictly confidential. We thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you are interested in more information, or the results of this research, please contact the project coordinator, Marilyn Caplan, by telephone at 744-7500 ext. 7071, or by email at: caplanm@vaniercollege.qc.ca.

I, the undersigned, consent to participate with the assurance that the data will be kept confidential and that it in no way affects my job seniority or security, nor can it be used for teacher evaluation. I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate at any time, and that such refusal also in no way affects my status within the College. Further, I understand that should I decide to participate at this time, I can subsequently change my mind at any time by sending an e-email to the project coordinator, at caplanm@vaniercollege.qc.ca, informing her of my decision. In such circumstance, all data that I have contributed will be withdrawn and my decision will also in no way affect my status within the College.

DATE: _____

PRINT NAME: _____
(GIVEN NAME, FAMILY NAME)

DEPARTMENT: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

APPENDIX 3: Questions for semi-structured interviews with new teachers

1. How many years have you been teaching at Vanier?

2. Have you had any teacher training? Please specify.

3. If yes, has your teacher training been useful to you? In what way?

4. Please think back your first couple of semesters teaching at Vanier, particularly the first. Describe your experience.

5. As a new teacher, what have been your challenges to date in teaching at Vanier?

6. Have these challenges differed from year one to year two and so on? If so, please explain. (If the interviewee is unsure, ask for specific social, pedagogical and administrative challenges.)

7. What would have helped you overcome these challenges, or what do you think could help in-coming teachers facing similar challenges? How would you rate these challenges? Please comment.

8. What has your department done to help with your integration into the College?

9. Which services/activities were most useful for you?

10. Are there other services/activities that could be of assistance to you that haven't already been discussed?

11. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss? Anything you feel we forgot?

APPENDIX 4: Questions for semi-structured interviews with departmental coordinators

1. What do you see as your role and/or responsibility regarding the integration and professional development of new teachers?

2. What activities or services do you as coordinator and your department now have in place for new teachers? What activities are the most important? What role(s) do department members play in the implementation and maintenance of these activities/services?

3. To what extent would you describe these activities as consistently and systemically offered?

4. In your opinion, are these activities/services sufficient? If not, what prevents you from offering more?

5. If you could offer more, what in your opinion would be the most important activities you could offer?

6. What would encourage your department members to partake in (more) activities? What would prevent department members from partaking in activities?

APPENDIX 5: Consent/confidentiality form for focus groups

Consent Form

Factors Promoting the Effective Integration and Professional Development of New Teachers by Academic Departments

A team from The Learning Centre at Vanier is researching how academic departments can offer new teachers additional support regarding integration into the collegial work environment and professional development. In order for this project to move forward, the research team requires the participation of new teachers (0 – 5 years of teaching experience at Vanier), experienced teachers (6+ years) and departmental coordinators.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and your decision to assist in this effort will in no way influence your status within your department or your job security. In no way can the data collected in this study be used in the teacher evaluation process. All data from this study will be kept strictly confidential. We thank you for your collaboration.

I, the undersigned, consent to participate with the assurance that the data will be kept confidential and that it in no way affects my job seniority or security, nor can be used for teacher evaluation. I will not repeat any dialogue exchanged within the focus group. I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate at any time, and that such refusal also in no way affects my status within the College. Further, I understand that should I decide to participate at this time, I can subsequently change my mind at any time by sending an e-email to the project coordinator, at caplanm@vaniercollege.qc.ca, informing her of my decision. In such circumstance, all data that I have contributed will be withdrawn and my decision will also in no way affect my status within the College.

DATE: _____

PRINT NAME: _____
(GIVEN NAME, FAMILY NAME)

DEPARTMENT: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

APPENDIX 6: Questions for the focus groups

Focus Group Questions

1. What activities/services has your department put in place for new teachers over the past year/semester?

2. Which services/activities were most useful for you?

3. As a new teacher, what have been your challenges to date in teaching at Vanier?

4. How would you rate these challenges? Please comment

5. Have the services/activities offered by your department helped alleviate these challenges?

6. If not, what would have helped you overcome these challenges, or what do you think could help in-coming teachers facing similar challenges?

7. Are there other services/activities that could be of assistance to you that haven't already been mentioned?

8. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss? Anything you feel we forgot?