GETTING READY FOR A MAJOR INFLUX OF NEW PROFESSORS

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The educational network is currently experiencing an important renewal of its teaching manpower. This influx of new professors, in virtually all educational institutions, places this significant event once again in the forefront of our preoccupations.

The statistics speak volumes: Many new professors will not stay. They will migrate towards other institutions that offer more interesting conditions or they will simply not persevere in teaching–a profession that is not quite as easy in practice as it may seem.

Driven by a willingness to accommodate these new professors by supporting their integration, offering them interesting prospects for vocational development and encouraging the transfer of expertise from seasoned to novice professors, numerous institutions are updating their approach to receiving and integrating new teachers and even initiating succession plans for the next generation.

▶ JULIEN, LAURA, MARIE-ÈVE AND OTHERS

We all agree that when a professor arrives in an educational institution, he does not come empty-handed. At the very least, he is knowledgeable about his discipline–this is why he was hired. Of course, life experiences, skills, attitudes, ways of thinking and work ethics are also part of the package–a whole set of personal qualities.

Expertise in the discipline and personal qualities can be considered as the main elements making up our basic profile. However, is this enough to ensure that a person will be able to teach with ease and effectiveness?

Are new arrivals whohave the basic profile and professional work experience in the discipline one step ahead of the others? Are those who have greater knowledge in pedagogy further ahead? In terms of entry profiles, the real winners could well be those who also possess teaching experience. To shed light on the various profiles associated with new arrivals, let us connect some of these profiles to candidates in actual job interviews:

Julien enthusiastically discusses his two years of experience teaching geography at another college; he speaks of the richness and usefulness of the studies in education he has completed and, naturally, he talks about his solid knowledge of the discipline, the result of his studies in the field. Teaching is his first real professional job. All the marks of a winner, wouldn't you agree?

Laura has no teaching experience to speak of, but is very eloquent about her undeniable expertise in the discipline, given that she already works in the field. She has been a nurse her entire professional life, a total of twenty years, and she believes she has the right qualities to share the practical expertise she has acquired in the discipline. However, she may not mention the fact that she has no teacher training nor any teaching experience. Here again, she has everything she needs to succeed, her extensive experience in the field coupled with professional maturity. Does this guarantee she will be an effective teacher?

Among the other potential profiles, there is also **Marie-Ève** who is in her early twenties, with no professional experience in the discipline or in teaching and without any teacher training. This is her first professional job. However she is fresh out of university and can speak at length on new advances in the discipline. She can also relate to generation Y students given she is practically their age… She mentions that she has a global perspective of college life given that it was not that long ago she herself graduated from college. Is she also off to a winning start?

In your opinion, who has the best chance of successfully integrating the profession? Julien, Laura or Marie-Ève? What are some of the other possible entry profiles? The following table provides an overview.

It is tempting to ask whether there is a Leon or a Josée in the network, someone with a "complete profile". This person would have training in the discipline that is updated through regular professional development activities, some work experience in the field, some training in pedagogy, teaching experience at college level ideally, and a knowledge of the institution because they have worked there, either in teaching or another capacity.

A variety of entry profiles with one similar goal: To feel at ease, effective and experience a sense of well-being in the exercise of one's professional practice.

Table 1: A variety of entry profiles						
	Discipline		Teaching		Institution	
	Training Has training in the discipline	**Experience** Has work experience in the field/discipline	**Training** Has teacher training	**Experience** Has work experience as a professor	**Knowledge** Has knowledge of the institution's characteristics and culture	**Experience** Has worked at the institution
JULIEN	Recent training	No experience	Recent but partial training	2 years of experience	No knowledge	No experience
LAURA	Training but not recent	20 years of experience	No training	No experience	No knowledge	No experience
MARIE-ÈVE	Very recent training	No experience	No training	No experience	Some knowledge as she was a CEGEP student	No experience
LÉON OU JOSÉE	Training in the discipline and updated through professional development	Work experience in the discipline	Teacher training	Experience as a professor	Knowledge of the institution	Has worked at the institution

▶ PRACTICING THE PROFESSION

Three concepts contribute to a better understanding of what is at stake when we speak of occupational integration for new professors. These concepts create an interesting theoretical basis for reflection when making decisions on developing a series of effective ways to integrate new professors.

We refer to the concepts of vocational development, occupational integration and professional identity.

VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For several researchers[1], *vocational development* can be seen from two different perspectives (Uwamariya and Mukamurera, 2005): a developmental point of view and one that is centered on professionalization.

From a *developmental point of view,* vocational development is made up of several stages. Although there are minor differences among researchers, they generally agree on 1) the survival stage, 2) the consolidation stage, 3) the diversification or renewal stage, 4) the maturity stage, also called professional influence stage, and finally 5) the disengagement stage, i.e. retirement. Each stage can be linked to specific attitudes and competencies.

The *approach focusing on professionalization* takes the position that vocational development is not only the result of years of accumulated teaching experience. Rather, it is the result of a dynamic learning process by which a professor makes a commitment, alone or with colleagues, to acquire a new level of mastery and understanding. Therefore, vocational development necessarily involves the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, but it may also consist of reflecting on one's own practice, a point of view in keeping with the well-known work by Schön (1994) on the practice of reflection.

Reflecting on one's practice can be done individually; but a growing number of teachers also believe in collective exchanges with colleagues on the subject of professional practice. Openness to other points of view allows the professor to broaden his horizons and eventually, improve his practice. These exchanges break down the isolation of professors, in a framework of mutual vocational development. The following definition of vocational development summarizes the approach based on professionalization: Vocational development is a "process of individual and collective transformation of competencies and identity components that are mobilized or likely to be mobilized in professional situations" (Barbier and Demailly, 1994, p. 65).

[1] This presentation of concepts is taken from Nault's analysis in an article that appeared in *Pédagogie collégiale*, vol. 20, n° 2, 2006.

OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION

Occupational integration can be defined in several ways depending on one's point of view and also based on the context in which it occurs. It varies according to the course planned by each professor. It ends when the professor has adapted to his environment and the daily tasks he must carry out; can function fully and effectively within the school system; has reached a certain level of confidence and competency; and is mainly concerned with improving his practice and increasing his repertory of teaching strategies (Gohier, Anadon, Bouchard, Charbonneau and Chevrier, 2001). In other words, "occupational integration is a process of construction of knowledge and competencies and, at the same time, a process of socialization in the workplace and identity transformation" (Vallerand, Martineau and Bergevin, 2006). It is a period of trial and error during which the new professor develops his "professional persona" (Nault, 1999) and integrates into an educatinal work environment and its organizational culture.

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

During the occupational integration stage, the new professor undergoes an *identity* transformation and becomes a teaching professional. This is when he makes the transition between identifying as a specialist in a discipline and identifying as a teacher or trainer. To illustrate this phenomenon, consider the fact that professional identity is linked to the social and professional role of an individual, i.e. the way in which he presents himself in society. For example, going from the initial introduction "I am a nurse", to presenting oneself as "a professor of nursing" (Baillauquès, 1990).

It seems clear that a smooth occupational integration provides a solid foundation for developing a strong professional identity and for fostering a commitment to vocational development.

▶ INSTITUTIONS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPORT VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Based on the professional development stages we mentioned earlier, i.e., survival, consolidation, diversification and renewal, maturity and professional influence, and disengagement, we can establish key periods for institutional support of vocational development in employees (as presented in the table 2). These include: recruitment, selection and hiring periods, the period during entry into the institution, integration, investment and development periods as well as reinvestment and influence periods, and retirement.

During these key periods when support is offered to new employees, institutions could also include programs geared towards managing human resources. There could be a *Recruitment program* linked to key periods in recruitment, selection and hiring; a *Program for reception and occupational integration* linked to entry and integration periods; a *Program for vocational development and professional recognition* relating to investment and development periods, reinvestment and influence and lastly, a *Program for retirement*.

Given that these programs can be applied to all types of personnel, including teachers, professionals, all support staff and management, each one warrants further attention and development. In this article, we briefly present the "spirit" of each, relative to their support objectives (Table 3). We then examine more explicitly what a *Program for reception and occupational integration* means for teaching staff, what it contains and its goal. The following tables present the result of work carried out by a task force for the *Commission des études* du Collège François-Xavier-Garneau, based on reflections provided by the team of educational advisors.

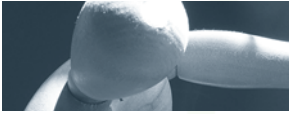| Table 2: Help on the path to vocational development		
Professional development stages	**Key periods for institutions to provide support for vocational developmet**	**Programs**
	Recruitment Selection Hiring	**Recruitment program**
Survival	Entry	**Program for reception and occupational integration**
Consolidation	Insertion	
Diversification and renewal	Investment and development	**Program for vocational development and professional recognition**
Maturity or professional influence	Reinvestment and influence	
Disengagement	Retirement	

Table 3: Support programs and their goals		
PROGRAMS	**KEY SUPPORT PERIODS**	**TARGETED SUPPORT** **This would enable a teacher to:**
Recruitment program	Recruitment Selection Hiring	a) Become aware of the type of candidate required. b) Submit to a rigorous selection process that is non-discriminating and equitable. c) Be advised of the institution's expectations and requirements towards the teaching staff hired and the opportunities for support and development offered by the institution.
Program for reception and occupational integration **This enables the teacher to:** 1. Receive a personalized welcome. 2. Use the necessary resources to be functional immediately upon arrival. 3. Be coached in his professional path. 4. Meet other professors and professionals and initiate a network of contacts. 5. Position himself in the organizational culture of the department, the program and the institution and develop a sense of belonging. 6. Position himself in relation to his own professional identity and the teaching profession. 7. Develop skills in reflective thinking. 8. Get personal and professional satisfaction from his activities within the institution.	Entry	a) Be functional from the outset. b) Receive a warm reception. c) Begin to develop a sense of belonging within the institution, the department, the program and the teaching profession. d) Be aware of most essential rights, obligations, policies, rules, procedures, departments, etc. e) Know the resources proper to the discipline, the department, the program, educational services, human resources and other services.
	Integration	a) Create bonds within the department and outside the department with other professors or staff representatives; build a network of contacts. b) Know the policies, rules, procedures, services, resources, etc., and make use of them. c) Adopt the college's educational orientation, its values and the organizational culture of the establishment, the college network and the profession. d) Identify one's needs and carry out activities to upgrade and update skills while developing pedagogical, disciplinary and other skills. e) Build an identity as a professor "Think and act like a professor"; develop skills in reflective thinking, etc. f) Assume one's role: Active and constructive visibility within the department and program, assume responsibilities based on one's abilities and interests.
Program for vocational development and professional recognition	Investment and development	a) Adopt the college's educational orientation, its values and the organizational culture of the establishment, the college network and the profession. b) Consolidate one's identity as a professor. c) Pursue development activities. d) Involve oneself in professional activities: taking part in activities, committees, task forces, the achievement of projects, experiments, innovation, carrying out research, etc.
	Reinvestment and influence	a) Share and disseminate one's knowledge and expertise or that of one's department, program or institution within one's institution itself as well as within the college network or elsewhere, notably through lectures or conferences at symposiums, by writing articles, etc. b) Train and support one's peers or other persons.
	Retirement	a) Be invited to transfer expertise through collaboration in activities. b) Receive recognition for one's involvement in the institution.

GOALS OF A PROGRAM FOR RECEPTION AND OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION

Even though the *Reception* and *Integration* sections have much in common, it can be useful to distinguish between them even if only to better identify their respective goals and the type of means to be implemented for each one.

RECEPTION COMPONENT

The *Reception* section actually corresponds to the moment newcomers arrive at the institution and, for many, their first steps in this new profession. More specifically, the *Reception* section targets access to information and resources that allow the new arrival to be functional immediately, feel welcomed into the institution and into his new group.

Table 4 introduces the support objectives for the *Reception* section along with a set of general means designed to achieve these goals.

Table 4: Reaching the objectives of the RECEPTION section						
GENERAL MEANS	**CATEGORIES OF MEANS**	**TARGETED SUPPORT** This would enable a teacher to:				
The professor:	Information Individual follow-up Networking Training Recognition	a) Be functional from the outset. . b) Feel welcomed as a human being c) Begin developing a sense of belonging within the institution, the department and program as well as the teaching profession. d) Know of the existence of the most essential rights, obligations, policies, rules, procedures, services, etc. e) Know the resources specific to the discipline, the department, the program, teaching services, human resources and other services.				
		a	**b**	**c**	**d**	**e**
Receives all the necessary information and tools to begin working immediately: schedule, office, keys, photocopy, email, voicemail, employee, number, user account, etc.	Information Individual follow-up	Be functional	Feel welcomed	A sense of belonging		Be aware of resources
Receives all necessary information to become familiar with existing rules, procedures, the institution's policies as well as its culture and available resources[2].	Information	Be functional			Be aware of	Be aware of resources
Is twinned with other professors from the department so as to offer front-line support.	Individual follow-up	Be functional	Feel welcomed		Be aware of	Be aware of resources
Feels welcome[3].	Recognition Networking		Feel welcomed	A sense of belonging		
Gets a sense of belonging vis-à-vis the institution (small pin, bag, portfolio, etc.).	Recognition		Feel welcomed	A sense of belonging		
Gets a guided tour of the college.	Individual follow-up	Be functional			Be aware of	Be aware of resources
Receives all necessary information on one's department and its program[4].	Information			A sense of belonging	Be aware of	
Is invited to meet management and professionals from various departments and services at the time of reception and information activities.	Information Recognition		Feel welcomed	A sense of belonging	Be aware of	Be aware of resources
Is aware that educational advisors are available for individual meetings to provide answers to questions and support if need be.	Individual follow-up					Be aware of resources

[2] See the "College" section in the *New teacher's kit*. This kit is introduced later on.

[3] More specifically, through meetings with human resources, the department coordinator, the person in charge of the program, at presentations within the department, the Program Committee, in the institution's journal/newspaper, with organizations from the institution, etc.

[4] See the "Department" section and the "Program" section in the *New teacher's kit*.

The *Occupational integration* section targets consolidation and support for new professors in the acquisition of tools, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which enable them to gradually become more effective, in greater control of their teaching and able to take part in and make their own contribution within the team, whether this means their department or program of study.

Table 5 outlines the support objectives of the *Occupational integration* section as well as the general means designed to achieve them.

Table 5: Reaching the objectives of the OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION section								
GENERAL MEANS	**CATÉGORIES DE MOYENS**	**CIBLES DE SOUTIEN** This would enable a teacher to:						
The professor:	Information Individual follow-up Networking Training Recognition	a) Create bonds within the department and outside with other professors or staff representatives; build a network of contacts b) Know the politics, rules, procedures, services, resources, etc., and make use of them. c) Adopt the college's educational orientation, its values and the organizational culture of the establishment, the college network and the profession. d) Identify one's needs and carry out activities to upgrade and update skills and develop educational, disciplinary and other skills e) Build an identity as a professor "Think and act like a professor"; develop skills in reflective thinking, etc. f) Assume one's role: Active and constructive visibility within the department and program, assume responsibilities based on one's abilities and interests						
		a	**b**	**c**	**d**	**e**	**f**
Is invited to continue the pairing begun during the reception section	Networking Individual follow-up	Create bonds	Be aware of the bonds and make use of them	Adopt the culture		Build one's identity as a teacher	
Is guided in identifying his contribution to the department and the program based on his own abilities and interests	Individual follow-up Recognition			Adopt the culture			Assume one's role
Receives any other useful information on his department, program and the institution as well as pedagogical information and information on the teaching profession itself[5].	Information		Be aware of the bonds and make use of them	Adopt the culture			
Is informed that educational advisors are available for individual meetings to provide support and answers to his questions, if required.	Individual follow-up			Adopt the culture		Build one's dentity as a teacher	
Is invited to meet professionals in education/ pedagogy during an information and training activity on the main components of the institution's educational culture.	Informaiton Training	Create bonds	Be aware of the bonds and make use of them	Adopt the culture	Improve oneself	Build one's identity as a teacher	
Is invited to take part in pedagogical activities with professors from varied sources to discuss educational situations and to develop his ability to reflect.	Networking Training	Create bonds		Adopt the culture	Improve oneself	Build one's identity as a teacher	
Is invited to carry out developmental activities (teaching, disciplinary, ICT, others), credited or not.	Networking Training	Create bonds			Improve oneself	Build one's identity as a teacher	
Is invited to draft a plan for vocational development and is offered support to do so.	Individual follow-up Recognition				Improve oneself	Build one's identity as a teacher	Assume one's role

5 See the "Profession" section in the *New teacher's kit*.

▶ PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

It goes without saying that the general means shown in tables 4 and 5 are to be specified and contextualized by the different institutions when developing a local program. They are the ones who select and implement the tools, training to be offered, meetings, etc.

It is the institution's responsibility to specify, based on its values and priorities, which of the suggested activities should be mandatory and which ones should be considered "invitational[6]".

Becoming functional from the outset

It is of primary importance to have support measures that give the new professor access to all the material, tools and information needed so he can start work with ease. It is easy to imagine the negative impact that not having quick access to a telephone, email addresses, office keys, etc. could have on a new profession. Ensuring the smooth flow and effectiveness of measures intended to equip the newcomer with the appropriate tools does not happen on its own. It implies close cooperation with the institution's various departments and services as well as the development of effective procedures for all parties.

> *The essential goal in the integration process is to break down the isolation.*

Information

Several of the methods mentioned refer to a tool called *New Teacher's Kit*, a handy how-to-manual for new teachers. It includes useful information for teachers and is divided into 4 sections: College, Department, Program and Profession.

The information can be provided in a paper format, for documents that are not bulky and have a more stable content, or in virtual format for others. Part of the information (the most useful in each section) can be provided at the time of hiring so the professor can be functional from the outset. Thereafter, additional information can be transmitted to new teachers at appropriate times.

The "College" section contains information that allows new professors to act right away, especially relative to useful resources. It also includes general information on the institution itself, its educational orientation, its policies, rules, etc. The "Department" section can include a list of professors in the department and their coordinates, departmental rules on the evaluation of learning, departmental projects, procedures for reviewing grades, etc. The "Program" section offers information on operating rules, course grids, a program summary, etc. The "Profession" section provides information on the programs, the institution's rules or policies on teaching as well as basic documentation relating to education and the teaching profession.

Individual Support

It is important to anticipate individual support measures to meet the specific needs of people with different entry profiles, ex,: pairing with another professor in the department for front-line support, an offer of a teaching consultation, support to identify one's contribution within the department and program based on one's skills and interests as well as support to work out a plan for vocational development.

Training offered

Almost all programs offered in educational institutions include training activities. However, the scope of training available varies considerably. It can vary from several hours for a non credited course to a complete credited training program[7]. The institutions decide if training is mandatory or not. It is important to note that a reception and integration program can include training in the educational field as well as other training, for example, specific software, communication skills, discipline, etc.

Networking

The essential goal of an integration process is to break down the isolation. Thus, it is important to plan for activities that allow new arrivals to create bonds with professors in their department and other departments, and also with people who belong to other categories of personnel, especially educational advisors.

Recognition

Feeling welcome and well received as a person can make all the difference between having the impression of being just "another employee" and getting the feeling your arrival is important and that your involvement and development are encouraged, supported and valued.

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6 This is expression we used for the general means described in tables 4 and 5: "Is invited to…"
7 PERFORMA has developed a specific training program geared especially to new professors.

As outlined in this article the general means used to reach the objectives of a *Program for the reception and integration* of teaching staff, constitute what could be called "a basic set" of means to be implemented. Obviously, these means can be adapted and enriched depending on the priorities and resources of each individual institution. At the very least, it is possible to affirm that they constitute a promising base shared by all institutions, according to documentation we received from many of the colleges consulted while drafting this article. ◗

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