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THE EFFECTS OF JOB INSECURITY ON BEGINNING SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

by

Sarah L. Patten

A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

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Thesis Abstract

THE EFFECTS OF JOB INSECURITY ON BEGINNING SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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The purpose of this study is to consider the effects that job insecurity is having upon beginning teachers. It is focused on teachers with less than four years of teaching experience and employed, under contract, in the secondary panel of public schools. This study looks at both professional and personal effects of insecurity.

The teachers who are involved in teaching while facing insecurity are the primary source of qualitative data, through interviews. These interviews will provide details about what they perceive as the effects of job insecurity. The stories and experiences of the teachers will be analyzed to identify recurring themes or ideas that the participants discuss.

This research will help administrators and colleagues to understand and support beginning teachers through uncertain times.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results: Background Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results: Interview Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Up Interview Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter of Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter of consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Up Interview Notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rationale

Educational administrators are fundamentally concerned with the performance of the teachers that work with them. A large area of research, done for the benefit of administrators, has been concerned with the challenges associated with pre-service and beginning teachers. However, in recent years the nature of teachers' work has changed rapidly. Our society is in a postmodern age which is “fast, compressed, complex and uncertain” (Hargreaves, 1994). The educational arena that new teachers are entering now is vastly different from a decade ago. In the current climate of fiscal restraint, it is usually the newest employees that feel the brunt of cut backs. Beginning teachers experience job insecurity in the form of termination and layoffs. Furthermore, they are subject to job loss through the bumping process of seniority. Beginning teachers are often transferred between schools and may change departments, subjects and levels taught each semester. These are all additional elements of instability.

The purpose of this study is to consider the effects that job insecurity is having upon beginning teachers. The research is specifically focused on those who have less than four years of teaching experience, who are employed, under contract, in the secondary panel of public schools and who have taught at two different school sites. A focus is placed on the “in-school” part of their lives. How do they perform in the classroom? What is their opinion of themselves as a teacher? Will new teachers remain in the profession? This study will also
encompass the effects on teachers lives outside of the school building, that are identified by the participants.

The important emphasis for administrators, is how new teachers perform their job when being faced with instability, such as termination, transfer or change in job responsibilities. By researching this area, an understanding will form that can assist administrators in helping beginning teachers through uncertain times.

The principal question is: **What are the effects of job insecurity on beginning secondary school teachers?**

**Context**

Gurskey and Huberman (1995) describe the process of career entry and socialization as a sequence from an initial phase of "exploration" that then moves to "stabilization". It is teachers in the first phase of "survival and discovery" that are the focus of the study. Stabilization does not occur until "there is the juncture of a personal commitment (the decision to make a career of teaching) and an administrative act (the granting of tenure)" (Gurskey and Huberman, 1995, 196). However, this stability is occurring later for teachers just entering the profession. Education in Ontario has been going through complex changes for several years. As this study is conducted school boards have been amalgamated and the far
ranging effects of Bill 160 loom on the horizon. Recent studies from the United States indicate that “many teachers leave the profession within the first five years, and that often the most highly qualified and skilled teachers are the most likely to leave” (Fennick, 1992, 1). It is possible that Ontario is headed for the same fate.

For the purpose of this study, job insecurity is defined as any major change to a teacher’s employment, which includes termination, the threat of termination or being laid off. As well, a required transfer to a different work location is a form of job insecurity. A change to teaching responsibilities, such as moving from the English to the math department, is also a form of insecurity. This definition arises from the particular context for this study, in a large public school board in Central Ontario. In recent years the board has had to deal with changes to finances and the social contract, both of which required reduced spending. When required to cut its budget, over the last four year, the board has decided to lay off the lowest seniority teachers by declaring them “surplus to region”. This study focuses on those teachers who are new to the board and who have been affected by job insecurity, in any of its forms.

According to the board policy and the collective bargaining agreement, the teachers with the lowest seniority can be easily terminated. As soon as beginning teachers receive notice that they are surplus to region, they can not apply to any available positions. These teachers must wait to be recalled by the board. If a position is not available before August 31, in the year of the lay off, the teacher’s contract is terminated. For a period of 14 months, any teachers who have not
been recalled are kept on a list, waiting for job openings. Their new position is determined by seniority and qualifications. If, for example, a job teaching English is available, the teacher with the highest seniority on the recall list, and the qualification to teach English is offered the position. However, under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, if a surplus teacher is offered a contract position and refuses, they are not contacted again and are terminated from their employment. Recalled teachers can only accept the job responsibilities and location offered to them. Their only other choice is to leave the board.

The board has undergone several years of budget cuts that have affected beginning teachers. At the end of the 1994-1995 school year, 25 teachers were declared surplus to the region. The following year (1995-1996) the board faced fiscal constraints imposed by the Ontario government and declared 140 teachers surplus to region. However, the board is quick to point out that all 140 teachers were recalled by October of 1996. However, because of the recall process, very few of them returned to the same school or kept the same teaching responsibilities. The 1996 - 1997 school year was relatively stable because there were not any lay-offs. However, approximately forty teachers were declared excess to their schools and had to change locations. In March of 1998 the Ontario government unveiled a new funding formula for all schools in Ontario. After the announcement by the government, the board sent out 299 surplus to region notices, which affected 13% of the secondary panel teaching staff. There were also approximately sixty teachers declared excess to their school who were
required to move locations. This research was being conducted during the time of
the 1998 lay-offs, which were different from the previous years. According to
representatives of the school board, there was little hope of any of the teachers
being recalled\(^1\). An important point to mention is the fact that during the four
years, very little hiring had occurred. The result was that any teachers who had
been cut in 1995, were also affected in 1996 and 1998. The beginning teachers
who participated in this study, and the researcher herself, have experienced the
insecurity of termination, transfer and change. Can this constant feeling of
insecurity and continual changes to tasks and responsibilities be conducive to the
development of beginning teachers? This research will clarify some of the major
effects of insecurity on some of the teachers in this board and will suggest ways
that these challenges can be addressed.

\(^1\) The representative was quoted in a newspaper article that is not cited in order to maintain the
confidentiality of the participants of this study.
Established Approaches:

The conventional approach when discussing beginning teachers, is to look at career entry and socialization. The process of starting a new career is described in terms of cycles or phases that are a progression towards a mastery of professional skills. In the literature review for their research, Gurskey and Huberman (1995) describe several different approaches for illustrating new teachers’ experiences, including thematic, sociological, psychoanalytic and ‘classic’. Each different proposal describes the stages that beginning teachers go through until they reach stabilization in their career. However, Gurskey and Huberman (1995) point out a problem:

Most of these studies have conceptualized the passages of teachers in terms of a progression through a ‘career’...[however] some school personnel may not have a staged, continuous sequence of life experiences and we are talking about a process filled with plateaus, discontinuities, regressions, spurts and dead ends (196).

Within many of the empirical studies cited, the period from three to five years is suggested as the time needed for full development (Gurskey and Huberman, 1995). Another study by Smaby et al. (1994) also identifies a three year period as the minimum needed for a cycle of career development. In their developmentally based theory, an individual needs to successfully complete and resolve one stage before moving on to another. However, they also acknowledge that:

If an experienced teacher who has successfully achieved these tasks changes grade level, subject, building, or experiences some other major change in their professional career, they usually face these same concerns and need to successfully resolve them again (85).
This research study follows the ideas proposed by Smaby et al. A central assumption of this research is that a teaching career can no longer be described in terms of sequential development that eventually leads to mastery. If careers are no longer stable in the first few years, then new teachers may be unable to develop when they are constantly moving between schools and changing their teaching responsibilities.

Pre-service and First Year Teachers:

An overall view begins with individuals before they become teachers. Although, pre-service teachers are not part of this study, research into their beliefs and perceptions is relevant to how they will feel and understand once they are employed. A study conducted by Kathy Carter (1994) uses an interview process where novice’s interpretation of events are recorded. This strategy provides “rich information about pre-service teachers’ conceptions and interpretations of teaching” (251). This study raises similar concerns to those cited above, about the validity of general developmental models of teacher learning. The alternative view presented is that there are “powerful effects of pre-service teachers' preconceptions”(250) that ultimately create “solid differences between successful and unsuccessful experienced classroom managers”(250). Ruth Fennick (1992) expresses this idea more directly by describing how pre-service and beginning teachers have idealized aspirations for their teaching. However, she goes on to chronicle the many forces at secondary schools that all contribute to weakening even the most heartfelt efforts of new teachers, such as low morale and the potential for burnout. Fennick (1992) blames these destructive forces with the loss
of many qualified and skilled teachers during their first five years. Thomas and Kiley (1994) cite the statistic that “one out of seven (15 percent) of new teachers leave teaching after their first year” (1). Their research identifies many problems for first year teachers: too much time spent in preparation, classroom management, dealing with individual student needs and physical and emotional stress. Niebrand et al. (1992) document the fear and apprehension experienced by first year teachers. They chronicle concerns and problems with classroom management, assessment, problems with individual students and developing a teaching style. However, they state that one of the largest problems is “the fear of being evaluated and found to be a failure [which] leaves the unspoken question: ‘Will I receive a contract next year?’” (86). Many beginning teachers “feel they must appear to be as skilled as the master teachers...in order to ensure another year of employment” (84). When they cannot meet this goal they become discouraged, stressed and often choose to leave teaching. This self imposed insecurity about continuing in teaching adds to the many other problems experienced in the first year.

Teacher Retention and Turnover:

Research has explored the many reasons why, after the first few years, new teachers may leave teaching. Thomas and Kiley (1994) state that “more than 50 percent [of teachers] have left within six years” (1). They maintain that “the greater the number of problems new teachers encountered, the more likely they were to leave the profession” (2). Hart and Murphy (1990) conducted a study that explored ways to reduce teacher turnover in an attempt to improve schools overall.
Recruitment and retention of the best teachers was seen as a necessary reform in many American schools. Their interview analysis looked for “references congruent with specific structures of the job and changes in authority and power that affect job satisfaction and, ultimately, intent to leave” (227). Their findings led them to assert that with young workers, those that have experienced success see more career options for themselves and remain within the profession. However, when there is a lack of career-choice stability, these same young people are not afraid to abandon teaching as a career and seek permanent employment elsewhere. A link between job stability, satisfaction and remaining in teaching may exist for Ontario teachers. The interview protocol for this study is based upon the questions asked by Hart and Murphy (1990). It asks respondents to chronicle their experiences and career goals. However, for the purpose of this study, additional questions that dealt specifically with job insecurity were added.

Teacher Stress:

An additional challenge for all teachers is stress. It has been reported that:

in increasing numbers, teachers are experiencing such stress-produced problems as high blood pressure, peptic ulcers, sleep disturbances, family crises, eating disturbances and displacement phobias” (Halpin et al., 1985, 136).

Studies in the 1980’s also focused on the idea that stress was increased if an event or change was perceived to be external, or under the control of ‘powerful others’ (Halpin et al., 1985). The situation had not changed much in a study done across Canada during the early 1990’s. Teachers face “increasing demands on their time outside of class, and expectations for role expansion to include
caretaking and social work responsibilities” (Thiessen and Cole, 1993, 207), that have been imposed by the government. The same 1992 survey reports that “ten percent [of teachers] disillusioned by the realities of the job, expect to leave within the first three years” (207). Hall et al. (1988) assert that early experiences may be the most crucial in a teachers’ career because the induction period is when “the beginning teacher faces often overwhelming stress” and they believe that “the seeds of burnout” are planted during this time (14). Several studies explore the myriad of forces that affect beginning teachers, identifying anywhere from eight to thirty-six separate factors, including extreme workloads, student misbehaviour, lack of support and isolation. Each of these quantitative studies cite various stress factors that influenced burnout and the decision to leave teaching [Hewitt (1993), Leithwood et al. (1995), McCormick (1997), and Thomas and Kiley (1994)].

The nature of a teaching job is shown to be complex and difficult. However, the context for teaching in Ontario is changing, as outlined below. None of these studies mention the specific problem of job insecurity, because it was not a factor that affected their samples. Along with all of the other reasons to leave, beginning teachers in Ontario are now subjected to additional job insecurity.

**Context for Teaching in Ontario:**

In December 1996, a report outlining the projected supply and demand for teachers in Ontario was prepared for the Ontario Association of Deans of Education. It described the era of financial cuts facing beginning teachers:

Since 1993, two successive Ontario governments have significantly reduced funding to Ontario’s school boards...this funding restraint resulted in a significant decline in teacher hiring...In 1993 through
1995 there were again new teacher surpluses, with recent graduates failing to obtain full-time teaching positions (McIntyre & Smith, 1996, 3). Since 1991 the pupil-teacher ratio in Ontario secondary schools has increased 6 percent from 15.1 to 16.0 (McIntyre & Smith, 1996). The number of teachers under the age of 30 has decreased from the 1970’s when they were 44 percent of elementary and secondary teachers to only 11 percent in 1990 (Thiessen & Cole, 1993). These statistics describe the climate in Ontario schools, where there are fewer new teaching positions, due in part to fiscal constraints.

It is the time period of cut backs and layoffs, between 1993 and 1998, that this study is focused on. The new teachers who were able to enter the profession during those years, are the subjects of this research, because they have had to deal with job insecurity in their first years of experience. Unfortunately, it is not just the teachers in this study that will be affected. Those who enter the profession between 1998 and the year 2000 will also face difficulties. Although McIntyre and Smith (1997) have calculated an increase in hiring due to widespread retirements, they acknowledge that “competition for teaching positions will be brisk for a couple more years...[and] new grads may have to accept supply teaching jobs, limited contracts and second choice locations”(10).

The context in Ontario continues to change dramatically. The proposed compression of the secondary curriculum to four years could result in the loss of 60,000 secondary students per year and cuts to preparation time could result in a 5 percent increase in the pupil-teacher ratio (McIntyre & Smith, 1996). The branch of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (O.S.S.T.F.) that
represents the teachers in this study, estimated the far reaching impact of Bill 160 for their board in 1998. For that board alone, the projection was a loss of 783 teachers, or an average loss of 29 teachers per secondary school if changes were made to preparation time and support services. While this research was being conducted, the Ontario government announced a new "Fair Funding Formula". The new formula is described by the government as "more responsive to the needs of students throughout the province. Funding will be based on students' needs rather than the local community's wealth" (Ministry of Education and Training, 1998a, 1). The government set out new guidelines to limit class sizes in secondary schools to 22 pupils and promised funding for additional teachers. The Foundation Grant for each secondary school student was set at $3,953 per year. Out of this grant, $2,362 was allocated for the classroom teacher and $458 was allocated for preparation time (Ministry of Education and Training, 1998b, 2). The funding formula has been mandated for the next three school years (from September 1998 to June 2001). The union that represents secondary school teachers in Ontario responded to the government's new formula with "deep concern for the results of the thinly disguised cuts to education funding" (O.S.S.T.F. Media Release, 1998a, 1). The union's analysis determined that "a large number of teachers will be laid off" or that "a large number of teachers may be replaced by less qualified personnel" (O.S.S.T.F. Media Release, 1998a, 1). Because of this change in funding, many school boards determined that secondary teachers would be required to cut preparation time in half. This would

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1 Based upon an O.S.S.T.F. Fact Sheet, distributed to members in October of 1997.
effectively reduce the number of teachers required. For this reason many boards in Ontario laid off their beginning teachers, including the one in this study.

Without additional funding this board stated that many of the 299 teachers on the recall list will not have jobs for September, 1998. As of May 14, 1998, the union stated that the government funding brought “the total number of teacher and educational worker lay-offs to over 5,200 across Ontario” (O.S.S.T.F. Media Release, 1998b, 1). The eventuality of sweeping changes in Ontario could reduce the number of new teachers required and subject those with low seniority to continued job insecurity for many years.

**Support for Beginning Teachers:**

The early 1990’s have seen Ontario schools in a state of flux. Adra Cole and Nancy Watson (1993) undertook a study to examine what type of support is available to beginning teachers, specifically in the form of induction programs. Their findings are that “because of the state of teacher supply and demand, and the financial costs associated with hiring, retention of newly hired teachers is a concern for many school systems”(244). However, induction programs have associated costs and financial constraints limit new initiatives. As they state; “with fewer new teachers, as well as less money, induction programs are more likely to shrink than expand”(252). This results in the inconsistency that even though beginning teachers are very important, school boards often cannot afford to keep them or support them in their work and development. Regrettably, this leads to a greater problem because some new teachers feel that they cannot remain in the profession. In the 1992 Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, cited
by J. Natale (1993), 20 percent of teachers with two years experience said that they would leave the profession within five years and 29 percent of these “cited that recurring complaint: lack of support from administration”(17). A study conducted by Hall et al. (1988) compared beginning teachers across panels and found that “first year high school teachers perceived less administrative support and experienced more job-related stress than first year elementary school teachers”(19). Ultimately their study found that teachers who were contemplating or preparing to leave “perceived less administrative support, felt less satisfied with teaching, experienced more job-related stress, and held more negative attitudes toward students”(16). The same concerns about lack of assistance and its effects can be raised in Ontario. The combination of restricted hiring and removal of support has had an effect on beginning teachers.

**Collective Bargaining Agreements:**

The pervading sense of insecurity is particular to teachers who are just beginning their careers, because lay-off decisions are made based on seniority, as negotiated by unions through collective bargaining. Ontario did not have a law governing agreements between school boards and teachers until 1975. It was the passage of the School Board and Teachers Collective Negotiations Act of 1975 that granted teachers the right to strike and bargain collectively (Grant, 1992). In his description of labor relations in the Canadian education systems, Michael Grant (1992) described Ontario as “the most elaborate system of bargaining in Canada” (36). Up to December of 1997, Ontario had five separate unions, a provincial teachers association and “bargaining in each local authority [which]
occurs separately for teachers at the elementary and secondary levels, meaning over 480 different bargaining units" (36). Although the Ontario government reduced the total number of school boards to 72, as of January 1998, there are still hundreds of separate contracts and negotiations that are dealt with each year.

Susan Moore Johnson (1983) interviewed teachers in six school districts in the United States to determine their concerns about collective bargaining. She found that eleven main concerns were continually brought forward. Those that relate to this study include that:

they sought salaries that would enable them to live comfortably and the job security they believed was due them in exchange for accepting positions of public service...they wanted equitable treatment, resented favoritism, and sought assurances that decisions such as transfers and assignments would be made in orderly, fair ways (323).

However, in a previous article, Johnson (1982) outlined issues surrounding a seniority based lay-off system. One main advantage is that all teachers are treated equitably without the possibility of patronage or the potential for abuse by administrators. A second advantage is that seniority practices can minimize uncertainty. Johnson notes that “seniority reduces uncertainty and competition, largely because each teacher knows where he or she stands and can anticipate the progress of lay-offs” (260). However, Johnson also points out that there are disadvantages to a seniority system because experience is not necessarily a measure of competence. She states that the process of bumping and transfers can disrupt classes, program offering and attempts to achieve racial equity on school staffs, because placements are made by seniority without consideration for
qualifications, ability or suitability. Perhaps the most telling affect for this study is
Johnson's assertion that:

frequent transfers determined by seniority rules rather than by choice
reduce teachers' allegiance to their schools and principals. A teacher's
sense of belonging to a particular faculty and of participating in the
educational mission of that school is essential to the success of the school
(260).

An overview of collective agreements in Ontario came to a similar conclusion.
Davis and Ryan (1980) found that there were problems surrounding the issues of
teacher surplus and redundancy. They described it as "a serious morale problem
among more junior teachers, given the emphasis on seniority in job protection"
(152). At that time the youngest teachers were bumped from school to school, had
to teach a variety of subjects, continually returned to summer school to upgrade
their qualifications and still had no guarantee of security. Davis and Ryan (1980)
found that seniority based lay-offs limited programs and reduced teacher loyalty.
A similar situation is present in the 1990's, but little has changed to deal with the
issue of teacher surplus. Within the contract for the board in this study, decisions
about cuts to staffing are based solely upon seniority. It is the new teachers, with
the lowest seniority who are declared surplus to the region and excess to their
schools.

Job Insecurity:

Studies outside of the educational arena have dealt with the effects of job
insecurity on professionals. Earnshaw, Amundson and Borgen (1990) define
insecurity as "the perceived threat of loss of continuity in a job situation" (2), where
continuity includes both employment and job content, and the threat is perceived
because the person wants to keep their job. In a study concerned with how job insecurity affected families, Wilson, Larson and Stone (1993) described the effect of the economic environment in the 1990’s:

perceived job insecurity affects more workers than does unemployment. As increasing numbers of workers are affected by possible job losses, budget cuts, stagnation or limitations of job opportunities, and forced job relocation, the already large number of families directly affected by job insecurity will increase (74).

This is the situation faced in Ontario where more and more people are under the threat of losing their job. There are many effects cited by both studies as individuals and families deal with insecurity. “A sense of powerlessness, anger, shock, disbelief, sadness, and resignation” (2) is cited by Earnshaw et al. (1990). The participants in their study moved through five transition stages; Enthusiasm, Disillusionment, Remission, Realization and Adaptation, as they had to deal with the transition and discontinuity imposed by job insecurity. Wilson et al. (1993) focused on the stress felt by both the individual and the family. The effect of insecurity was measured in terms of job stress and they found that “increased job stress could lead to increased anxiety, decreased tolerance of co-workers and a decrease in job satisfaction” (78). Their findings assert that “younger employees and their spouses experience higher levels of stress due to perceived job insecurity than do older employees” (78). In both studies, the threat of losing a position had adverse effects on the participants as they dealt with the stress and discontinuity that insecurity brought to their lives. Hundreds of secondary school teachers in Ontario are facing similar conditions of job loss.
Positive Effects of Insecurity:

Although, research has been discussed previously that outlines adverse effects, this is not the only possibility. A research study into issues of educational reform and upheaval was conducted in the North of England in 1986. The primary researchers G. Riseborough and P. Poppleton (1991) interviewed 160 secondary school teachers, with a particular focus on those in the first five years of their careers. They describe the situation as “a time of mass unemployment, graduate unemployment and teacher unemployment. As such, schools were in a ‘buyers’ market’ for new recruits” (319). As well, the time period of 1985 - 1986 in England saw a ‘Teachers’ Action’ by the unions, against the government’s restructuring policies. It was a situation that is eerily reflected in the current climate in Ontario. Riseborough and Poppleton observed that “there was a profound sense of job insecurity” (309), and that promotion and job opportunities were severely limited. Beginning teachers were asked about their perceptions of the climate and the education system. Many new teachers had survived competition to attend university, had come through a selective recruitment for teacher education and were finally just grateful to find any work in a contentious job market (Riseborough and Poppleton, 1991). They “saw themselves as ‘the vital new blood’, ‘the fresh air’, and ‘the new broom’, and felt they were specifically selectively recruited...to facilitate change” (322). They insisted that they did not have any problems as they entered the profession. Once employed, “beginning teachers tended to see the veterans as an impediment to their career aspirations and the implementation of related educational innovations” (325). Indeed, it was the more experienced
teachers who felt insecure in their jobs and were threatened by the energy of new staff. Riseborough and Poppleton (1991) concluded that in this case beginning teachers were “the ‘standard bearers’ on policy-induced ‘bandwagons’” (331) and they could be used as a tool of change for the state. Overall, this study reveals that in a time of crisis, beginning teachers were able to adapt and work within new constraints and that they survived much better than their experienced colleagues.

Another study of an educational system was undertaken in 1994-1995; “a time when significant changes to the nature of public education in New South Wales had been initiated” (McCormick, 1997, 20). John McCormick (1997) looked at occupational stress and whether different groups of teachers attribute stress to different domains. He specifically looked at groups of teachers based on years of experience. In his findings, teachers with less than 11 years of experience, reported the least stress of all respondents. McCormick attributed this to the fact that new teachers benefited from state regulated reforms and training and that they had better chances for promotion and other opportunities. Both of the preceding articles found positive forces at work for beginning teachers, even in climates of change and constraint.

Self Concept:

One effect of insecurity that will be looked at, is in terms of self-concept. Friedman and Farber (1992) define this as “an individual’s overall evaluation of his or her traits and abilities...[and] one’s perception of self (traits, abilities, and aims) in relation to others and the environment” (28). Problems arise when people’s
perception of themselves is incongruent with their perception of how others see them. For example:

a major source of stress for teachers lies in the insensitive and disparaging attitudes expressed toward them by parents, the public, the media, and their own administrators (29).

In looking at the situation in New York state and Michigan, Jo Anna Natale (1993) described a time of recession and cut backs where schools were forced to cut teachers through layoffs. This particular situation had specific effects on beginning teachers:

Because of fiscal arrangements, there are teachers who are sent pink slips every April for the first 10 years of their teaching career...the first year, it’s a shock; the second year, it’s debilitating, but maybe you survive; the third year, you just decide this is not a place you want to be, where good practice doesn’t make a difference (Natale, 1993, 18).

Within teaching there are very few extrinsic rewards such as increased pay, praise or even promotion. Natale (1993) believes that lack of recognition is one of the main reasons that many teachers leave the profession. In Ontario, educators have also observed the destructive effects of job insecurity. Padraic Brake looked at the situation in 1996 following massive cuts by most of the major boards in central Ontario. A beginning teacher observed that “the cutbacks to education make looking for work very depressing, even if you get the job, the cutbacks don’t make it a stable environment to work in” (Brake, 1996, 33). Other teachers register the fact that even if they have survived a round of cuts, an uncertainty exists that makes it difficult to work.
Summary:

This research will proceed from the work cited here to provide a look into the effects of job insecurity on beginning teachers in one board in central Ontario. Two of the studies presented challenge the view that a teaching career can be described as a process of sequential steps leading to mastery. The researchers argue that development can be adversely affected by any interruption in the first few years. Since the beginning teachers in this board do not have stability in their early career, I will look at whether their professional development has been affected by job insecurity.

The research documents that the first years of teaching are very difficult. Beginning teachers face increased stress, the apprehension that they will not be as good as their colleagues, lack of support from administration, lack of recognition and few choices because most decisions are made by others. The research shows that these factors are the reason that many beginning teachers choose to leave the profession. However, there is no literature that deals with the current local context. In addition to the previously documented problems, beginning teachers in Ontario much also face the effects of job insecurity.

When job insecurity is considered, researchers must examine how it affects beginning teachers performance, their development as professionals, their relationships with other staff and ultimately, how it affects whether they will remain in teaching. These areas are relevant for the teachers in this study, because they are all at the beginning of their careers and have to learn to deal with the pressures and challenges of teaching. However, the research presented does not
deal with the new teachers perceptions of job insecurity, the compounding effect of all of the other problems plus job insecurity or situations where teachers have no choice to continue in the profession because they are terminated. With this research, I plan to examine how the particular situation of job insecurity in this board, interacts with the typical problems of beginning teachers, or whether the addition of job insecurity, affects their development, their perceptions and their future in ways that have not been previously considered.
Design and Methodology

General Approach:

The purpose of this study is to identify what beginning teachers perceive as the effects of job insecurity. Also, it is an attempt to understand how teachers interpret and assess the significance of job security in the first few years of their career. As a basis, it will use a phenomenological approach. Bailey (1997) describes this as:

an attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations, trying to gain entry into the conceptual world of (the) subjects in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives (41).

The teachers who were and are involved in teaching while facing insecurity are the primary source of data. The study will be done in one board in central Ontario, that has a considerable population of beginning teachers.

The design and methodology of this study is based on recent work in the use of ‘story’ or ‘narrative’ as a means of research. The primary approach is taken from Kathy Carter’s (1993) description of how stories capture “the richness and indeterminacy of our experiences as teachers and the complexity of our understandings of what teaching is” (5). As teachers experience events, they actively work to make sense of what has happened by building understandings, beliefs and perceptions (Mayer-Smith et al., 1994). Coffey and Atkinson (1996) describe how “teacher’s stories have functions of self and cultural identity, entertainment, moral evaluation and news” (62-63). By asking participants to describe their own perception of events, the researcher gains access to their
individual knowledge. Carter (1993) describes how, through the analysis of stories, central themes and explanations can be found to deal with the problems faced by teachers. There are limits to this form of research, including problems with interpretation and the inherent bias in an individual’s recounting of events. It must be stressed that generalizations are not possible with this type of qualitative research. However, the insight into a few individuals’ thoughts and beliefs can give a pattern for further exploration and a way to make sense of a chaotic situation.

**Procedure:**

Research needs a solid grounding in theory and knowledge. This study began with a literature review. A context was also required. For this part of the study, primary source documents were analyzed. In order to determine how many teachers were affected in the particular school board, an administrator in the personnel department and union representatives were consulted. As well, published reports and newspapers were sources of statistics and information. These sources gave an overview of how widespread the factors associated with insecurity have been in recent years and how they continue to affect new teachers.

Beginning teachers themselves were the primary source of qualitative data through elite interviews. Anderson (1990) describes an elite interview as “one directed at a respondent who has particular experience or knowledge about the subject”(223). These elite interviews presented more details about how beginning teachers framed events. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) describe how telling stories
about their experiences, “is an obvious way for social actors, in talking to strangers (e.g., the researcher) to retell key experiences and events” (56). The questions explored memories, self-image and perceptions of major effects on the individuals.

Subjects:

The research is specifically on those who have less than four years of teaching experience, who are employed, under contract, in the secondary panel of public schools and have taught at two different school sites.

A time period of four years has been designated as it encompasses the probationary contract period, but also acknowledges that a career may not be stable after only two years. In the current climate, a perpetuated job posting is happening later on in a teaching career. For example, in the board studied, teachers with over five years experience and seniority, were notified that they could be terminated from their position. Other teachers with six to ten years of experience were administratively transferred to different schools because of reductions to staff. The requirement of at least two different teaching positions is designated so that respondents will have a context of change to discuss.

There was a restriction to respondents who were actively teaching. Although it would be interesting to interview those who have left the profession, it must be left for the subject of another study. Respondents who are currently teaching were contacted through their schools, for academic research purposes and were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. However, respondents were asked if they knew of anyone who had left teaching and any reasons why.
Overall, a focus of the research is how insecurity affects a person while they are teaching, so this was the main thrust.

The condition of being a contract teacher has been included for several reasons. The first is that the names of contract teachers appear on a seniority list for each board and through this they can be contacted. Substitute teaching is intrinsically understood to be transitory, even though part-time and long term occasional work may be a starting point for many teachers. In order to present a broader context, one of the interviews included was from a teacher who has only worked on Long Term Occasional contracts. However, the main point of this study is to look at the effect of potentially losing a contract position and all of the benefits, salary and seniority that it entails.

**Sources of Data:**

The design of this study is based upon previous work that focused on beginning teachers. In some cases, a questionnaire or survey preceded the contact of subjects, but in all four studies that were reviewed, individual interviews were the main source of qualitative data for the research (Hart & Murphy, 1990, Mayer-Smith et al, 1994, McCormick, 1997, Riseborough & Poppleton, 1991). There were five interviews conducted with employees of one board in Central Ontario. The purpose was to collect demographic data and identify recurring themes or ideas that the participants discussed. Three of the subjects met the criteria of being a beginning teacher, with less than four years of teaching experience, employed under contract, in the secondary panel of public schools, with varied experience. In order to enlarge the scope of the study, two other
perspectives were also included: a first year teacher who had only taught at one site, and a teacher who had only worked on short term contracts, and had never been given a full time contract position by the board.

Participants were selected in a convenience sample. Bailey (1997) describes this as “the case or cases that can be studied most easily” (137). Principals and vice-principals at five secondary schools were contacted. One principal declined participation. The other four administrators recommended from two to five teachers that they knew were in the first four years of their career. This resulted in thirteen names. The suggested names were compared against the regional seniority list and those who did not hold a contract with the board were eliminated. Each of the remaining nine candidates received a letter of introduction (see Appendix B). Five interested teachers contacted the researcher and volunteered to be interviewed. There are limitations to this design. In order to prevent any undue bias, because of a personal relationship with the researcher, I did not interview any teacher with whom I had worked during my own career. All of those interviewed were personally distant from the interviewer. The fact that the participants were volunteers has the disadvantage of being a non-random sample. Ultimately, the responses cannot be generalized to represent a greater population. Nonetheless, there is an advantage to working with participants for whom the experience of job insecurity was extensive and who were not reluctant to discuss their experiences. The value of hearing and recording individual teachers’ experiences is supported by K. Carter (1993) because “these stories capture, more than scores or mathematical formulae ever can, the richness and
indeterminacy of our experiences as teachers" (5). As well, she identifies that “the central themes are often moral and philosophical, having more to do with feelings, purposes, images, aspirations and personal meanings" (7). It is by listening to and recording personal observations of beginning teachers that we can begin to understand individual perceptions of insecurity.

**Instruments:**

Five of the beginning teachers contacted volunteered to be interviewed. The participants were told of the purpose of the study and were sent a copy of the interview questions in advance. Interviews were approximately the same length (35 - 45 minutes). The protocol was the same for each interview. Each participant was asked a series of open ended questions about their background, teaching experience, career goals and the effects of job insecurity on their professional and personal life (see Appendix A). As McCormick (1997) describes it, the format is "semi-structured, in the sense that the interviewer [is] permitted to expand on questions arising to probe answers if it was judged that either were unclear" (21-22). This flexibility allows for the complex nature of some of the questions. Each participant gave written acknowledgment of their agreement to participate (see Letter of Consent, Appendix B). They also gave permission for the interviews to be taped, but notes of answers were taken. All participants were ensured confidentiality and anonymity throughout the interview process. All five were given a copy of their individual transcript to review first. Participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt that participation would have a negative impact on their careers or if they were uncomfortable with the end results.
and conclusions of the study. It was explained to all participants that the results will be available through the central office of the school board in which the study is being conducted. If they felt that they could be identified within the study or were uneasy with the results being available, they could withdraw from the research.

**Analysis:**

Information and statistics from the board were reviewed and condensed. The resulting information about the context has been presented to give a fuller scope of how widespread the effects of job insecurity are within one board. This process also provided background for the stories of the individual teachers.

Carter (1993) describes the knowledge that a researcher can gain through the stories of others, using “the careful framing of patterns with respect to certain themes” (10). The analysis of the qualitative data gathered will be done through a process of coding. The patterns and themes will be taken “out of the data rather than being imposed on them before data collection” (Bailey, 1997, 159).

The analysis began by gathering all of the interview notes and tapes. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) describe coding as “the reading and re-reading of data and making selections from the data” (46). Each tape was reviewed and a partial transcription was typed out. A clean copy of each interview and interview notes were kept in storage. Additional copies of the interview notes were made for the process of coding. Each interview was reviewed several times. In each interview, whenever a specific effect of job insecurity was identified by the subject, a note of it was made, along with an identification of the source of the information. Once each interview was reviewed and recorded in chunks of information, the
statements were placed into category or theme groups. Coffey and Atkinson emphasize the importance of moving from coding to interpretation. They state that one should look for “patterns, themes, and regularities as well as contrasts, paradoxes, and irregularities” (47). By this process of organization, patterns begin to emerge around what teachers identify as the effects of job insecurity. It was possible to report “explanatory propositions with which we can make sense of the dilemmas and problematics of teaching” (Carter, 1993). However, in the analysis a researcher needs to be aware that coding can fragment the data and remove it from a broader context. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest a complementary strategy of narrative analysis and remaining sensitive to the form that the narrative takes. They emphasize the idea that “individual narratives are situated within particular interactions and within specific social, cultural, and institutional discourses” (62). Trends and patterns amongst even a small group of beginning teachers will give insights into how they perceive the effects of job insecurity in their school and their lives.

**Changing Contexts:**

The interviews were conducted in February of 1998. At that time participants were asked about their plans for the future and whether they felt that their current position was secure. At the end of March, 1998, the board gave lay off notices to 299 teachers in response to funding cuts under the government’s new “Fair Funding Formula”. Four of the participants received their notice of termination. The fifth was working under a short term contract and had been notified of her termination earlier in the year. Because of the resulting job
insecurity, the research plan was revised and a follow up interview was conducted with all five participants (See Appendix A and Appendix C). The results of this research study were influenced by the changing context in Ontario. All of the participants have faced prolonged job insecurity and are now looking at the real possibility of being terminated.

As well, this study has a personal meaning for the researcher. As an employee with the same board, I received my own surplus to region letter on the same day. I have been laid off four times by the same board and I have taught in six different schools in a period of four years. I believe that because I shared the same experiences, the participants were able to open up to me in the interviews. The effects of job insecurity are very real for many of Ontario’s teachers. This study hopes to find out how beginning teachers are coping with the changes and stresses of this profession.
Results: Background Information

During the interviews, each of the participants discussed their career history and their perceptions of the effects of job insecurity. Their personal stories are presented here to give the reader an understanding of the experiences of beginning teachers. Summaries of their interview responses are included in Appendix C. The names of all of the participants have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

ANGIE:

Angie began her career with the board in February of 1995, teaching Geography and Math. After three weeks on the job she was informed that she would be surplus to the region at the end of the school year and recalled if needed. She was recalled two weeks before school started. Angie spent six weeks teaching Geography and History at a new school, but was declared excess to that school in October and transferred to a third school to teach Geography, History and Science for the rest of the year. In March of 1996 she was declared surplus to region for the second time. Angie was recalled to teach Geography in September of 1996, but only stayed in that position for six weeks before being transferred to a fifth school for the rest of the year in Science and Geography. In May of 1997 Angie decided to apply to a sixth school for a full time Geography position. She interviewed for the position and was chosen over the other candidates. She spent the 1997 - 1998 school year at that one location, but was declared surplus to region again in March of 1998. At the time of writing, she has
not been assigned a position for September, 1998. Over her seven semesters with the board, Angie has been at six different schools and has taught four different subjects, two of which she is not qualified for. Angie has experienced the insecurity of both externally imposed change and change based upon her own personal choice.

Angie sees herself as a good teacher, although she still feels that there is a lot to be learned. She applied to this board along with two others because of their geographic location and the fact that she was comfortable with the environment in the schools. Her main concerns were with the effect that insecurity had on her abilities as a teacher and how well she could deliver curriculum. One of her “dreams” was to be able to teach a course of study twice so that she could get past the point of learning the material herself and have the time to work on how to deliver it to the students so that they would be excited about the subject. Her observations on the amount of insecurity looked at the long term effects:

I found that every time I was told I had to move, it was actually harder and harder to deal with, which seemed to be opposite to what a lot of people thought. A lot of people seemed to think ‘Oh well, by this time you’re old hat at it, you’re not going to think anything of it and it’s not a big deal to leave’. Whereas, I found that every time I had to leave I was very frustrated because I was always at a school that I felt like I could go somewhere in. I didn’t like that I didn’t have the opportunity to develop how I wanted to develop.

Even with all of the changes over her four years with the board, Angie considers herself to be very fortunate to have a job and be teaching. She could not think of any other career that she would want to move to and hoped to continue teaching even if it meant continued insecurity.
ROBIN:

Robin began her teaching career with the board when she was hired in January, 1995. She was qualified to teach English and Dramatic Arts. After one semester of teaching English she was declared surplus to the region in June, 1995. The recall position was available at a different school filling in for a Long Term Occasional position in English and Art. In November, 1995, of that same semester, Robin was moved to a contract position teaching English, Art and Vocal music at her third school. However, this position ended after one semester and Robin was moved to a fourth school to teach Drama and English as a Second Language from February to June 1996. Once again she was declared surplus to region. By the time Robin’s seniority number was reached on the recall list, for the school year 1996 - 1997, the position available was 0.3 (one teaching class) at a fifth school. The rest of the time that semester was filled with supply teaching. From February to June of 1997 her timetable consisted of one English and one Art combined with a period of coverage for other teachers. She was declared excess to that sixth school in June 1997 and moved locations again. During Robin’s fourth year with the board she taught English full time at one location, for both semesters. She was declared surplus to region for the third time in March of 1998. During the seven semesters that Robin has worked for the board, she has taught five different subjects, three of which she is not qualified for, in seven different secondary schools. At the time of writing, her position for September is uncertain. Of all of the participants in this study, Robin epitomizes the beginning teacher who
has been affected by job insecurity on an ongoing basis.

Robin had chosen to apply to the board specifically because she had been a student in its schools, had completed her practice teaching in its classrooms and had personal contacts with its staff. Overall, she feels that she is a very good teacher and has become very flexible. She describes most of her career as “surviving” but asserts that “Surviving is a huge accomplishment in these circumstances.” Robin is very concerned about the human factor of job insecurity. Although she has always understood why the board has laid people off, she does not feel that the bureaucracy appreciates how devastating insecurity can be:

I think they’re destroying a generation of teachers, by not letting us teach or by giving us such poor teaching situations, that survival is the best we can do. By nature I don’t want to just survive, I want to be a good teacher, I want to be mentored and I want to grow and I want to take risks and you can’t take risks unless you know there’s a ground under your feet. When the ground is moving or mud or quicksand, you can’t take those risks because you don’t feel safe enough to do so.

Robin is afraid that continuous job insecurity has made her cynical, but she still loves to work with students and still loves the idea of being a teacher.

CATHY:

Cathy began her career with the board in September, 1994. For the first three years, she was a supply teacher and filled Long Term Occasional positions in her qualification areas of Physical Education and English, but also in other subjects. Her positions ranged from day to day supply, to month long positions and one full semester, full time position in Physical Education. Over those years she worked constantly as a supply teacher. During her four years with the board, Cathy has taught all grade levels and ability levels including basic, general and
advanced students. However, she has never taught the same course twice. She did teach grade nine gym at two different schools, but the program was not the same. In October of 1997, Cathy interviewed for and was hired for a probationary contract position teaching English half-time. She describes it as a unique teaching situation where she job shares in a non-semester school. Cathy indicates that this position was ideal for her: "I've been waiting, since I started teaching, for a job like this to come up because I have two small kids. So, I'm trying to balance being at home half time and being in school". In March, 1998, Cathy was declared surplus to the region. Because she began her contract with the board in October, 1997, she is in the bottom fifty of the three hundred people who were laid off. She does not have a position for September, 1998, at the time of writing.

Cathy and her husband lived in the region and she specifically applied to the board for work when they advertised any positions. Although she applied to other boards as well, she was called for supply work a great deal more by her home board. Cathy found that there was a shortage of qualified teachers to supply in Physical Education, especially female teachers to supervise female students. Cathy found that the insecurity of teaching in Long Term Occasional positions was very stressful. She built strong relationships in each school and always wanted to remain in the position. "I always felt sad that I couldn't stay where I was because I felt like I was just starting to get somewhere". For this reason she was happy to obtain a contract position. She feels that she is very strong in the classroom and gets a lot of positive feedback from students and
colleagues. For her, the main source of insecurity was the lack of knowledge about what would happen in the next school year. She described this feeling:

I don’t feel insecure in the sense that if there was a spot available, I think that I could get a job. But I feel like there is going to be such a lack of space for us. I’m so new, when I look on the seniority list, I think there are only six people below me.

However, if an opportunity in teaching is available over the next few years, then she would “stick it out” because Cathy loves her job.

STEVE:

Steve entered teaching secondary school as a second career. He taught job search strategies and high school equivalency courses for adults through the board’s community education program for several years. He was employed on three month, six month or one year contracts that regularly came up for renewal. However, because of cuts in government funding, Steve’s position teaching in the community was insecure. He decided to attend a faculty of education in the 1995-1996 school year to earn his teaching degree. He applied to the board during an “open call” for supply teachers in the spring of 1996. However, he did not teach in any supply or Long Term Occasional positions for the first year after graduation. He continued to work part time in community education for that year. In September, 1997, Steve was hired on a probationary contract to teach English. It was for one semester to replace a teacher that had taken a Long Term Disability leave. He described a “high degree of angst” near the end of the semester because he did not know if the individual he was replacing would return to take a place on the school staff. Steve received official documentation that he would be
terminated if the position was not available during the second semester. However, three days before the beginning of the second semester, he was informed that his contract would be extended until the end of the school year because the individual would not be returning. In March, 1998, Steve received notice that he would be declared surplus to region. His seniority number placed him in the bottom fifty of the three hundred that were laid off. At the time of writing Steve does not have a position for September, 1998.

Steve describes his first year of teaching as an enjoyable experience. He has found it a challenge and a great deal of hard work, but feels that he is good at being a teacher. When he graduated from a faculty of education, he applied to ten school boards, all in the south and central regions of Ontario. He applied specifically to this board because of his connections and previous work experience in the community based education programs. He describes a feeling of insecurity based on the unrest and uncertainty surrounding Bill 160 and the governments proposed changes: “As a result of Bill 160, there is a high degree of uncertainty, from my perspective, as to whether or not a position will be available for me in the future”, and specifically for September, 1998. However, Steve had another perspective on the broader issue of insecurity in education:

Conversely, do I feel secure in this profession and believe that I will have a position available to me for the better part of the next five years? Yes, I think so. I think that ultimately I will be remaining in teaching, even though I might experience, or others might experience, short term unemployment or gaps in employment. My feeling is that it is a secure area.

Steve feels that teaching is the job that he is best suited for and plans to continue in the profession and continue to improve himself and his teaching ability.


JENNIFER:

Many beginning teachers start their career in supply or Long Term Occasional teaching. In order to provide a broader context in which to discuss insecurity, Jennifer’s story is included. During the seven years that she was taught, she has only worked on short term contracts. She began her career teaching part time English as a Second Language for a different board for four years. Her contract work was based upon the demand for language classes in the area. She began working for this board in January, 1996, filling the position of a teacher who had taken a Long Term Disability leave. The job teaching Family Studies and working in the library lasted until May, 1996. The following semester Jennifer moved to a different school to teach Family studies. The second semester of that school year was at a third school teaching History. However, the school did not have a position for September, 1997. Following the teacher’s protest in October and November of 1997, Jennifer was hired to cover a parenting leave at a different school. The job, teaching Geography, lasted until January, 1998. A fifth school had a position to cover a leave of absence from February to June of 1998 teaching Family Studies and English. In all, during her three years with this board, Jennifer has taught at five schools, for five subjects, three of which she was deemed qualified for, at all different grade and ability levels. In March, 1998, the board gave surplus to region notices to three hundred secondary teachers. Jennifer already knew that her position was terminated as of June, 1998. However, under the collective bargaining agreement, all teachers on the recall list must be placed before jobs can be offered to anyone else. The effect
that this has on Jennifer is that she has to wait for three hundred people to get a job in the board before she is eligible.

Overall, Jennifer is confident about her performance and asserts that she is the kind of teacher who can teach well regardless of the subject area. She chose this board, because it was where a full time job was offered. She had also worked for the board during her Bachelor of Education year, conducting portfolio research and had previous contacts. Jennifer feels that she has great flexibility and considers it a great accomplishment not to be “totally cynical” after being moved around for so long. However, Jennifer sees a lot of limits and inconsistencies in education:

There’s no such thing as having a choice. I think the only people in this profession who may have a choice, or perceive themselves as having a choice, are teachers who are permanent and have been here for twenty years. But even they now feel insecure about what or how it may be perceived if they decide to move. It think this sense of insecurity affects people at different levels as well as choice.

Even so, Jennifer believes that there is something valuable in being an educator and still believes that she can make a difference in the lives of her students.
Results: Interview Results

During the interviews participants were asked the same series of questions about their professional and personal lives and the effects of job insecurity. The responses of each person were coded and then organized into categories. The recurring points are grouped for comparison.

Professional Development:

The first area dealt with in the interviews concerned the individuals performance as a classroom teacher up until that point. The three, experienced, contract teachers felt that they had taught very well, but were concerned about their professional development. Angie felt that there were skills as a classroom teacher that she still needed to learn and could have developed if she had stayed in one location. She felt that she never had the opportunity to develop these skills because she “had to deal with all the things about being a new teacher, in a new school, over and over again”. Robin shared the belief that she had not had the same level of professional growth as other colleagues, because of the circumstances she had to face teaching in seven different schools. For both of them it was a question of priorities and time was not available for professional development. Robin described her experiences:

When you’re constantly feeling out your environment and constantly trying to figure out the philosophy of the departments, it’s very difficult to respond to all of those needs, as well as your students and your timetable and everything else.
Cathy spent the first years of her career moving between schools and subjects. While she was very confident in the classroom, she felt that she still needed to improve her development in terms of curriculum knowledge and unit planning. She described her biggest challenge as trying to stay ahead of the students in her classes and being able to think in terms of units, instead of just working day to day. All three women saw areas to improve upon, however they also believed that improvements would come if they could stay at one location for more than a year.

The other two participants had slightly different frustrations and challenges in their work. Steve, as a first year teacher experienced the anxieties that have been documented in many research studies. His main concern was whether he would be able to do the job which he had trained for and whether he could be an effective teacher. He described a steep “learning curve” as he tried to learn as much as he could and do the best job that was possible. Jennifer, on the other hand, was already very confident that she could teach any subject in any classroom. Her frustration came with her own and other’s professional development. Moving from contract to contract meant that she was never at one school for very long. Her biggest challenge was “always being an outsider and not having the influence to make changes” in curriculum that she felt needed to be developed. An overriding effect of job insecurity was that none of the participants had the opportunity to develop themselves or their teaching to their full potential.

Adaptability and Learning:

One of the positive aspects of job insecurity is that all five participants
described themselves as flexible and able to learn quickly. Through her experiences at several schools Angie knew that she was good at handling anything that an administrator could throw her way. Robin saw opportunity in taking the best ideas from every department that she had worked for and bringing that knowledge to her new position. Although she found it more difficult to adapt to a new school, than other participants, she was still proud that she could handle new challenges. Cathy and Steve, both in their first year as probationary contract teachers, described the tremendous amount of learning that they had done. They had both learned very quickly how to improve their performance in the classroom and were both confident that they were doing a good job. Jennifer saw her greatest asset in her flexibility. She knew that she could teach anything. Although she is still uncomfortable during the first week of transition into any new position, she feels that her continuing job insecurity has given her the skills to perform well anywhere. Each participant saw a positive effect from how they have learned to handle job insecurity.

**Feeling Secure in Teaching:**

A pair of questions dealing with the participant's feelings about security in general asked them how secure they felt at that moment, what specifically made them feel insecure in their various positions and whether they felt secure in teaching as a career. At the time of the first interview in February 1998, only two participants stated that they felt secure at that moment. Angie had chosen to move to her school and was having a stable year teaching Geography. Her feeling of security stemmed from the fact that she had interviewed for the position
and had been chosen over other candidates. She hoped to remain at the same place for at least another year. Cathy also expressed a feeling of security, but only until the end of the school year. She had competed for the half time English job and felt secure in the fact that she had been chosen. However, she was very uncertain about the future. Both described a feeling of security in the moment, but had trepidation about what would happen next.

When they were asked to think about the future, none of the participants was very optimistic. Angie conceded that “there’s always been a certain amount of insecurity, probably from the very first day I was in”. Angie tried to explain why she could still feel secure in her day to day school life:

You get used to insecurity. You don’t think anything of it anymore... I think with us, we have had to go through this from day one so it almost becomes human nature to have that insecurity. So, you don’t even realize that you’re being insecure, it’s just part of the whole situation.

Robin stated that she had never felt any security in teaching and was not sure that the day would ever come when she did feel secure. Cathy did not feel any security for the future, specifically because she did not know in February, what the government was planning for education. This insecurity did not stem from lack of confidence. Cathy was certain that she could get a job, but only if teaching positions were available. Her feeling was that there would be fewer teachers required and that with her low seniority, the possibilities for her were limited. Steve shared Cathy’s outlook and “high degree of uncertainty” about the impact of Bill 160 and whether there would be a position available in September 1998. Jennifer did not feel secure in any of her positions because none of them was
guaranteed for longer than a semester at a time. In March of 1998, all of the participants found out that they would be terminated by the board. They were all facing another round of insecurity.

In terms of teaching as a stable career, there were varying opinions. Angie felt that she had to deal with what she was given and that insecurity was part of being a teacher. She indicated that if insecurity was affecting someone to the point that it was a serious detriment, then maybe they should do something else for a while. Steve was also of the opinion that he had to deal with the insecurity and move on. He didn’t want to dwell on what the government was going to do, because he had no control over it anyway. Even though his current job was insecure, Steve felt that his future in education was stable. In contrast, Jennifer saw job insecurity as the reality of the future. She has always been a contract worker where there is no job security. She sees a trend in the reorganization of the economic market since the 1980’s. Contract work makes more sense to the board because it is less expensive and Jennifer feels that it will become the way in which more teachers are asked to work. Each of the participants, regardless of experiences has held a job or jobs that were insecure and each of them has felt the effects of this insecurity.

School Performance:

Once it was established that all of the participants had experienced insecurity, other questions explored the specific effects. The first discussion was about the effects on their performance at school. All of the teachers interviewed were emphatic that job insecurity did not compromise their classroom teaching. All
of them were committed to their students and to providing the best possible
program to them. Steve expressed the idea most succinctly:

Every day I recognize that I’m here to do a job. Job insecurity doesn’t affect
the way that I teach in class. I come in and I do my job and I go home. I
think that the anxiety probably has more effect on your personal life, on the
time when you’re not in the school.

The effects of job insecurity were only present in areas of school life outside of the
classroom. Angie was continually moved from school to school and found her
source of frustration was having to learn administrative rules and regulations over
and over again. As well, she regretted that she had not had the opportunity to
teach a course more than once. Angie had always worked with another more
experienced staff member who had helped her through a new course curriculum.
However, what she really wanted was a course that was her own that she had
used her knowledge and creativity to produce. For Robin, Cathy and Jennifer the
effect of job insecurity was the same. In dealing with new schools and new
courses, they had all found that they could not contribute to extra-curricular
activities. Robin also added the fact that, for her, it was too difficult to become
emotionally involved with students through an extra-curricular, then have to leave
them. In contrast to the view of the more experienced teachers, Steve said that
the threat of insecurity had driven him to enhance his performance. “I’m
constantly trying to learn as much as I can and I’m volunteering for a variety of
activities and extra-curricular teams. Job insecurity is a good impetus to get the
learning process going”. However, with all of his activities in the first year, Steve
saw that there could be a real opportunity for burnout if his job insecurity
continued for an extended period of time. He didn't think that he could keep up
the same pace as he did in his first year. Although all of the respondents were
deliberate in making sure that job insecurity did not affect their classroom
teaching, there were some areas of life in the school that they could not protect.

Colleagues:

An additional aspect of school life that was affected by job insecurity was
the relationships between beginning teachers and their more experienced
colleagues. The reactions varied from participant to participant. Angie felt
isolated in all of her schools. She said that she never got a chance to “really fit in”
because of her moves. She was able to make a connection with one staff member
at each school, but never felt that she had any strong friendships. Cathy also
described her relationship with other staff as distant, but explained that this
stemmed from the years when she had worked as a Long Term Occasional
teacher. She found moving schools often was difficult because the majority of the
staff didn’t know who she was, or why she was there, so she wouldn’t make an
effort to get to know them unless she was in a position for a month or more.
However, Cathy was finding that her relationships had started to develop in a
contract position at a school, because she knew that she would be there until the
end of the year. As she put it, “I’m eating my lunch sitting at the lunch table rather
than just working, because I know that I’m going to be part of this staff”. Steve was
positive about his relationships with other staff members. He even saw his job
insecurity in a positive way because his tenuous status kept him from becoming
involved in conflicts:
There are many times when I've chosen to bite my tongue rather than say my piece, because you want to appear as inconspicuous as possible when anything negative is transpiring.

Jennifer found that her job insecurity kept her from forming relationships simply because she was too busy. “Your prep periods are prep periods, your lunch is a prep period, every period is a prep period. So, you don’t have time to sit and socialize.” Overall, she found that most staff members understood how busy she was and did not take her distance as snobbishness. However, Jennifer was very concerned about a growing resentment between older and younger teachers. She identified several problem areas from her perspective. Jennifer sees older, complacent teachers whose main concern is their pension. She believes that their concern should be about what will happen to their colleagues in these uncertain times. She also sees the push for younger teachers to get more teaching credentials as a threat to older teachers, that will cause further resentment between the two groups. Finally, she is frustrated with the way teachers are paid:

    Why does someone with 25 years get paid more than another, who is better educated, with a better sense of what's going on. Pay is based on experience, but all of us are doing the same job.

In the follow up interview, she discussed how the lay offs had accentuated an area of resentment. Many teachers who had put in extra time and felt that they would be recognized for their work, were laid off. However, some teachers who “hadn’t done a thing are safe”. Jennifer feels that this resentment will grow and eventually divide teachers. Perhaps in some cases it already has. Robin has felt a growing resentment and frustration over her years of teaching, that is best expressed in her own words:
What I've found is an increasing resentment towards older staff, that have never had any flux in their career, could take everything for granted, were at the top of the pay grid, hadn't been frozen for 3 years at 33,000 dollars and didn't realize that that meant that you were taking home about 400 dollars a week, had no concept... I did find that I resented some older colleagues and their attitudes and their attitudes to change and their lack of support, because they have just no conception of where we’re coming from. My tolerance for them became basically non-existent.

Each participant experienced very different relationships with other staff members, but all acknowledge the fact that these relationships were affected by job insecurity.

**Personal Life:**

Teachers do not exist solely within the walls of their schools. Questions in the interview also dealt with the effects of job insecurity on the participant's personal life, including their relationships and economics. Angie was the only interviewee who was not married. When she first started working with the board she found that the commute from her home was too long, so she rented space from a teacher who lived closer to her school. However, every time that she was placed at a new job, she had to find a new place to rent. Although she could get her own apartment, "with all the insecurity that's going on and not knowing where you're going to... it makes it really hard to know where you want to live". Angie considers herself lucky because she has the freedom to move without worrying about a family depending on her. She feels that she is quite fortunate that she has had a job for four years and describes the job insecurity as "what I've had to go through for being as lucky as I've been". Steve and Jennifer have found the
effects of insecurity to be mostly financial. Steve continued to teach night school courses for extra money, planning ahead just in case he does not have a job the next school year. He states that:

Major life decisions are made based on employment, from my perspective. I tend to save a lot more money rather than spending my money... My wife and I have discussed and disregarded the possibility of having a family until I’m more secure in my employment.

Jennifer also limits her spending. She says that job insecurity has affected whether she’ll go on vacation. Instead, she used her March Break to set exams and mark student’s work. As well, Jennifer has always had another source of income and tries not to depend solely on teaching for money, because in her experience, teaching is never a steady income. Other participants were affected in different ways. Robin’s husband has been employed throughout her job insecurity, but she always taught summer school for the extra money, just in case. Overall, Robin found that the largest effects on her personal life were emotional rather than financial. When she was laid off for the second time, Robin went to an employee assistance counselor in order to deal with a growing depression. She feels that the continuous insecurity has been very damaging; “You know it’s not personal, yet it’s impossible not to take personally”. For Cathy the threat of job insecurity had a major affect on her life choices. She had her first child while she was still at a Faculty of Education:

The reason that I chose to do that was because, when I was in Teacher’s College, everybody was saying that there weren’t any jobs for us. So, my husband and I looked at our life and what we wanted and we said we do want to have kids. I thought if there aren’t any jobs right now and chances are I’ll be supply teaching, if we have our kids now at the beginning of my career then I can work full time when they go to school and I don’t have to
take maternity leave... Hearing all the time that there weren’t any jobs changed the way we did things.

Cathy believes that her choice has ultimately added to her job insecurity. Her youngest child is two years old and she would like to continue teaching half time in order to be with her children. However, she feels that part time teaching jobs will be very difficult to get and that she is less secure because she can’t take just any position that opens up. Whether financially, emotionally or in making a life decision, each of the participants believes that job insecurity has affected their personal life.

**Self Image:**

Teaching is a very personal job. Each day the teacher is performing for the students, preparing the days lessons and being judged on how well they deliver the curriculum. Being terminated from a teaching position can affect the way a teacher views their own abilities in their job. Each participant had a very personal reaction to job insecurity. Angie’s first feeling, each time she was declared surplus, was that she was being fired because she wasn’t a good teacher. However, the staff and administration at each of her schools made it clear that her termination had nothing to do with her ability. Even so, there was always the doubt about her abilities in the back of her mind. Angie finally found a “huge confidence booster” in the fact that she was selected for a position at her current school. Cathy also found that her confidence and self image were improved when she was selected for a contract position. She had found that during her time as a
supply teacher she didn’t have a lot to feel good about, because she didn’t have a place where she belonged. Both of these teachers felt more confident when they had been specifically selected to fill a position.

Robin and Jennifer present an interesting study in contrasts. Job insecurity had a different effect on each of them. Jennifer had completely disassociated her personal feelings from her job. She stated that her self image had not been affected at all; “Yes, teaching is what I do, but it’s not all of who I am. I knew that going in. This is just one dimension of my life”. She enjoyed teaching, but had always kept other options open and was employed in a different field in case teaching could not provide steady work. Robin, on the other hand, had never considered any career other than teaching. She had begun tutoring at age 14 and described how she had built her whole life around becoming a teacher. Her first year of teaching, the insecurity was expected and accepted. However, as it continued, Robin found it more difficult to deal with:

[Job insecurity] does have an effect on your personal life, because again it comes down to I’ve worked so hard and I tried so hard and there was nothing else that I thought that I could give my career... there was nothing left to give and it still wouldn’t change anything.

Robin expressed frustration because she believes that she did “everything right by societal standards” in going to school, getting an education and working as a teacher, but she was still uncertain about her future. She commented that maybe her belief that if you worked hard, then you were rewarded was just a “bag of goods” that she had been sold. Robin felt that she had started as a positive
person, but that continued job insecurity had damaged her self image and made her cynical.

Initially, Steve did not feel that job insecurity had affected his self image at all. He was confident in his abilities and sure that his extra work had been noticed by his department head and administration. He had found the first year of teaching to be a challenge, but was very proud of how much he had learned and how well he had worked with his classes. In March of 1998, Steve received his notice of termination and had to deal with the very real possibility of losing his job. In a follow-up interview in April, 1998 Steve expressed feelings that were quite different from the initial interview. At first he was shocked and upset because he didn’t really think that anyone would be laid off. He began to feel dejected and even angry. He explained that because of seniority based layoffs it did not matter what kind of teacher you were, it only mattered how long you had taught for the board. Overall, his impression was that being terminated had a significant effect on his outlook. Steve felt bitterness at having worked so hard for the board, only to be cut. He sensed a growing apathy towards “going the extra mile” because what he did no longer seemed to matter. This radical change from confidence and self-satisfaction to bitterness and indifference is an interesting example of the possible effects of job insecurity.

Steps to Reduce Insecurity:

In the initial interview, participants were asked if they had taken any steps to try and reduce insecurity by making themselves more valuable. Robin and Jennifer were both quick to reply that, as Jennifer put it, “You can’t make yourself
indispensable because you're not”. Despite this, all five participants had undertaken some activities in an attempt to improve their job prospects. Angie took additional qualification courses to qualify to teach Geography and earned her Honours Specialist in that subject area. Robin also took additional qualifications courses and had begun work on her Masters in Education. Jennifer was near the end of her Masters program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Steve was taking courses to upgrade his undergraduate degree and improve his teaching skills. Cathy indicated that she wanted to take courses, but so far had found the cost prohibitive. Other, outside of school pursuits, included Robin taking on responsibilities as a union representative. Both Steve and Jennifer taught night school with different boards in order to have a connection, just in case their current board did not have work for them. Within their schools, Angie, Cathy and Steve had sought out extra curricular activities with teams and clubs to improve their chances of staying at the same job. Cathy said that she wanted to be “known as someone who does a little extra”. They all felt that doing something “extra” would set them apart. However, Jennifer saw herself as being on a continuous treadmill. She saw that “having credentials is what it takes”, but since a lot of beginning teachers now have additional credentials, it is an accelerating race to stay ahead. Each of the participants felt that a way to deal with job insecurity was to try their best to upgrade and improve and make themselves attractive to employers.
Leaving the Teaching Profession:

The five participants in this study had chosen to remain in teaching despite one to four years of job insecurity. However, they are a small sample of all the beginning teachers in Ontario. Four of them knew of other teachers who had chosen to leave the profession and they attributed the loss to job insecurity and lack of support for young teachers. Angie had heard of several people who were unhappy with the job situation in Ontario and wanted to keep their option open. She related how some had left to teach overseas instead of remaining. Robin had two colleagues who left teaching. One, frustrated by bureaucracy and the seniority system left to pursue a Doctoral program. Another, who had a background in computers and math, chose to take a higher paying job in the private sector. When the board phoned to recall him to teaching he refused. Cathy knew of two teachers who could not get steady work. One left for a career in kinesiology, the other started his own business. Jennifer’s story told about a colleague who felt undermined by other teachers and had a very negative experience in the first year. She chose to leave teaching to start her own business. Each respondent expressed frustration at the fact that often young teachers did not stay in the profession. Robin blamed the system:

Education gives a lot of lip service that we need these young teachers, we need their vitality, we need their youth, but when push comes to shove, I don’t think they really... they’re not willing to make any concessions to actually make that real.

Not every beginner, who starts in teaching, will remain, but the threat of job insecurity is driving some away, often when they may not want to leave.
Career Plans:

In the initial interview participants were asked what their career plans were in terms of the next year and up to ten years in the future. After they had all received lay off notices, the follow-up interview asked them to restate their plans for the next year. Two of the teachers had planned for a more stable future. In the first interview Angie wanted to stay positive and stay in teaching. She planned to remain in the same school and teach some of the same courses again and continue her extra curricular involvement. Eventually, Angie was considering pursuing a position of responsibility in her department. After the lay off, she was at a loss to state her plans. She hoped to be recalled and continue teaching somewhere in the board, but if she was not called back to teaching she really had no idea of what to do. Angie adopted a “wait and see” attitude until the board made its staffing decisions. Steve had a seven year plan all prepared. He would stay in the same school for two to three years while he learned as much as possible and upgraded his credentials. After three years he planned to select a school closer to his home and develop further with a new staff. He planned to qualify for his Honours Specialist and be promoted to an assistant head position in five to seven years. He did not think that there would be any cuts to staffing. After he had received his notice of termination Steve had to change his immediate plans. However, he planned to continue in teaching. He had already applied to another board and had contacted the community based education program that he had worked for before. Steve believes that there will be teaching opportunities in the future and he plans to be around to take them.
The three other participants always kept the possibility of continued job insecurity in the back of their minds. Robin had considered the possibility of another lay off in the first interview and had thought about her own reaction:

I've always said that if they give me another surplus to region notice, I'm out, I'm leaving. I don't know if I have the guts to do it, because I don't know what else I would do.

Ideally, Robin wanted to stay in the same school, work with the drama department and eventually take a position of responsibility. Her lay off notice came to her while she was on maternity leave. In the follow up interview she stated that she had decided to focus her leave on her child, not on looking for a job. She was very hopeful that she would be recalled before her leave was finished. If not, Robin planned to explore taking her Junior qualifications and become a primary teacher because she saw more stability in elementary schools. Cathy was thinking about other possibilities at the first interview. Although she hoped and believed that there wouldn't be any cuts, she was ready if there were. She stated that if there were teaching opportunities, she would continue, because she loved the job. However, she was resolute that she did not want to supply teach again and would pursue a different career if laid off. Her ideas in February included opening a day care centre in her home or returning to school and seeking out a career in recreation. By the follow up interview in April, Cathy had determined that her chances of employment with the board were remote. Her husband had applied to work in Alberta and she said that they were "aggressively seeking the move". She felt that there were not any ties or loyalty that would keep her in Ontario. Cathy had already inquired about teaching in Alberta and had good
possibilities at a secondary school. She was optimistic about finding a better situation somewhere else. Jennifer had always had an alternative in mind from the first day; "My original plan was that if I didn't work in the first three years, to get a sense of teaching, I was just going to quit". There are positive aspects to teaching that she enjoys and she would stay if offered a full time job. Jennifer had already begun graduate work at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. If teaching jobs were not available she planned to pursue full time studies in education or had an option of attending law school. In the follow up interview she had determined that there would not be a job for her with the board. She was looking at two options for a new career. Either she would go back to school full time, or join her sister in a small business venture. All five of the participants wanted to remain in teaching. Nevertheless, if opportunities were not available, several of them were ready to leave the board behind and pursue other careers. Many young teachers have already been lost because of the job insecurity, and some from this study may be as well.

Facing Insecurity:

On March 27, 1998 the secondary school principals in the board hand delivered 299 notices of termination. The teachers receiving the letters were "indefinitely laid off" as of August 31, 1998. All of the teachers in this study who were on contract received a letter, as did the researcher herself. With this new instance of job insecurity, a follow up interview was conducted. Many of the points made have already been discussed, but there were two issues that were only brought up during the second interview. The first was each individual's reaction to
the news, and the other was their reaction to the board’s handling of the situation. By the time the lay off notices were delivered, rumors had been running through the board for several days. The government’s new funding formula had been leaked to the press on March 23rd. The actual announcement came on March 25th. Both major Toronto newspapers carried stories about the chaos that would follow and how some boards “warned that schools could be closed, teachers laid off and custodial services cut” (The Toronto Star, 1998, A1). Each of the teachers interviewed stated that they expected to receive a lay off notice even before it was given to them on March 27th. In Jennifer’s case, she had already received notice much earlier in the semester. Their emotions ranged from sadness, to anger, frustration, disappointment and a feeling of resignation. They were all faced with job insecurity again.

All five of them explained that they understood why the board had declared some teachers surplus to region. As Jennifer put it, she couldn’t fault the board because the new funding formula put them in the predicament where they did not have the same amount of money. However, each of them had other feelings about the board’s handling of the situation. Angie understood that the notices had to be delivered early in compliance with the Employee Relations Act, but she questioned whether the board could make an accurate assessment in just two days. She reasoned that the board may have laid off too many people and that some of those being put through the negative experience would eventually be told that they did have a job. For Angie, putting people through insecurity that wasn’t necessary, was an unacceptable act. Steve also understood that the board had to do
something. However, like Angie he had questions about the process. Steve had hoped for more explanation and support from the board. Cathy also had difficulty understanding the entire process. She said that she had received some mixed messages. Cathy thought that the board may have know what was coming and prepared the lay off notices ahead of the funding announcement. She was concerned that the board had “jumped the gun” and had cut too many staff in an attempt to cover themselves. Robin also thought that the board had cut too many. She described the lay offs as a “knee jerk” reaction. She understood that they had to make some cuts, but questioned why no other board had cut so fast or so deeply. Robin was suspicious that the cuts were being made on the backs of the young teachers as some kind of political game with the province. She resented the idea of being a pawn. Jennifer also saw political ramifications in the situation that the board faced. She upheld the boards decision to cut 299 people and said that it was not intended to antagonize teachers, it was the only option available. Jennifer placed the blame for the notices with the provincial government. She believed that because her board had shown some sympathy toward the teachers during their Political Action, they were now being punished and hit the hardest in terms of reduced funding. Jennifer believed that the provincial government was trying to send a message that if school boards did not support the Ministry of Education’s plans, then their funding would be affected. All of the participants understood the basic fact that some lay offs had to occur because of reduced funding, none of them accepted the board’s statements at face value. There was
suspicion, lack of communication and confusion about what was going to happen
to these teachers in the future. The actions of the board were seen as contributing
to the increased sense of job insecurity for all of those involved.

Messages to Colleagues:

As the final part of the interview, each person was asked if there was
anything else that they wanted to comment on, or if there was anything that they
wanted their colleagues to know. Angie wanted others to stop assuming that it
was easy for her to move schools, just because she had done so before. She
emphasized that every school is different and that new teachers would always
need a lot of support. She said that the hardest part was “the frustration of leaving
a school when you’ve just gotten established” and feeling a sense of loss because
she felt like she was “being yanked out of a good thing”. Cathy also focused on
the fact that it was hard to leave a school where she had worked. She explained
how she always wanted to keep the position that she was in because she had built
relationships there with the staff. “I always felt sad that I couldn’t stay where I was
because I felt like I was just starting to get somewhere”. She was concerned that it
was always those who had energy and a lot to offer a school that were being hurt
and that the students would lose the most in the end. Steve hoped that other staff
members would remember that to a beginning teacher everything is new. He said
that they needed to be sensitive to the fact that in these times of high turnover,
many staff members were not as welcoming as they could be. Steve thought that
his first year would have been better with a mentor or at least another, more
experienced, staff member that he could go to with questions. In the follow up
interview he was distressed by the “level of ignorance” of other staff members. According to Steve others believed that all the beginning teachers would be called back, but he said that were not aware of the circumstances. They did not understand that teachers would lose their jobs. All three related the challenges of working in a new school and how they hoped their colleagues would try to make future moves easier to work through.

Robin and Jennifer focused on the personal aspects of what had happened to them rather than the professional. Robin wanted her colleagues to know that they need to start thinking about other teachers as human beings and see the human cost associated with job insecurity. She talked about how staff would be very concerned if a student didn't have a stable home life and how this could be devastating to the child. But, she said that they never seemed to think “if you're in your seventh school, how does that make you feel”. Robin didn’t think they others could see the correlation or the idea that instability is not “just a teenage thing, [it] is a human thing”. Robin really wanted others, especially the decision makers of the board, to see the human cost that the lay offs were creating; “I am not a number, I am a human being”. She also indicated that because beginning teachers were professional, they wouldn’t let a lay off affect their teaching, but this didn’t mean that it hadn’t affected them as a person. Robin didn’t think that other staff members realized the difficulty she went through maintaining her professionalism. Jennifer also wanted other staff members to “understand the other person’s lived reality” and see the pressure put upon their younger
colleagues. She explained her belief that the disillusionment and despair over layoffs was not because the beginners are not good teachers:

It is because there isn’t this sense of community within departments, there isn’t the sense of support. Teaching can be very lonely because you can close your classroom. If you don’t have a colleague in a department to speak to about issues that are of concern, like the idea of a mentor, it could become very, very depressing for a lot of teachers.

Jennifer saw a hierarchy in schools and other problems that created divisiveness between beginning and experienced teachers. She saw these as extraneous issues that took away from the important focus of teaching; the students. In the follow up interview she pointed out that insecurity had affected teachers who had never been touched before and that they also felt abandoned by their colleagues. Jennifer didn’t think that other staff members understood the severity of the crisis that is facing education. In each of the responses, these beginning teachers looked to their colleagues for understanding and assistance as they dealt with the effects of job insecurity.
Epilogue

On April 20, 1998 the provincial government and the Ontario Teacher’s Federation announced plans to institute an 85 factor for retiring teachers. This opened the possibility for up to 10,000 retirements across Ontario. The board in this study recalled some of the initial 299 teachers laid off, stating that they had miscalculated the impact of the new funding formula. However, as of June 1, 1998 there were still 232 secondary teachers without a position. Approximately 55 - 60 of these teachers were recalled during the last weeks of June due to early retirements and others could be recalled during the summer or early fall. For those participants in the study, their future plans were varied. Angie was recalled to a contract position at her seventh school to teach Science and Geography. Robin, was still waiting to hear about open positions. She was optimistic that she would be placed before her maternity leave ended in October, 1998. Cathy’s husband accepted a job offer in Alberta. They have moved and she plans to open her own licensed day care out of her home. Steve is teaching summer school. He was hired for a Long Term Occasional position in English. Jennifer is now a co-owner of a small business, but will continue to pursue part time graduate studies. She may return to teaching if opportunities arise. I was recalled in June to new teaching responsibilities, but I was able to remain at the same school. Beginning teachers continue to strive for excellence in their own performance and stability in their careers. Hopefully, this study will help others to understand and support the beginning teacher’s struggle in complex times.
Discussion

Each beginning teacher interviewed has experienced job insecurity during their early career. While each individual had unique experiences and talked about the effects from their own perspective, insecurity has had major effects on their professional and personal lives. Job insecurity has added another dimension of difficulties to all of the factors usually associated with starting a teaching career. With widespread changes and cuts to all boards, the findings here may have resonance for every beginning teacher in Ontario.

The established view that teaching is a series of sequential steps, leading to mastery of professional skills is no longer quite as valid for beginning teachers in this board. Smaby et al. (1994) maintained that when there was a major change in a teacher's early career, that person could not progress in his or her professional development. Within this study each participant saw the moves and changes as detrimental to their professional life. Living and dealing with job insecurity made it difficult to develop professionally because of added pressure and time constraints. The most difficult part of the situation was leaving behind a position and a school where there had been potential for development, growth and closer relationships with staff and students. Each teacher lost possibilities for improvement as they were moved to another location. There was an overwhelming sense of being tired of struggling and being tired of just surviving. These beginning teachers had to keep facing the same problems over and over
again in each new school and this limited their progress as professionals.

Some of the studies that center on teachers look at individual's perceptions instead of statistics. Carter (1994), Niebrand et al. (1992), and Wilson et al. (1993) all explore how teachers perceptions of themselves and their work place can affect levels of performance, quality in staff relationships, stress levels and job satisfaction. The finding of this study are consistent with this previous literature. Each of the participants expressed feelings of frustration in their early career rising out of their perceptions of teaching. However, job insecurity had additional effects in this area. The participants felt the apprehension that they had to appear as skilled as more experienced teachers (Niebrand et al, 1992, 84). However, the presence of job insecurity changed a feeling of striving to be more like experienced teachers into a feeling of rivalry or resentment at those who had stable jobs. They all felt the damage in their relationships with other staff members, such as feeling left out or cut off from their colleagues. They also felt frustration that arose from their perceptions that older colleagues were protected from job insecurity. Some had become cynical, resentful or depressed. Each beginning teacher felt that job insecurity had damaged them.

These beginning teachers also experienced additional stress because of their perception of job insecurity. Halpin et al. (1985) discussed how stress increased when any change was perceived to be external. This is certainly the situation for the beginning teachers in this board. Each of them expressed the feeling that they had no choice and no control over the progress of their careers.
The decisions about their employment status, their work locations and their assignments were made by other people. In most cases, those making the decisions did not know the beginning teacher personally, they were represented by a number on a seniority list. The staffing decision being made by others and the perception of beginning teachers that they had no choices produced increased stress in an already difficult career.

In previous studies, when job insecurity was not a factor, many beginning teachers chose to leave the profession because of stress, lack of support, lack of recognition or the difficulties that they faced in the classroom. Thomas and Kiley (1994) stated that the more problems encountered, the more likely a teacher was to leave. In this board, beginning teachers had to face all the same problems, but also had to contend with insecurity. Every one of these teachers has lived with job insecurity, in one form or another, from the first day they stepped into a classroom, whether it has been for one year or up to four years. Each respondent asserted that she / he was a good teacher, ready and willing to remain in the profession for the love of the job. However, they were not sure how much more pressure and uncertainty they could take before burning out or being forced out to seek a different profession. Two of the participants decided to leave the board and seek other opportunities because of job insecurity. They fit the literature because there is a link between job stability, job satisfaction and leaving the profession. They have chosen to get away from the problems and dissatisfaction of teaching.
However, an area not dealt with in the literature is the situation of the two participants in this study who do not have a contract position for the next school year. As of August 31, 1998 their contracts will be terminated. They will remain on a recall list for fourteen months and may be called back if any positions are available. However, they may not continue in the profession because of the policies of the board and the government. The decision to leave may be imposed upon them. Both participants stated that they would wait for the board and were hopeful, but positions may not be available in the near future. The effects of involuntary termination on the individual are beyond the scope of this study and the devastating effects can only be guessed at. On an institutional level, job insecurity is affecting the retention of beginning teachers in this board and this may have far reaching effects in the future, when Ontario may face the same staffing crisis as the United States.

In contrast, there are studies that document positive effects of job insecurity. Riseborough and Poppleton (1991) and McCormick (1997) cite examples where beginning teachers were able to adapt and work within new situations without as much stress as their more experienced colleagues. All of the participants in this study expressed the idea that they had become more flexible and could deal with complex situations, because of their experiences. They felt that in dealing with continued job insecurity they had become better teachers, who were able to handle a great deal of stress and change. They stated that they did not let instability adversely affect the teaching that they did each day in the
classroom. These beginning teachers, all accepted insecurity as an integral part of their job. They did not see any probability that the situation would get better and had developed ways to cope with an uncertain future. However, of the teachers interviewed, only one is continuing with the board, with a contract in September. Dealing with job insecurity may make someone a better teacher in the end, as they learn to cope with or even benefit from changes to locations or responsibilities. However, when the continuation of a contract is at risk, and insecurity is in the form of termination, this seriously affects a teacher’s ability to develop.

Beginning teachers in this board are subjected to all of the problems of starting a career, but they are also affected by job insecurity. The participants in this study did not develop their professional skills because of job insecurity. They perceived a rift between themselves and more experienced colleagues. They also felt that they had no control over the progress of their careers. Two of the participants chose to leave to escape continued job insecurity. Two others were waiting to be recalled so that they wouldn’t have to leave teaching. One participant, with four years experience, will begin again in a new school and face the same problems of a beginning teacher for one more year. Job insecurity is taking a toll on the beginning teachers of this board as they leave the profession, wait to be terminated or wage the same battles again and again.

The literature on beginning teachers focuses on the transition into the profession and how teachers adjust to and cope with their new jobs. In this study, the beginning teachers of this board are able to adapt and adjust to new positions
because they have so much experience in changing responsibilities. The most difficult problem that participants in this study must face is the added job insecurity and the disruption that it causes. Some participants must deal with abandonment because they did not survive this year. In this board and Ontario more beginning teachers may be lost unless the current situation is altered.

Conclusions

Job insecurity is having an effect on beginning teachers. It is detrimental to their development as teachers because they cannot progress without a stable position. Insecurity also causes tension with colleagues, the administration and the board and has far reaching effects on teacher retention. From the research findings presented here, there are some specific areas of concern for everyone involved in education: colleagues; administrators; the board; the union; and the provincial government. All of them might profit from considering the issues presented here in order to assist beginning teachers in these complex times.

A few specific recommendations can be made to offer support. The beginning teachers in this study all asked for greater understanding from their colleagues. They experience feelings of anger, pain, loss and often resentment from those around them. For some of the participants, experienced colleagues were perceived as an impediments to their own careers. If senior teachers returned to a job, then a beginning teacher was out of a job. The first few years of
teaching are difficult, especially when coupled with job insecurity. Beginning teachers need support from colleagues in terms of empathy and understanding. More specifically, support in terms of curriculum assistance, information, moral support and even informal mentoring is invaluable.

School administrators are concerned with how well all of their staff perform both inside and outside of the classroom. For that reason they need to support the staff, particularly beginning teachers. At the most rudimentary level, teachers need support when they enter a new school or begin to teach in a new subject area. Even if they have a few years experience teaching, anyone entering a school for the first time will have the same questions about policy and procedure. Beginning teachers need help to orient themselves at a new location and responsibilities. Being recognized for their contributions to the school is one way to ease their doubts about their ability and improve morale. Allowing time for professional development would be a great support. However, under current conditions it is difficult for administrators to retain the junior members of their staff, in order to keep their energy and talent working for the school.

There are areas of concern that all parties must be aware of in order to ensure renewal and development of beginning teachers. Some of the participants felt that the board in this study did not support beginning teachers. For the past four years, all of the cuts to the board’s budget have resulted in lay offs. They see that the easiest route is to fire the youngest teachers because they are not protected by the current collective bargaining agreement. As the literature review
predicted, beginning teachers in this study had very little loyalty to the board because they felt like they did not matter and were not listened to by their employer. Even while employed by the board, two participants worked for other school systems to keep options open. At the end of the year, two of the participants chose to leave. If anything is going to be done, to alleviate the attrition that job insecurity is causing, the board needs to find a way to support beginning teachers.

However, the fault for continually cutting beginning teachers does not lie fully with the board. They must follow the policies and practices outlined by the collective agreement. The teacher’s federation and the board need to negotiate a way to support beginning teachers. Unfortunately, with a seniority based system it is very difficult to help those at the bottom. The federation is unwilling to change or give up any of the benefits or rights from previous contracts. With many union issues, such as retirement gratuities, pensions and job security the interests of experienced teachers are set against the interests of beginning teachers. The resentment between the two groups that starts at school level is also present board wide. The feeling of some beginning teachers in this study is that the union only supports and protects its older members and ignores the needs of beginning teachers. The reality is that the situation of job insecurity will only change when the collective agreement changes.

The future of education in Ontario is not certain and one prediction is that instability will continue for some time. Job insecurity is affecting the beginning
teachers, but the board states that financial constraints imposed by the provincial
government make cuts necessary. Because of the terms of the collective
agreement, any staffing cuts affect those with the lowest seniority. This results in
making it almost impossible for the board to keep beginning teachers employed on
a stable basis. Beginning teachers feel that they experience the brunt of changes
and that they are the ones most affected by cut backs.

Unfortunately, Ontario may be heading for the situation that many areas of
the United States are already dealing with; they will lose the best and the brightest
of their beginning teachers from lack of support and opportunities (Fennick, 1992).
School policies and norms that limit support or even collegiality, combined with
board policy, seniority, collective agreements, and government cuts, make it
difficult or even impossible for beginning teachers to develop or stay in their
chosen career. Schools, boards, federations and the government all have some
responsibility for the current condition of insecurity. Perhaps future policy studies
can develop strategies to bring these groups together so that they can begin to
support the future of teaching by finding a way to reduce job insecurity.

Areas for Further Study:

This research has looked at the effects of job insecurity from only one
perspective. It would be more valuable to revisit the participants and objectively
observe their performance in the classroom and their interactions with other staff.
As well, a broader perspective could be realized by finding out the perceptions of
those who work with beginning teachers: their colleagues; administrators; and
even students. The effects of job insecurity may reach out to those associated with beginning teachers. As the context in Ontario continues to change, what may be the most beneficial is to look at the effects of insecurity on teachers with five, ten or even more years of experience.

I have experienced job insecurity in many forms, for the first four years of my teaching career. I undertook this study because I knew that I was not alone in my situation. Beginning teachers are the future of education in Ontario. They need job opportunities, some stability and the support of everyone around them to grow into professionals who can provide the very best education to children. Hopefully this study has provided some insight and suggestions that will help beginning teachers in the coming years.
References


APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Interview Protocol

The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers⁠¹

Name of Person Being Interviewed: _______________________________

Date of Interview: ______________________________________________

Interview Taped? ______ Yes ______ No

Prologue: This interview is part of a research study for a Master’s thesis, being conducted through the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Thank you for volunteering to participate. As a result of this study, more information about how beginning teachers react to insecurity will be available. This will assist administrators and colleagues in helping new teachers face various difficulties. The stories that you relate in this interview will help to explain the effects that job insecurity has had on you personally. I would like to tape-record this interview so that we have a more accurate record of your responses. Your confidentiality and anonymity will be respected. Only my advisors and myself will have access to these tapes and I will erase them once the thesis is complete. May I have your written permission to tape this interview?

1. Tell me about your career as a teacher so far?
   Probes: How did you become a teacher? Did you choose this board specifically? What locations have you worked at? For how long? What different subjects, ability levels and grade levels have you taught? How does this relate to your primary teachable?
   Total years in Education: ________________________________
   Total consecutive years: ________________________________
   Placements (chronological order):

2. How do you feel about your performance as a classroom teacher?
   Probes: What is the biggest challenge to date? Describe some of your accomplishments. What would you like to improve in your teaching?

3. How secure do you feel in your teaching career? Why?  Probes: What specific events or circumstances made you feel secure? Did you stay at

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¹ This protocol is based in part on the one documented by Hart & Murphy (1990), in their study of how new teachers react to redesigned work.
one location for several years? Have your teaching responsibilities remained relatively the same?

4. Describe any time periods when you feel your position was insecure. Probes: What specific events or circumstances made you feel insecure? Have you been transferred or been told to change positions? Have you been laid off or fired by a board?

5. What effects did job insecurity have on your school performance or life? Probes:
   - Tell me about ...
   - How did you feel when...
   - Describe what happened...
   - What economic or personal decisions were based on job security?
   - What relationships did it effect with other staff members?
   - What relationships did it effect with significant people in your life?
   - Was there any effect on your performance in the classroom?
   - What was the effect on your self image?
   - Did you view the lay off as a reflection on you personally?


7. Do you know anyone who has left the teaching profession in their first five years? If so, can you tell me about the reasons why?

8. What career plans do you have? Probes: What do you want to do in the next year? What do you see yourself doing in ten years? How will you get there?

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity or how you feel about your teaching job?

Notes regarding context and atmosphere of the interview:
Follow Up Interview Protocol

The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: ______________________________

Date of Interview: ______________________________

Phone Interview? ____________ Interview Taped? Yes / No

Prologue: In response to the recent changes in staffing for the board, this interview is being conducted to reexamine your feelings about job insecurity. Thank you for continuing your participation. This study will assist administrators and colleagues in helping new teachers face various difficulties. The thoughts and opinions that you relate in this interview will help to explain the effects of the current job insecurity, on you personally. Your confidentiality and anonymity will continue to be respected. May I have your permission to use your responses?

1. Please describe your reactions to receiving notification about being terminated.
   Probes: Did you expect to be laid off? What was your reaction to the wording of the letter? How were you notified?

2. How do you feel about the board’s handling of the funding formula?
   Probes: Do you feel the lay offs were required? Will you remain with the board? Will you take any action?

3. What are the effects of this insecurity on your current professional life?
   Probes: What relationships did it effect with other staff members? What relationships did it effect with students? Are there any changes in your classroom teaching?

4. What are the effects of this insecurity on your personal life?
   Probes: What decisions have you made due to this lay off? What relationships did it effect with significant people in your life? Has the lay off effected your self image?

5. What are your plans for next year?
   Probes: How will you deal with the layoff? Are you considering other career options?

6. What do you want your colleagues to know about how you are feeling now and how this has affected you?

7. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity, the recent notice of termination or how you feel about your teaching job?
APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

LETTER OF CONSENT
January 1998

Sarah L. Patten
Address
City, Ontario
Postal Code
Phone number

Contact address
at school
Phone number

Dear Colleague:

I am conducting research into the effects that job insecurity has had on teachers in this board over the past four years. Your name has been recommended to me by (your principal / a colleague / a friend) as a beginning teacher with unique and interesting experiences.

The purpose of this study is to consider the effects that job insecurity is having upon beginning teachers. It is focused on teachers with less than four years of teaching experience, who have taught at at least two different sites and who are employed, under contract, in the secondary panel of public schools. A focus is placed on the “in-school” part of life, but this study also extends to influences on life outside of the school building.

To gather information, I will be interviewing teachers who have faced or are facing insecurity. These interviews will provide details about what you perceive as the effects of job insecurity. Your stories and experiences are important in order to identify recurring themes or ideas amongst beginning teachers.

Each interview will last approximately one hour and will be conducted at a location convenient to you. I want to assure you that the information gathered in this interview will be kept in strict confidence. All information will be reported in such a way that individuals, or institutions cannot be identified. If your comments will be quoted directly, you will be contacted with a transcript to review. The information that is collected will be stored in a secure location and is only available to my advisors and myself. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

This research will assist administrators and colleagues in helping new teachers through uncertain times. I hope that you will consider volunteering. If you are interested, or would just like more information, please contact me at the above address. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah L. Patten
LETTER OF CONSENT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study of the effects of job insecurity on beginning teachers. As a result of this study, more information about reactions to and the ramifications of insecurity will be available. This will assist administrators and colleagues in helping new teachers face various difficulties.

I want to assure you that the information gathered in this interview will be kept in strict confidence. All information will be reported in such a way that individuals, organizations, or institutions cannot be identified. However, the final report will be available from the board office. If your comments will be quoted directly, you will be contacted with a transcript to review. The initial information that is collected will be stored in a secure location and is only available to my advisors and myself. All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.

Please sign below to indicate that you have received a summary of the project and are willing to participate. You may, of course, withdraw from the study at any time. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Sarah L. Patten

Name: ____________________________________________
(Please print)

Signed: __________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________
Interview Report

The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: Angie
Date of Interview: Feb 18, 1998
Interview Taped? Yes

1. Tell me about your career as a teacher so far?
   Total years in Education: started Sept 1994
   Total consecutive years: contract Feb 1995
   Placements (chronological order):
   
   Feb 95 - June 95: Geography + Math, declared surplus
   Sept 95 - Oct 95: 6 weeks, Geography + History, staffing shuffle
   Oct 95 - June 96: transfer to Geo / Hist / Science, new school, surplus
   Sept 96- Oct 96: LTO Geo. Left when offered contract
   Oct 96 - June 97: contract Science + Geo, chose transfer
   Sept 97 - June 98: all Geography

   Probes: Did you choose this board specifically? What different subjects, ability levels and grade levels have you taught? How does this relate to your primary teachable?
   - chose 3 boards based on geographic area that was comfortable
   - did one semester of day to day supply, different board
   - first teachable in Geography, Biology, Environmental science
   - also taught math and history
   - all grades and levels experience for intermediate and senior

2. How do you feel about your performance as a classroom teacher?
   Probes: What is the biggest challenge to date? Describe some of your accomplishments. What would you like to improve in your teaching?

   "I think considering everything I went through, I’m doing OK. I wouldn’t say that I’m at all to the point that I’d want to be as the best teacher I can be. I have a lot to learn, but if you want to look at the good side of it, at least for me going through these things I’ve learned very quickly how to adapt to things. So when things come up on a day to day basis I’m pretty good at handling it. But, on the same hand there’s a lot more I need to learn. If I’d been able, in these past couple years, to stay at one school I think there’s other things as a classroom teacher I would have developed quicker, because I wouldn’t have had to deal with all the things about being a new teacher, in a new school, over and over again.”
   Accomplishments: - staff advisor for Outers Club
- develop curriculum, worked with head to develop for general level
- Still to improve: - how I deliver my lessons, confidence level, would love to teach a course twice, “to get to that point where I’m past trying to figure out what it is I’m learning, you know learning it myself first, before I deliver it and getting on to how can I deliver this really well, how can I get the students involved, how can I get them excited. Being able to have the time to look in different places to find my lessons, to find new things that are going on”
- more confident with curriculum
- classroom management, confident, but more experience will help

3. How secure do you feel in your teaching career? Why?
Probes: What specific events or circumstances made you feel secure?
Right today:
“I feel OK about it. I think I do, because I interviewed for this position. Up to this point in time I’ve just been bumped from place to place. This is the first school I actually got to where I applied, competed with other people and they accepted me.” (Except for my initial screening interview with the board)
- rumor that Bill 160 won’t go into effect until Sept 99. Hoping for one more year where I’m not going to have to change. no idea after that
  “I also kind of know…. I’m still waiting for those numbers coming out in March and April, those are still really important to me. So, as much as I think it’s going to be OK, I’m not getting my hopes up”

4. Describe any time periods when you feel your position was insecure.
Probes: What specific events or circumstances made you feel insecure?
Have you been transferred or been told to change positions? Have you been laid off or fired by a board?

“I think there’s always been a certain amount of insecurity, probably from the very first day I was in.”
- laid off 3 weeks into a job, for end of a semester
- found out position two weeks before Sept, uncertain summer
- low numbers in a school, found out within a few weeks
- always a certain amount of insecurity, “The times that it feels more insecure is when I’ve just been told I’m going to be declared surplus and I don’t really know where I’m going to go. Every time it’s kind of been a last minute change”
- surplus to region twice
- excess to school
- transfer process weird, third posting, wanted more geography, happy with job, when position came up worried about what to do
  “As much as it was hard, it wasn’t as hard as the other times, because it was still my choice. It was sad leaving and it was hard packing all my stuff
up, but I knew I was going somewhere else and it was my own choice. It seems strange that I put another change on myself, but I knew it was a change for the better."

5. What effects did job insecurity have on your school performance or life?

School performance: not able to focus as much on classroom, had to spend more time learning about admin. rules + regs, getting the school to know her, things I’ve had to go through over + over again
- hasn’t made a course hers, had to use others work, happy with quality but it hasn’t been as much hers
Staff members: don’t get a chance to really fit in. Made a friend at each school and kept in touch, name is known, staying at one school would have built stronger friendships
Personal: commute was too difficult, stayed with a teacher at her school, found out about new job, then had to find a new place to live, always moving “If I really wanted to, or if I had to I could just get myself my own apartment, but with all the insecurity that’s going on and not knowing where you’re going to, north end or south, it makes it really hard to know where you want to live. “ - one school would be able to settle down
- no economic impact, low rent, no dependents, no debts, doing fine, wouldn’t be able to move around as much with husband or kids

self-image: - at some point you think that it’s because you’re not a good teacher, everyone always made it clear that it had nothing to do with choosing, never a major thought, always went through the mind, not really the reason because admin. always made it clear that it wasn’t me
- being chosen was a “huge confidence booster”, first time I tried, competed and was chosen as the best for the job, chosen over people with more experience.

6. Have you taken any steps in an attempt to reduce insecurity?
Probes: Extra curricular activities? Skill upgrading? Committees?

- after Fac of Ed. Qualifications in Bio and Environmental Science, during summer got Sr. Geo and got Hons. Specialist in Geo, immediate goals to upgrade, get Hons. Sp to be able to apply for assistant head positions
- focus on main subject area, dismissed ESL or Spec. Ed.
- extra-curr: outers club, badminton team, Learning Outcomes committee
- not strong as a coach

7. Do you know anyone who has left the teaching profession in their first five years? If so, can you tell me about the reasons why?
- heard people talk about it, people say if something better comes along they'll take it, they're not closing any doors, no specific examples
- other options, one is an exchange and teach somewhere else, using same skills, just not in this board.

8. What career plans do you have?
Probes: What do you want to do in the next year? What do you see yourself doing in ten years? How will you get there?

- just teaching, stay positive about staying in teaching
  "A year from now I'd like to still be here, teaching. I'd like to make sure I teach OAC again, to run the Outers Club again, to stay on the committees, to keep doing, but my new thing, I think next year will be to do the OAC Canada course."
- years from now still in teaching in some form, who knows, positive experience this past year, thinking positively
- maybe POR, depends on changes in job description

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity or how you feel about your teaching job? What should administrators and colleagues know?

"I always knew there was a possibility that I would be declared surplus at the end of every position. But I found that every time I was told I had to move, it was actually harder and harder to deal with, which seemed to be opposite to what a lot of people thought. A lot of people seemed to think 'Oh well, by this time you're old hat at it, you're not going to think anything of it and it's not a big deal to leave'. Whereas, I found that every time I had to leave I was very frustrated because I was always at a school that I felt like I could go somewhere in. I didn't like that I didn't have the opportunity to develop how I wanted to develop".
- the hardest was to change when it was unexpected.
  "Just because someone had to move around a lot, that that doesn't necessarily mean that they know how to deal with it or that it's an easy transition and I don't think they should ever make that assumption"
- every school teaches things differently
  "People assume that a young teacher has all these wonderful ideas, yet they seem to forget that that young teacher is trying to deal with so many new things that they're not having an opportunity to maybe use their mind. They don't' have the time."
- new teachers need support, curr documents, lifesaver program, other staff to help through, someone should be walking you through step by step
- a lot of schools are quite good, are learning as they've seen so many teachers going through
- teaching has not been all bad, despite 6 schools in 2 and 1/2 years, but I have a job, still consider quite fortunate, still pretty good to have a job, still thankful "Maybe this is what I’ve had to go through for being as lucky as I’ve been"
- tried not to be cynical or frustrated, has been a bit, overall tries to be positive, compare to someone else and their situation “I don’t know of anyone else that is at the age I’m at, that’s at the point in their career that I’m at, that has really had it any better than me. I think we’ve all had to go through the same things.”
- walked in knowing there would be uncertainty, maybe not this much, “You have to deal with what you’re given and if you really want it then you go along with it. You’ve got to realize that hopefully, one day it will get better. If you really don’t like what you’re doing and if all this insecurity is affecting you this much, then maybe you have to think is this really what you want to do or maybe do you need to do something else for awhile”.

Prediction: no idea, things change so much, would be quite surprised if it does, but still to a certain point, expect it, mild lay offs where people will be reabsorbed, year after that very questionable
- changes in 1999 too unpredictable, can’t make any decision, has to wait
- “You get used to insecurity. You don’t think anything of it anymore. I think if someone who had been teaching ten years suddenly had to go through what I have been going through, then I think their insecurity would be a lot more and I think it would affect them a lot more. Whereas, I think with us, we have had to go through this from day one so it almost becomes human nature to have that insecurity. So, you don’t even realize that you’re being insecure, it’s just part of the whole situation.
- “what seems to be hard to deal with is the frustration of leaving a school when you’ve just gotten established.
- the not knowing where you may end up isn’t as hard to deal with since, for me, I’ve always ended up somewhere

Notes regarding context and atmosphere of the interview:

after school, in a classroom, participants school, exchanged stories after tape recorder was off
Interview Record

The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: Robin

Date of Interview: Feb. 16, 1998

Interview Taped? X Yes No

1. Tell me about your career as a teacher so far?
   Total years in Education: started May 1993
   Total consecutive years: contract from Jan. 1995 (for 3 years)

   Placements (chronological order):
   Jan - June 95: English 1 semester, declared surplus
   Sept 95-Jan 96: Placed in LTO (under contract) 1 Eng, 1 Art, 1 Vocal Music
   Feb-June 96: Drama and ESL, declared surplus
   Sept-Jan 97: Recall to a .3 contract position, supply for other part
   Feb-June 97: Contract portion of recall list, full salary, benefits and seniority, 2/3 time table of Art + Eng. Plus one period of on-call.
   Excess to school
   Sept 97-June 98: Full English timetable, both semesters
   Total - “In My whole teaching career, this is my seventh school”

   Probes: Did you choose this board specifically? What different subjects, ability levels and grade levels have you taught? How does this relate to your primary teachable?
   - student in the board, had contacts. “When things were so tough, it’s so much easier to call the school where you have a name that knows you and will return calls”
   - taught art, music and ESL, has an Honours degree in drama, second degree in English. Only Eng not taught 3A0. Taught advanced, general

2. How do you feel about your performance as a classroom teacher?
   Probes: What is the biggest challenge to date? Describe some of your accomplishments. What would you like to improve in your teaching?

   “I feel that I have performed very well, given the circumstances, and I qualify that by given the circumstances in that I have had friends, who are lucky enough to have gone to less than seven schools, to have taught the same course twice, using the same text books, and other little details like that, and I see that their professional growth is much further than mine. Not because I haven’t tried and not because I don’t want to be where they are, simply because circumstances haven’t allowed it.”
“When you’re constantly feeling out your environment and constantly trying to figure out the philosophy of the departments, it’s very difficult to respond to all of those needs, as well as your students and your timetable and everything else.”

- good evaluations, positive feedback from students and parents, own worst critic

“Surviving is a huge accomplishment in those circumstances.”

- become very flexible

- good to be gained from every department, take, learn, “cross-pollinate” across the board, dissemination of ideas, thinks it is important

“I quite uniquely qualified to contribute” “usually in the department, there is only one of my ilk”.

- good bonding with specific classes, choirs, plays

3. How secure do you feel in your teaching career? Why?

“I don’t. I haven’t felt any security ever, yet. I’m longing for the day (pause), and I don’t know that it’ll come. I thing maybe, we keep seeing stuff in the papers, as a whole society we’ve got to change our mind set, there’s no such thing as a lifelong employer, contract work is the way of the future. Etc...etc.. That may be the case, but I do think there’s a lot of benefit to having some job security, and to having some roots, because I think it does help your performance and it does help your growth, because you feel that you can take chances, that you can expand yourself and you’re not just constantly keeping your head above water.”

“I’ve never really felt that. Yet because of it being missing I know that it’s something that I would like and that it would help me develop professionally.”

4. Describe any time periods when you feel your position was insecure. Probes: What specific events or circumstances made you feel insecure? Have you been transferred or been told to change positions? Have you been laid off or fired by a board?

- surplus to board twice

- excess to school once, it is possible to be fired

- transfer process is difficult because some positions aren’t “real”, always an internal candidate, never a chance to get the job, don’t know until after, very frustrating, already gone through work and prep

“Ultimately, when they place you, you have no choice” administrative transfer: “if you were administratively transferred that you were somehow... that you were being buffed somewhere or you were incompetent or you were just disliked where you were.” Not necessarily true now, “The bottom line is from the Department heads point of view you
are placed, you are not their choice. I was in that situation and I find it very
difficult."
- carry the stigma of an administrative transfer, even though you tried
- had to excel to get into teachers college, not have that be any part of the
equation for hiring is extremely difficult to take.
"You have no control over the situation, and teachers, as a breed, tend to
be a bit of control freaks (laughing, we are), and to tell us that we have to
control our classrooms and then tell us that we have no control over our
own career is an oxymoron, it's a paradox and it's very difficult to live with."

5. What effects did job insecurity have on your school performance or life?

- not as willing to put heart into extra-cur, because it hurts too much when
you leave, know I hold back from students, don't want to fall in love and be
pulled away
Personal: first time I expected it, told in advance, totally prepared, didn't
like it, insecurity wasn't fun, but accepted that it was due process
- second year when it happened, bottom of list, last twenty, "I found it very
difficult and I actually became quite depressed, to the point where I went
and sought the employee assistance program. That does have an effect on
your personal life, because again it comes down to 'I've worked so hard and
I tried so hard and there was nothing else that I thought that I could give my
career... there was nothing left to give and it still wouldn't change anything"
- connected to car accident in 1990, should have been employed in 1990
- economics: husband had money coming in, a factor, "I always taught
summer school, because you never know, I might not have that pay cheque
coming in in September", mortgage hanging over head
- emotional impact more devastating than the financial
- close friends are teachers, quite sympathetic, parents supportive
"In my school life, what I've found is an increasing resentment towards older
staff, that had never had any flux in their career, could take everything for
granted, were at the top of the pay grid, hadn't been frozen for 3 years at
33,000 dollars and didn't realize that that meant that you were taking home
about 400 dollars a week, had no concept. A lot of them just kept
complaining about retirement and I just kept saying, well get out, please,
please, let me open the door. I did find that I resented some older
colleagues and their attitudes and their attitudes to change and their lack of
support, because they have just no conception of where we're coming from.
My tolerance for them became basically non-existent"

6. Have you taken any steps in an attempt to reduce insecurity?
Probes: Extra curricular activities? Skill upgrading? Committees?

"It sounds awfully cynical, but I have come to the conclusion there is
nothing you can do to make yourself indispensable. The bottom line is
seniority and the bottom line is that they often don’t care how good a job you’re doing.”
- Extra-curr not taken into account in human resources where decisions are made
- taken Hons. Specialist, started Masters degree, tried to develop leadership skills, involved with OSSTF, directed choirs, show Etc.

7. Do you know anyone who has left the teaching profession in their first five years? If so, can you tell me about the reasons why?

- somebody who is so frustrated about the bureaucracy, just a peg in a whole, who cares about merit, who care about the deadwood in the system, everybody just transfers, actually left to pursue a Masters and Ph.D. to teach at a different level
- another, who was surplus to region, background in computers and math, when recalled, said no, left for private sector
“Education gives a lot of lip service that we need these young, we need their vitality, we need their youth, but when push comes to shove, I don’t think they really... they’re not willing to make any concessions to actually make that real.”

8. What career plans do you have?
Probes: What do you want to do in the next year? What do you see yourself doing in ten years? How will you get there?

“I’ve always said that if they give me another surplus to region notice, I’m out, I’m leaving. I don’t know if I have the guts to do it, because I don’t know what else I would do”
- good skill set, communication, interpersonal, what to do
- tutoring from 14, built whole life on becoming a teacher, very difficult to stop
- thought about POR, hopefully survive, stay in the same school, work more in drama, maybe still a dept. Head,
- still have integrity, not ready to compromise it to further career goals, most effective in a classroom
- difficulty in getting drama, swing to right devalues the arts, wants more extra-curr in drama, would like to see an integration of the arts, very competitive,

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity or how you feel about your teaching job? What do colleagues, administrators need to know?

- insecurity is very damaging, “You know it’s not personal, yet it’s impossible not to take personally.”
- focus on students as people, but staff are people, talk about students without stable home life - how devastating that is to them, but never think if you’re in your seventh school how does that make you feel, don’t make correlation, not just a teenage thing, this is a human thing
- need to see that there is a real human cost. I am strong, but I am tired of it all. Some of it is outside with provincial gov’t, seems it will never end
  “I think they’re destroying a generation of teachers, by not letting us teach or by giving us such poor teaching situations, that survival is the best we can do. By nature I don’t want to just survive, I want to be a good teacher, I want to be mentored and I want to grow and I want to take risks and you can’t take risks unless you know there’s a ground under your feet. When the grounds moving or mud or quicksand, you can’t take those risks because you don’t feel safe enough to do so”
- fairly positive person, but damaged, cynical now
- love job, love kids, administrative, board, political, provincial that is the problem, still love the kids so its’ the only thing that makes me still want to teach, low tolerance for everything else
- prediction, the board in order to cover it’s butt is going to lay off 500 of us, just in case that prep time goes.
- public backlash against that maneuver would be devastating
- prepared that they are going to try to give her a pink slip, but contemplating not taking it, “Be aware of me as a human being, I’m not just one of the 500 people getting this letter.”
- wants decision makers to see a human face, see the human cost, “I am not a number, I am a human being. At thirty years old, I have done everything right, by societal standards. I was a good kid in school, I got my degrees, I worked hard, I didn’t get a student debt. I did everything by the rules and you are playing with my life when I have done everything right. How can you do that? How can you take away that control when I have worked so hard.”
- frustrating, maybe we were sold “a bag of goods” that we shouldn’t have bought into, believe if you work hard that you will get some reward for it, private sector, haven’t worked as hard, get better payoffs, they work 40 hour weeks, would love to only put in 40 hours
- Public backlash against teachers, trying to justify existence,

Notes regarding context and atmosphere of the interview:

- after school, in a classroom, a lot of stories with a more personal connection after the tape recorder was turned off.
Interview Report

The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: ____________________ Cathy

Date of Interview: ____________ Feb. 25, 1998 ____________

Interview Taped? ______ X ____ Yes _______ No

1. Tell me about your career as a teacher so far?
   Total years in Education: contract began Oct. 97 - probationary contract
   Total consecutive years: Sept 94 - supply and LTO work
   Placements (chronological order):

   - all LTO's in Physical Education, shortage of Phys. Ed. Supply
   - 1st LTO - 4 months, half-time then 2 two week, then 1 month
   - then full semester, full time taught at 2 different schools
   - constant supply, no gaps
   - Probationary contract now in English, 1 3A, 2 3G

   Probes: How did you become a teacher? Did you choose this board specifically? What different subjects, ability levels and grade levels have you taught? How does this relate to your primary teachable?

   Teachable subjects - Phys. Ed and English (second)
   - has taught all grade levels and ability (basic, general + advanced)
   - never taught same course twice, grade nine at different schools, but program not the same
   - applied to board specifically, advertised for positions, lived in the region, called for supply more by this board.
   - unique teaching situation: half time (job share) in a non-semester school
   - "That's my choice. I've been waiting, since I started teaching, for a job like this to come up because I have two small kids. So, I'm trying to balance being at home half time and being in the school"
   - one week: Tuesday, Friday next week: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
   - "The English office that I'm in doesn't mind people being half time. The department head there stayed home with her kids so, she knows the importance of that. But, she wants people to have a chance to pursue their career half time. It was difficult to find a placement like that."

2. How do you feel about your performance as a classroom teacher?
   Probes: What is the biggest challenge to date? Describe some of your accomplishments. What would you like to improve in your teaching?

   - feels strong in the classroom, gets a lot of positive feedback from students and other teachers.
I feel confident when I'm in the classroom. My planning time though, because I'm new to all the courses, that's where I lack confidence. I sometimes feel like I'm not as prepared as I should be. But my interaction with the students in the classroom always goes well.

- biggest challenge, staying ahead of the students, planning units, not going day by day, but planning units

- accomplishments: won over general level students, previous experience at basic level helped, students were failing and now they are handing in satisfactory work and staying after school, but all are now passing and succeeding

- stressed that I wanted to get back in the classroom, didn't want more Phys ed. experience, wants to stay in English and become familiar with curriculum and resources, "I would like to stay in English for a while and keep developing it, becoming familiar with the curriculum and the resources that are being used right now."

3. How secure do you feel in your teaching career? Why?
Probes: What specific events or circumstances made you feel secure?

- "I don’t feel secure at all (laughing)"
- specifically the government, the lack of knowledge about what is going to happen next year "I don’t feel insecure in the sense that If there was a spot available, I think that I could get a job. But, I feel like there is going to be such a lack of space for us. I’m so new, when I look on the seniority list I think there are only six people below me."
- feels secure at current school to end of the year, not for Sept.
- "I think the real thing that influences my security is I only want half time. My youngest child is two, so I want half time for a few more years and I think that those jobs will be very difficult to get."
- less secure because I can’t take just anything that opens up

4. Describe any time periods when you feel your position was insecure.
Probes: What specific events or circumstances made you feel insecure? Have you been transferred or been told to change positions? Have you been laid off or fired by a board?

- often didn’t know when LTO’s would end, only guaranteed two weeks
- usually after a month would know whether it would continue or end
- admin. Didn’t tell her job was ending would go through head secretary or department head
- most stress was when a job kept getting extended, didn’t know what was going to happen
- happy in October to get half time probationary contract
- not difficult to move mid semester because of previous LTO exp.
- easier to move to new school because it wasn't filling somebody else's shoe's., in LTO' students knew teacher would be coming back.

5. What effects did job insecurity have on your school performance or life?
   School - LTO's didn't do a lot around the school, didn't want to start something with students and then quit, that was a priority, was able to be involved with one school because of schedule
   - at contract job "This is the first time I've felt really involved with the staff and the school in the sense that I know I'm going to be there until the end of the year, so I'm doing coaching and I'm working on the yearbook, just getting more involved. I'm eating my lunch sitting at the lunch table rather than just working, because I know that I'm going to be part of this staff."
   - never ever tried to get to know staff unless there for a month or more, one school knew some people from student teaching, found it hard, no one knew who I was or why I was there
   Life - had first child in teacher's college. "The reason I chose to do that was because, when I was in teacher's college, everybody was saying that there weren't any jobs for us. So, my husband and I looked at our life and what we wanted and we said we do want to have kids. I thought, if there aren't any jobs right now and chances are I'll be supply teaching, if we have our kids now at the beginning of my career then I can work full time when they go to school and I don't have to take maternity leave."
   - really hard because full time positions were available, but not part time
   - once I had kids I didn't want to work full time. "Hearing all the time that there weren't any jobs changed the way we did things."
   Self - called for interview, thought she would get because they called, really knocked when she didn't get it, felt she had screwed up in the interview
   - supply teaching didn't have a lot to feel good about, didn't have a place, didn't belong anywhere, always taking over for someone else, hard to build confidence
   - strength in Phys. Ed, need to build confidence in English, most teachers leave pretty easy work for supply teachers, hadn't worked with curriculum

6. Have you taken any steps in an attempt to reduce insecurity?
   Probes: Extra curricular activities? Skill upgrading? Committees?
   - worked hard at being involved in school events at probationary contract, running fund raising events, making sure I'm known as someone who does a little extra, doing yearbook, coaching volleyball, archery
   - no courses because of the cost involved
   - planning on attending school in summer of '98, but uncertainty about having a job in Sept., can't spend $800
   - no committee involvement
7. Do you know anyone who has left the teaching profession in their first five years? If so, can you tell me about the reasons why?
- I for sure, couldn't get job first year, went into kinesiology with a PT
- as a supply teacher met someone who started his own business on the side, very frustrated, hardly ever worked over first three year.

8. What career plans do you have?
Probes: What do you want to do in the next year? What do you see yourself doing in ten years? How will you get there?
- no idea, waiting to see numbers from the government
- if opportunity in teaching is available over the next few years, then love to stick it out, loves the job
- maybe take courses in Co-op, been recommended as an up and coming area, good with Phys. Ed / recreation background
- doesn't want to supply teach, either job or go do something else
- "If it looks very unlikely that I'll get a placement in the next couple years, then I'm considering changing careers. Either staying home and doing day care out of my home for a while and trying to just wait and see or going back to school next year and getting my recreation programmers certificate at college and maybe pursuing that end of it. I think you could still incorporate a lot of teaching doing that. You still do a lot of planning and programming which is similar to teaching."
- up in the air depending on what happens
- predictions: gov't won't do anything right away to look good for the next election, confident that if no changes would be called back
- hopeful for no changes and being called back in the fall, no notice yet

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity or how you feel about your teaching job?
- not sure if she was appropriate because she hasn't pursued a full time career, [int: not everyone the same trying to reflect different possibilities]
- very good as a supply teacher, comfortable in the gym, was called a lot because of her ability, put on priority list
- also employed a lot because she was female, wanted female supply for girls Phys. Ed, concern about Muslim students who can't do a lot of things if there is a man in the gym, female with Phys. Ed qualifications was an asset
- ideal to stay half time, stay in English for another year, have a repeat course, and develop myself in a course,
- with half time hard to go between gym and English, but following year have a split or mix of the two subjects, Phys. Ed builds a different relationships with students, a good combination
- strength in building relationships, difficult to leave a school, always wanted the position she was in
- "I always felt sad that I couldn't' stay where I was because I felt like I was just starting to get somewhere"

Notes regarding context and atmosphere of the interview:
- interview conducted in a classroom, after school, at interviewers school
Interview Report

The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed:  Steve
Date of Interview:  Feb. 18, 1998
Interview Taped?  X Yes  No

1. Tell me about your career as a teacher so far?
   Total years in Education:  first year as a secondary teacher
   Total consecutive years:  contract from Sept. ‘97
   Placements (chronological order):

   - taught job search strategy program and high school equivalency for
     Community Education prior to completing B. Ed and year after graduation
   - Sept 97 - June 98 - English teacher

   Probes: How did you become a teacher? Did you choose this board
   specifically? What different subjects, ability levels and grade levels have
   you taught? How does this relate to your primary teachable?

   - qualified in English and Individual and Society
   - after graduation applied to 10 boards in same geographic area
   - applied specifically to this board because of connections and previous
     work experience with Community Education
   - applied during an “open call” for supply and LTO positions
   - did not do any supply or LTO work, not employed as a contract teacher
     during first year after graduation because no positions were available
   - taught in community education for a year before being hired on contract as
     a secondary teacher
   - teaches part time in the evening, English courses

2. How do you feel about your performance as a classroom teacher?
   Probes: What is the biggest challenge to date? Describe some of your
   accomplishments. What would you like to improve in your teaching?

   - first year has been an enjoyable experience, “It certainly is challenging
     and a lot of work, a great deal of preparation and a lot of challenges... a lot
     of mistakes made, but a lot of learning as well.”
   - biggest challenge: “The biggest challenge that I’ve faced in teaching
     today would be trying to do the best job possible, trying to learn as much as
     possible to make myself more valuable to the school. So, that entails a lot
     of things, in the hopes of trying to gain as much knowledge to make
     yourself invaluable.”
- accomplishment: came in with a high degree of anxiety, ‘can I do the job’, relations with students, ‘am I capable of doing the job that I’ve been trained for?’
- “One of the most positive aspects is that I’ve found out very quickly that I’m capable of developing a good rapport with the kids. That I am, in my estimation and the estimation of my colleagues and my supervisors, good at what I do. Overall, the best thing for me is that realization that this is, in fact, the job that I should be doing. It’s the job that my personality seems to meld with the best.”

3. How secure do you feel in your teaching career? Why?

- Not secure at all.

4. Describe any time periods when you feel your position was insecure.
   Probes: What specific events or circumstances made you feel insecure? Have you been transferred or been told to change positions? Have you been laid off or fired by a board?

- feels insecure because of unrest with Bill 160, governments proposed changes and how they will affect those at same low seniority level
- security level will probably not come about for quite some time
- “As a result of Bill 160, there is a high degree of uncertainty, from my perspective, as to whether or not a position will be available for me in the future.”, specifically for Sept. ’98.
- “Conversely, do I feel secure in this profession and believe that I will have a position available to me for the better part of the next five years? Yes, I think so. I think that ultimately I will be remaining in teaching, even though I might experience, or others might experience, short term unemployment or gaps in employment. My feeling is that it is a secure area to be venturing in.”
- hasn’t been transferred before, however, ‘high degree of angst’ about current contract, hired to replace a staff member on long term disability, so that individual is still a part of the school staff.
- up until the Friday before the beginning of second semester, did not know if the other person was returning, received documentation about termination - in fact contract was extended for an additional semester
- the security aspect of particular contract was still up in the air
- "There are things that are happening within this particular department that suggest that I will continue to be here, but no one knows the future. There is still a high degree of anxiety attached.”

5. What effects did job insecurity have on your school performance or life?

- school performance: level of insecurity has not had a significant effect
- perception of job, insecurity doesn’t affect the way that I teach in class
- “Every day I recognize that I’m here to do a job. I come in and I do my job and I go home. I think that the anxiety probably has more effect on your personal life, on the time when you’re not in the school.”
- “In terms of the anxiety or the insecurity that’s associated with the whole situation right now, my feeling is that, if anything, it almost enhances my performance as a classroom teacher. I’m constantly trying to learn as much as I can and I’m volunteering for a variety of activities and extra-curricular.”
- “Job insecurity is a good impetus to get the learning process going.”

- personal: previous experience with community ed. All contracts for 3 months, 6 months or 1 year, all based on having government funding
- constant feeling ‘is the contract going to be renewed? Am I going to be employed after that 3 months?
- moving into education at secondary level, that anxiety has continued
- many start as LTO’s, I was lucky to get a semester one contract, had to wait for it to extend to a full year contract
- still have low seniority hanging over our heads, as a result there has been a continuation of whether there is security
- “That effects your personal life. Major life decisions are made based on employment, from my perspective. I tend to save a lot more money rather than spending my money. I try to live life from a tentative perspective where I don’t count on having a job in a year. As a result you tend not to plan to far ahead. My wife and I have discussed, and disregarded the possibility of having a family until I’m more secure in my employment.”

- relationships: capable of developing good relationship with most people on staff, insecurity works in a positive aspect because you are more hesitant to enter a conflict or voice dissatisfaction with colleagues, heads or admin., you are less apt to push the issue to resolve to your liking. “There are many times when I’ve chosen to bite my tongue rather than say my piece, because you want to appear as inconspicuous as possible when anything negative is transpiring.”

6. Have you taken any steps in an attempt to reduce insecurity?
Probes: Extra curricular activities? Skill upgrading? Committees?

- coaching basketball, 5 nights a week, 3-5 p.m.
- taking courses at university to upgrade category rating, taking English courses
- volunteered on committees; Grade Nine reports, Staff Allocation, scheduling
- Semester 1 ran a field trip, planning others for Semester 2
- department responsibilities as well
7. Do you know anyone who has left the teaching profession in their first five years? If so, can you tell me about the reasons why?

- doesn’t know anyone who has left teaching
- knows others with insecurity, not sure that experiences are that similar
- “My experiences outside of secondary school education have prepared me for the insecurity. I don’t let it get to me, to a large degree. I see a lot of other people who face the insecurity and it weighs on them day to day. They are constantly thinking about it, talking about it, discussing it, commiserating with others. Whereas, my feeling is that I’m here to do a job. The job could be here today and gone tomorrow. I’m not interested in constantly reminding myself that the governments done this... the governments done that. If it’s going to happen, it’s going to happen and I’m really not going to have any control over it. So, my feeling is just look past it and get on with the business of education.”
- although insecurity is there, somehow things will turn out right, “Most of the people who should have jobs, will have jobs. They might not be in the same format, but there will be jobs.”

8. What career plans do you have?
Probes: What do you want to do in the next year? What do you see yourself doing in ten years? How will you get there?

- this year: finish the school year and feel successful and learn a great deal, take in as much information as possible.
- second year, improve on the first year, continue to learn, start implementing some strategies that worked, trying new strategies that I hope will work
- hoping to be successful in courses at university, to improve standing in abilities to teach, also amount of money, move category 2 to 4 over 2 years
- goals for first 2-3 years, stay where I am, improve as a classroom teacher
- probably like to move schools after, closer to home and to gain a new perspective from different staff
- interest to learn as much as I can, after Honours Specialist hopefully promoted to assistant head of department, then in 5 - 7 years promoted to head of department

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity or how you feel about your teaching job? (Message to colleagues)

- “One of the largest challenges that a new teacher faces is coming in. I suspect that the sensitivity to the newness of everything is not there. For a beginning teacher all of the teachers are new people to know, all of the
students are new to know, all of the procedures are new to know. Things so simple as finding a washroom, learning how the attendance is handled, all of these minor things are sort of trial by fire.”

- with high turnover of staff in last couple of years there’s a familiarity with change amongst the staff, as a result they’re not as welcoming as in previous years, feel in first month that you’re flying solo, intimidated about asking questions

- “A solution might be something as simple as having an experienced teacher in the school that you’re paired with, that you can ask all the stupid questions or make all the stupid mistakes with, without fear of looking idiotic in front of the administration.”

- feeling like you have to do it all, large learning curve, have to teach yourself first, prepare materials, then teach, then reflect, almost doing double the amount of work

- “Understand the fact that as a new teacher you are probably having to work five times as hard to attain the same goal, or maybe even a lesser goal.”

- all situations are new, had to learn classroom management from experience and observation, came to take a firm but fair approach

- Overall insecurity: “To sum the whole thing up, I’d have to say that if I looked at the whole issue of insecurity, in a weird way, I think that the insecurity that I’ve met and experienced in my first year of teaching has actually made me work harder. That doesn’t always seem to make sense. It’s allowed me to learn more, because it’s provided the necessity to learn fast and take on as many things as possible and do as much as possible.”

- but “A continued insecurity would serve as a real opportunity for burnout, because you can’t, or I wouldn’t be able to, learn at that pace and have the insecurity for an extended period of time.”

Notes regarding context and atmosphere of the interview:

- after school, department offices, at participants school
Interview Report

The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: Jennifer

Date of Interview: Feb. 26, 1998

Interview Taped? X Yes  No

1. Tell me about your career as a teacher so far?
   Total years in Education: Feb. ’97
   Total consecutive years: 7 years, 3 years full time with this board
   Placements (chronological order):
   - part time as ESL teacher in another board for 4 years
   - all contract work based on section numbers, demand
   - Jan 96 - May 96, LTO for LTD - Family studies and library
   - Sept 96 - Jan 97, Family studies
   - Feb 97 - June 97, History, asked back but not enough seniority
   - after protest Nov 97 - Jan 98, Geography, covering parenting leave
   - Feb 98 - June 98, Family studies and English

   Probes: How did you become a teacher? Did you choose this board specifically? What locations have you worked at? For how long? What different subjects, ability levels and grade levels have you taught? How does this relate to your primary teachable?
   - qualified for Family Studies and Individual and Society
   - deemed qualified for history, geography and English
   - taught all different grades and ability levels through Family Studies
   - designed an OAC Politics course
   - chose board because it was where job was offered
   - as part of B. Ed, instead of practice teaching, did portfolio research for the board through university, had previous contact with the board, they responded first with a job

2. How do you feel about your performance as a classroom teacher?
   Probes: What is the biggest challenge to date? Describe some of your accomplishments. What would you like to improve in your teaching?
   - overall, confident about performance, not the kind of teacher who thinks only good in one subject
   - "The issue of pedagogy is not discipline driven. Unfortunately you see a lot it, once you move from one department to another, there's a sense of commitment where certain models are followed religiously, and they never
I’m much more interested in critically assessing my pedagogy rather than content.”

- accomplishment: proud of work when she took over an OAC class that had had 5 supply teachers previously, had a lot of autonomy in the course, “It was a great experience, because the kids actually wrote a letter on my behalf and wanted me to stay in the school. You know that you’ve done something right if the kids will do your soliciting for you.” Very positive first experience

- great flexibility, great accomplishment not to be ‘totally cynical’ after being moved around for so long, there is something in being an educator, still thinks that she can make a difference, accomplishment to be positive about your job

- proud of work in designing Society Challenge and Change course, also preparing students for politics at university

- biggest challenge: “My biggest challenge to date is always being an outsider and not having the influence to make changes.” Changes needed, not only from a subjective standpoint, but in the curriculum changes.”

- challenge when heads of departments, are teaching in a school for twenty odd years, they haven’t been anywhere else, they’re still good teachers, but they could be doing more on curriculum development in the school.

3. How secure do you feel in your teaching career? Why?

- not confident about job security, as a contract worker there is no job security, not even equivalent to permanent part time work

- reorganization of the market since the 80’s has been such that either you have part time permanent work or you have contract work.

- contract work makes sense as least expensive, the board or the employer doesn’t have to give you anything

4. Describe any time periods when you feel your position was insecure.

Probes: What specific events or circumstances made you feel insecure? Have you been transferred or been told to change positions? Have you been laid off or fired by a board?

- had a choice in jobs in as far as I could have said yes or no, but not a real choice because of surplus of teachers in the job market.

- “There’s no such thing as having a choice. I think the only people in this profession who may have a choice, or perceive themselves as having a choice, are teachers who are permanent and have been here for twenty years. But even they now feel insecure about what or how it may be perceived if they decide to move. I think this sense of insecurity affects people at different levels as well as choice.”
- contract stipulates that any teacher you are filling in for may come back at any time, your job is terminated, always a final date stipulated before the end of a semester, will be paid for marking but not officially employed, the board doesn’t have to give you a number

5. What effects did job insecurity have on your school performance or life?

- classroom teacher: first thing you think about is having time to read your students, need transition time to figure out students and school
- not as comfortable during transition, getting to know class, assessing academic demands of the school
- relationship with staff: so busy that you don’t have time to meet people, you get courses with little preparation time, staying up to 1 a.m. to lesson plan every night
- “Your prep periods are prep periods, your lunch is a prep period, every period is a prep period. So, you don’t have the time to sit and socialize. Sometimes it’s misconstrued as snobbishness, you don’t want to get to know the staff. More often than not people are very understanding. They know you’re here on a contract, you don’t have time to sit in the lunch room or to sit for twenty minutes and talk. You may do that every once in a while. I find that people are understanding, because they’ve seen people come in and out all the time.”
- self-image: not affected at all, this job is a job, committed to education, sometimes more than a job
- “Yes, it is what I do, but it’s not all of who I am. I knew that going in. This is just one dimension of my life.”
- economics: does affect whether I’m going to spend money on things that I shouldn’t be spending money on, e.g. Vacations, March Break spent marking and writing exams, catching up
- has another source of income, try not to depend solely on teaching for income, because it’s not steady income

6. Have you taken any steps in an attempt to reduce insecurity?
Probes: Extra curricular activities? Skill upgrading? Committees?

- No, “I realize that you can't make yourself indispensable, because you're not.” Educational inflation, having credentials is what it takes, but gap is widening, lots of people have the credentials, always on a treadmill to upgrade
- want to upgrade to have other career options, at OISE because I may want to do research, teach at another level
- other option, accepted to law school same year as Fac of Ed., may consider it as an option later
- upgrading but not necessarily focusing on teaching secondary
- no extra-curricular activities, don’t have time, not in a place long enough
- teaches night school as a strategic move to get into another board
  - also an opportunity to try new things, using feminist perspective

7. Do you know anyone who has left the teaching profession in their first five years? If so, can you tell me about the reasons why?
- yes, someone who had a Ph.D. in English, went into English at secondary level, basically looked at as a threat by department heads and admin.
- subtly undermined by others, very negative first experience, decided that it wasn't worth it, decided to leave
- now runs her own business writing for community groups, researching and writing for university

8. What career plans do you have?
Probes: What do you want to do in the next year? What do you see yourself doing in ten years? How will you get there?
- “My original plan was that if I didn’t work in the first three years, to get a sense of teaching, I was just going to quit. So, now that I’ve been in it and I’ve seen what it is, there are some really positive things about it and there are some things that I don’t like about teaching. The things that I don’t like have nothing to do with the classroom, it’s the other stuff.”
- plans, finishing at OISE, see what happens later on, if there isn't a full time position, possibly full time studies either Ph.D. or law school
- if I get a job full time that will change

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity or how you feel about your teaching job? (Message to colleagues)
- first thing to understand, anyone on contract or just beginning to teach “now has to deal with the reality that doesn’t meet the expectations of the theory of what teaching should be”
- disillusionment or despair is not because we aren’t good teachers, “It’s because there isn’t this sense of community within departments, there isn’t the sense of support. Teaching could be very lonely because you can close your classroom. If you don’t have a colleague in a department to speak to about issues that are of concern, like the idea of a mentor, it could become very, very depressing, for a lot of teachers. It is something that you do on your own.”
- “ Although we are supposed to be teaching in a much more democratic manner, yet that democratic style isn’t replicated in our staff. It’s still very hierarchical. We have department heads, we have committee heads and a stratification. There’s a hierarchy in the school and there’s a pecking order.”
- why does someone with 25 years get paid more than another better educated, with a better sense of what’s going on, pay based on experience, but all of us are doing the same job
- there is resentment, don't fault those who go home at 3:30 because there are other factor, part-time jobs, kids at a baby-sitter, can't choose your location so often new teachers have to travel a longer distance
- older colleagues need to “understand the other persons lived reality”
- “I think a lot of older teachers have been very, very comfortable for a long time. I don’t even think that the protest has woken up a lot of them. What really got a lot of older, more complacent teachers, (and there some young teachers who are just as complacent in positions of relative security), was this idea of what happens to our pension. If that’s the overriding concern, then there’s something wrong. It should be more about what happens to our colleagues.”
- look at why protest was successful and not successful, look at implications of divisiveness, which is what the bill was intended to do, divide the ranks, did we play into the governments hands
- not all older teachers are like that, a lot very helpful, go out of their way to help beginners
- “Let’s start doing what we say we’re doing. Let’s get rid of the hierarchy.”
- need to get past assembly line mentality in schools
- “When we look at insecurity in young educators and this push to get more credentials, I think that is very telling. Because young educators are told that they need to be qualified to do this job and since you don’t have the experience, you should have all these other things on paper. I’m wondering if this rush to get credentials isn’t playing into the hands of a ministry that sees the fact that the older staff members are insecure because they don’t have all the credentials and it creates internal tensions and conflicts. WE have to be very careful about how we deal with issues of credentials.”
- courses are garbage, you buy your credentials, never enlightening, don’t learn anything new, why are they kept going
- how is college making up professional? Who is on the board? real doubts about what the college is doing? Do we even need a college? Who asked for it?
- “The credential and the so called ‘professional’ college for teachers, I think that they are part of a larger problem of how we organize our work as professionals. It contributes to insecurity and I think, causes insecurity not only among younger teachers, but older teachers and leads to internal strife. It gets us caught up in ‘where’s my pension?’ , ‘where’s my job’, not the idea that maybe the ministry shouldn’t be buying curriculum. Maybe what is going on is wrong. But, we’re so caught up, and it’s only human, in all of these other extraneous issues, that we don’t talk about what we’re here to do.”

Notes regarding context and atmosphere of the interview:

after school, department workroom, participants school
Follow Up Interview Protocol
The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: _______ Angie ________________
Date of Interview: _______ April 8, 1998 ________________
Phone Interview? ____ Yes _______ Interview Taped? _______ Yes / No

Prologue: In response to the recent changes in staffing for the board, this interview is being conducted to reexamine your feelings about job insecurity. Thank you for continuing your participation. This study will assist administrators and colleagues in helping new teachers face various difficulties. The thoughts and opinions that you relate in this interview will help to explain the effects of the current job insecurity, on you personally. Your confidentiality and anonymity will continue to be respected. May I have your permission to use your responses?

1. Please describe your reactions to receiving notification about being terminated. Probes: Did you expect to be laid off? What was your reaction to the wording of the letter? How were you notified?

- I unofficially heard about it, not a huge shock, it was always in the back of my mind
- there were 17 in total at her school, a large group was in the principals office getting the official word, it was really sad, not angry or frustrated
- told in a large group, not individually, the principal thought it was a better way to handle the situation, I was fine, not shocked

2. How do you feel about the board’s handling of the funding formula?
Probes: Do you feel the lay offs were required? Will you remain with the board? Will you take any action?

- in terms of how the board gave notice, I have mixed feelings, the situation is not too bad because the board did a worse case scenario, we can only look to a better situation, we’ve hit bottom, now just wait for a recall, there are lots of rumors, 6 of 8 is something to look forward to
- with the employee relations act, we have to know so far in advance, but when we have to know so early, the board doesn’t know what they have to cut, if you end up having a job, you shouldn’t have to go through the lay off
- excited at the possibility of 6 of 8, but we shouldn’t be put through insecurity if it’s not necessary, went through a bad situation for nothing
- it’s hard to know where to put the blame, I wonder if the board knew about the changes all along

3. What are the effects of this insecurity on your current professional life?
Probes: What relationships did it effect with other staff members? What relationships did it effect with students? Are there any changes in your classroom teaching?
- professional life stayed the same, the staff were very sympathetic
- those who aren't laid off are expressing a lot of anger and frustration, more that me at least
- very supportive staff, the students are also frustrated, they don't want to see teachers go, student groups are trying to take action, have a voice

4. What are the effects of this insecurity on your personal life?
Probes: What decisions have you made due to this lay off? What relationships did it effect with significant people in your life? Has the lay off affected your self image?
- I’m just going day to day, making no decisions now, sit back and wait
- I can’t make any decisions, because I don’t know what will happen

5. What are your plans for next year?
Probes: How will you deal with the layoff? Are you considering other career options?
- if I’m recalled, then I’m back to teaching
- I have no idea if I’m not recalled, maybe a year off to do something else, I haven’t thought that far, going day to day, wait for something definite
- It’s harder to wait for September when I’ll have to change

6. What do you want your colleagues to know about how you are feeling now and how this has affected you?
- I think they need to understand it’s very, very frustrating, when you’re beginning a lot of your drive is to succeed and grow
- you feel you’re being yanked out of a good thing, it’s difficult
- all staff are frustrated, trying to understand, 1 step forward, 2 steps back
- I think a lot of people are aware, many others are angry, one teacher in particular is checking up on my feelings

7. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity, the recent notice of termination or how you feel about your teaching job?
- despite everything, I’m still not at a point of wanting to give up, this is still what I want to do, it’s not the best environment, but I will still do it
- it would be nice to feel settled somewhere, if they can do 6 of 8, then we’re all back, but it’s a waste of time to go through the insecurity
- I have to ask if the board has done all they can or are they using us, did they know all along about the need for lay offs
- the assistant head project: trying to come up with things to do to assist new teachers at the school, he is talking to me about little things that were important, he’s making a handbook for new teachers
- I’m glad their doing it, it’s an example of schools starting to realize they need to do something to help new teachers.
Follow Up Interview Protocol
The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: Robin

Date of Interview: April 16, 1998

Phone Interview? Yes

Interview Taped? Yes / No

Prologue: In response to the recent changes in staffing for the board, this interview is being conducted to reexamine your feelings about job insecurity. Thank you for continuing your participation. This study will assist administrators and colleagues in helping new teachers face various difficulties. The thoughts and opinions that you relate in this interview will help to explain the effects of the current job insecurity, on you personally. Your confidentiality and anonymity will continue to be respected. May I have your permission to use your responses?

1. Please describe your reactions to receiving notification about being terminated. Probes: Did you expect to be laid off? What was your reaction to the wording of the letter? How were you notified?

- I expected to be laid off, my OSSTF contacts had called to warn me, it wasn’t out of the blue and I appreciated that
- on one hand it is was “yeah whatever", I talked to the chair of the board, he was very negative, there is no future is secondary for 7 to 10 years
- I still protested to my MPP, but what can you do, pledge to work hard to prevent a Tory reelection

2. How do you feel about the board’s handling of the funding formula? Probes: Do you feel the layoffs were required? Will you remain with the board? Will you take any action?

- I asked why no other board cut so fast or so far, why are the cuts always on the backs of the young, the board explained that it was cuts in prep time, everything else then went down significantly
- the funding may not be the way the board wanted it, the layoffs are a knee jerk reaction, am I just a pawn in a political game?
- on one hand the board is facing cuts, so what else can they do, but what about other boards who apparently are ignoring the employment standards
- I believe that all boards will cut, the 85 factor is our only hope

3. What are the effects of this insecurity on your current professional life? Probes: What relationships did it effect with other staff members? What relationships did it effect with students? Are there any changes in your classroom teaching?

- I’m currently on maternity leave, but I hear that the school morale is low, I’m at a distance from it, which I appreciate
- I came home with marking, but there's no motivation to finish it
- I'm sick of the merry-go-round, if I'm not recalled I'm paid for 40 weeks

4. What are the effects of this insecurity on your personal life?
Probes: What decisions have you made due to this lay off? What relationships did it effect with significant people in your life? Has the lay off affected your self image?
- with the news, my blood pressure shot up, I almost had to be induced early, there were health concerns related to the lay offs
- I was angry for 2 days, but not I let it go, I take control where I can

5. What are your plans for next year? Probes: How will you deal with the layoff? Are you considering other career options?
- I'm willing to look for another job, but not an idiot job
- waiting to see what happens, I want to use my maternity leave for maternity, not job hunting
- if I'm not recalled there will be others looking for work before me
- I've worked really hard, 6 years in University, 5 professionally, maybe there are other things to focus on
- considered doing Junior qualifications, if I knew about a job maybe I would spend the money, things are a bit more stable in elementary, there is growth there that doesn't transfer to secondary

6. What do you want your colleagues to know about how you are feeling now and how this has affected you?
- I know that they don't understand, they try to empathize but they can't until they are in the same situation, they shouldn’t pretend
- colleagues need to recognize that insecurity affects the human being, not just the teacher, while we are professional, we are also human, there is a burden in being a professional
- quandary about not telling the students, but how can students and parents take action if they don't know, we should let students be in the loop, they're losing out as well and the need to understand
- the administration should let the community know (e.g. Post a board)

7. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity, the recent notice of termination or how you feel about your teaching job?
- this is an awful time to be a teacher, you may have a job, but it's difficult to be positive and not cynical, I don't like my own disillusionment
- insecurity does hurt people, I saw things differently 5 years ago, there's a lack of professional development
- the main problem is that there is no control over the changes, all luck and a numbers game, there's nothing that we can do
- it hurts to leave the kids when there has been a genuine connection
Follow Up Interview Protocol
The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: Cathy
Date of Interview: April 8, 1998
Phone Interview? Yes
Interview Taped? Yes / No

Prologue: In response to the recent changes in staffing for the board, this interview is being conducted to reexamine your feelings about job insecurity. Thank you for continuing your participation. This study will assist administrators and colleagues in helping new teachers face various difficulties. The thoughts and opinions that you relate in this interview will help to explain the effects of the current job insecurity, on you personally. Your confidentiality and anonymity will continue to be respected. May I have your permission to use your responses?

1. Please describe your reactions to receiving notification about being terminated. Probes: Did you expect to be laid off? What was your reaction to the wording of the letter? How were you notified?

   - I expected a letter, I was not surprised
   - but, I expected to be able to apply for transfers (the blue sheets), I was disappointed when I couldn’t apply, I had to wait to be placed

2. How do you feel about the board’s handling of the funding formula? Probes: Do you feel the layoffs were required? Will you remain with the board? Will you take any action?

   - I got some mixed messages, some said that the board had the letters prepared before the funding announcement, did they know what was coming? I don’t understand the process, don’t know the whole story, is the board trying to cover themselves,
   - there is an idea that the board jumped the gun and cut too many teachers
   - I went to a protest at a golf club because it was holding a Tory fund-raiser, I didn’t see a lot of younger teachers there

3. What are the effects of this insecurity on your current professional life? Probes: What relationships did it effect with other staff members? What relationships did it effect with students? Are there any changes in your classroom teaching?

   - my professional life hasn’t changed for now, I do the best that I can do, even though there’s no job, I don’t want to fade out or lose my energy
   - the students know, they say how sad it is and give me hugs
4. What are the effects of this insecurity on your personal life?
   Probes: What decisions have you made due to this lay off? What relationships did it effect with significant people in your life? Has the lay off affected your self image?

   - no it hasn’t affected my self image
   - I am going through some changes in my personal life, my husband is applying to work outside of Ontario, now I don’t have any ties, I don’t feel I have to stay

5. What are your plans for next year?
   Probes: How will you deal with the layoff? Are you considering other career options?

   - next Friday we find out about leaving and going to Alberta
   - I want to get back out west to my family, it’s a better situation out there
   - with the lay off I’m aggressively seeking the move
   - I’m hoping to make contacts and teach in Alberta, there is a school there for young teenage mothers with good prospects
   - if I stay in Ontario, I’ll probably change careers, go into recreation, I don’t want to wait around for a career

6. What do you want your colleagues to know about how you are feeling now and how this has affected you?

   - I feel like people who have energy and a lot more to offer are those being hurt, a number will chose to leave, the system is being blamed
   - the kids will lose out in the long run, the young teachers with a lot to offer and the energy won’t be around
   - those who should be moving on aren’t being encouraged to do so

7. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity, the recent notice of termination or how you feel about your teaching job?

   - we need a voice and aren’t being heard, the younger teachers should rally politically
   - it is more powerful to the public to stand up and say we want a job and can offer a lot
   - it’s important for the young teachers to get active, though not as politically active
Follow Up Interview Protocol
The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: ____________Steve________________
Date of Interview: ____________April 14, 1998________________
Phone Interview? Yes Interview Taped? Yes / No

Prologue: In response to the recent changes in staffing for the board, this interview is being conducted to reexamine your feelings about job insecurity. Thank you for continuing your participation. This study will assist administrators and colleagues in helping new teachers face various difficulties. The thoughts and opinions that you relate in this interview will help to explain the effects of the current job insecurity, on you personally. Your confidentiality and anonymity will continue to be respected. May I have your permission to use your responses?

1. Please describe your reactions to receiving notification about being terminated. Probes: Did you expect to be laid off? What was your reaction to the wording of the letter? How were you notified?
   - it was somewhat expected, had heard the news before being called to the Principal's office, the news was still shocking even if somewhat expected, I didn't think that it would come
   - upsetting, really defected, a little bit angry, it doesn't matter what kind of teacher I am, just how long I've been with the board

2. How do you feel about the board's handling of the funding formula? Probes: Do you feel the lay offs were required? Will you remain with the board? Will you take any action?
   - if the board knows the ramifications of the funding formula, then they have to do what they have to do
   - I want as much advance notice as possible, know the situation
   - in terms of the board's handling of the situation, there wasn't a lot of info from an employee standpoint, there are a lot of questions and angst
   - they have to work with the money they have, but there could be a lot more support given

3. What are the effects of this insecurity on your current professional life? Probes: What relationships did it effect with other staff members? What relationships did it effect with students? Are there any changes in your classroom teaching?
   - my impression is that it had a significant effect on the way I do my job
   - for me, it has effected my professional life, the nature of what we do is continuity, when continuity is gone so is responsibility, for example I might have tried to deal with difficulties with students, now I'm pulling back, can I change anything in 3 months if I'm not seeing a student for five years
   - it's not a lack of caring, almost an "apathy" towards the day to day
- tied to bitterness about his job loss
- new teachers attempt to be exemplary; punctual, no sick days, involved, now it seems “why bother”, you do a lot for the benefit of the kids, but also to get noticed, “I busted my hump for 6 months and there’s no difference, but someone who did nothing has better standing”
- 4 other staff in the same department laid off, including the assistant head
- we see each other every day, I see a profound effect on them as well
- people are irritable, less tolerant, less willing to “go the extra mile”, bitter, there’s a communal depression, morale is low even for those not cut
- people are very nervous about the level of extra work next year

4. What are the effects of this insecurity on your personal life?
Probes: What decisions have you made due to this lay off? What relationships did it effect with significant people in your life? Has the lay off affected your self image?
- started to brace for the future, need to change spending habits, hold back and put some projects on hold, I hope for the best

5. What are your plans for next year? Probes: How will you deal with the layoff? Are you considering other career options?
- I applied to another board (to every head of English in the board)
- attempt at being proactive
- talked to contacts at a community based education program, trying to get a position at summer school, sitting back to see where things go

6. What do you want your colleagues to know about how you are feeling now and how this has affected you?
- not a lot, there are very few who appear to be concerned, older teachers seem more worried about their pensions
- there is a level of ignorance in the senior staff, they believe there will be call backs in September, but we know it won’t happen, they aren’t aware of the circumstances
- the day it happened, said “oh that’s too bad”, now it’s a fact of life, things must go on and the layoffs aren’t mentioned anymore

7. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity, the recent notice of termination or how you feel about your teaching job?
- I’m still a consummate optimist, will get past the bitterness
- when they get rid of 1 old teacher, they can replace with 2 new teachers
- I hope that the government really does want a better system
- hope for the 85 factor, the young teachers will be so happy to have a job they will do anything (perhaps this is part of the governments design)
- this is the second time I have lost my job because of the government
- those on LTO’s are giving up, however, I’m still optimistic
Follow Up Interview Protocol

The Effects of Job Insecurity on Beginning Secondary School Teachers

Name of Person Being Interviewed: Jennifer
Date of Interview: April 8, 1998
Phone Interview? No Interview Taped? Yes / No

Prologue: In response to the recent changes in staffing for the board, this interview is being conducted to reexamine your feelings about job insecurity. Thank you for continuing your participation. This study will assist administrators and colleagues in helping new teachers face various difficulties. The thoughts and opinions that you relate in this interview will help to explain the effects of the current job insecurity, on you personally. Your confidentiality and anonymity will continue to be respected. May I have your permission to use your responses?

1. Please describe your reactions to receiving notification about being terminated. Probes: Did you expect to be laid off? What was your reaction to the wording of the letter? How were you notified?
   - there was no shock, I was contracted from Jan, the end of semester 1 to officially June 17, which is not the end of the semester
   - when I first started I expected that after 2 years I would have a number, after my first contract, I knew I wouldn’t get a number, there was a large lay off in 1996, I’ve done only LTO’s

2. How do you feel about the board’s handling of the funding formula? Probes: Do you feel the lay offs were required? Will you remain with the board? Will you take any action?
   - at one level, I can’t fault the board, the funding formula put them in a predicament, dates changing from Sept. 98 to Aug. 99 messes up the board, as of March 25 we can only use a certain percent of the budget
   - how the board handled the lay offs was not intended to antagonize teachers, they had to hand out notices to avoid contractual obligations
   - the board, because of open sympathy to the teachers during the political protest, was hit the hardest, it’s not an accident that other boards are getting more money, this is a direct hit on the board because the Ministry is sending a message; this is what happens when you’re not on side

3. What are the effects of this insecurity on your current professional life? Probes: What relationships did it effect with other staff members? What relationships did it effect with students? Are there any changes in your classroom teaching?
   - I feel other people’s insecurity, there is a re-evaluation by all teachers, even the secure ones
   - there is restructuring, refunding, the insecurity has “trickled up” to those who always said “I can’t effect me”
- there is a higher stress level at the school, including a VP who is surplus
- there will be a second bump cycle with the VP’s, so everyone is re-evaluating where they are

4. What are the effects of this insecurity on your personal life? Probes: What decisions have you made due to this lay off? What relationships did it effect with significant people in your life? Has the lay off affected your self image?
- there are none because I've been living with insecurity for so long
- I knew well in advance that this position would be terminated

5. What are your plans for next year? Probes: How will you deal with the layoff? Are you considering other career options?
- I have 2 options; either I can go to school for full time studies, I would continue graduate studies at OISE
- or, I am currently working at a business with my sister, I'm invested in a small business and would turn more attention to it, maybe working there 3 days a week

6. What do you want your colleagues to know about how you are feeling now and how this has affected you?
- personally, I am reevaluating my role in the education system, that is fundamentally (at the Ministry level) becoming inequitable
- I’m not sure if I can be part of a system that doesn’t reflect my personal beliefs, I don’t think that education should be run this way
- the cuts won’t affect affluent kids, but what about the others?
- this directly affects how I look at teaching, I don’t want to invest time and energy that doesn’t help students who need help
- I am much more cynical about the difference that I can make, I need to rethink where I fit in this new system

7. Is there anything else you would like to say about job insecurity, the recent notice of termination or how you feel about your teaching job?
- I think a lot of people, who have been teaching 5 years of more (maybe 8 to 10 with contracts), people who felt they had security feel abandoned by colleagues, they all have ties to the community, they felt if they put in extra time, tried different approaches then they would be recognized for this
- so far there’s no “what can we do to help these people?”, “what are they doing next year?”
- what has been done by our colleagues? Other don’t understand the severity of the crisis
- this is another source of divisiveness, some who haven’t done a thing are safe, there is resentment, it’s them and us, the work of young teachers is kept but not acknowledged