

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE BC TEACHER ON CALL
SYSTEM**

by

Anita Moore

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APPROVAL

Name: Anita Moore
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of Thesis: An Examination of the BC Teacher on Call System

Examining Committee:

Chair: Paul Neufeld
[Correct title – Consult your Grad Secretary/istant]

Robin Barrow
Senior Supervisor
Professor of Education

Ann Chinnery
Supervisor
Assistant Professor of Education

Jean Warburton
External Examiner
Professor of Education

Date Defended/Approved: _____

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the substitute teacher system in British Columbia. It is argued that strengths include the use of qualified teachers as substitutes, provisions for professional development, protection of preparation time for contract teachers, and central management of the system. Weaknesses identified include a lack of preparation in teacher training programs for the role of substitute teacher, a lack of guidance and support within schools, the frequency of substitute teachers covering classes in subject areas and levels outside their training, and unsatisfactory working conditions. Although further inquiry is needed, it is therefore suggested that better preparation of beginning teachers for the realities of substitute teaching work in teacher preparation programs, the development of a systematic theory of substitute teaching, a reduction or elimination of out-of-field teaching, and continued efforts to resolve issues surrounding working conditions would be beneficial changes to the current system.

Keywords: substitute teacher; out-of-field teaching; teacher-on-call; teacher preparation programs; working conditions; professional development

Subject Terms: Substitute teachers – British Columbia; Teachers – Job satisfaction – Canada; Teachers – Training of; School management and organization – Canada

To my family

&

All of the TOCs waiting for continuing contracts

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GLOSSARY

BCCT	British Columbia College of Teachers
BCPSEA	British Columbia Public School Employers' Association
BCTF	British Columbia Teachers' Federation
Continuing Contract	A continuing teaching contract that will be renewed each year.
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families. Created June 28, 2007 on the disbanding of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).
GED	General Education Diploma
LEA	Local Education Authority
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Out-of-field teaching	This refers to teaching done outside of one's subject(s) or level(s) of preparation.
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
Teacher on Call	This term is used in British Columbia to denote a substitute teacher. The terms relief teacher and supply teacher are synonyms for substitute teacher.
Temporary Contract	A part-time or full-time teaching contract with a definitive end date.

1: BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Teachers-on-call (TOCs) fulfill a central role in maintaining the continuity of K-12 education in British Columbia. Although their work is usually temporary, and sometimes undervalued, the system as it is currently organized could not operate without them. In a study conducted in the U.S., Varlas (2001) found that “students spend 5-10% of the school year under the instruction of a substitute teacher” (p.1). This means that “on average, a student is taught by a substitute teacher for 187 days—more than a full year of school—from kindergarten through 12th grade” (Russo, 2001, pp. 6-7). On a typical day in the United States, “approximately 5 million children arrive in their classrooms to find a substitute teacher” (Jones & Hawkins, 2000, p. 34). For those students that spend 10% or more of their time with a TOC, the influence of TOCs may be significant, and thus it is important to consider the unique contribution of TOCs to the education system overall. According to the British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT) 73.7% of teachers surveyed in 2003 began their careers as TOCs (BCCT, 2003). With such a large role in our education system, it is important not to overlook TOCs in educational research.

There is currently very little research focused on TOCs and most of what there is focuses on the experiences and perceptions of TOCs and the technical and managerial aspects of their role¹. Although these studies have provided

valuable information, they have not attempted to evaluate the TOC system itself. Many of the studies exploring the experiences and perceptions of TOCs have found that TOCs themselves routinely identify flexibility, diversity of experience, and the relative lack of traditional teacher responsibilities as positive and very attractive aspects of TOCing, yet these same research studies identify a great deal of dissatisfaction regarding the uncertainty inherent in on-call work and the treatment of TOCs by their employers, other staff members, and even students (e.g. Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Cornwall, 2004; Bodin & Clarke, 2002). Given the general agreement regarding TOC experiences across districts, provinces, and even countries, it seems clear that the next step is to perform an evaluation in the hope that it may point out the way to improving these experiences. Such an evaluation should focus on the working conditions for TOCs, but ideally would do so while simultaneously evaluating the educational value for students. Merely ensuring TOC satisfaction, without also providing meaningful educational experiences for students, would be a somewhat hollow victory. As a preparation for such an evaluation, this study seeks to both identify and frame the problem, which to date has not received adequate discussion in the academic literature.

1.2 Overview of TOC policies in British Columbia

1.2.1 What is a TOC?

In BC there are 3 general teacher categories. Contract teachers are teachers who have permanent and continuing teaching positions. These teachers can be either full-time or part-time and make up the majority of teachers in BC. Temporary contract teachers are those that have been awarded a

temporary teaching position, either full-time or part-time, with a definitive end date. Temporary contracts usually span between 20 days and 10 months. TOCs work as casual employees and are not guaranteed work on a daily basis. A TOC assignment may be as short as half a day, or as long as several months. Most assignments are only for a single day. After a certain number of days in a particular assignment (usually 20 days), the TOC is placed on a temporary contract. In general, TOCs do not get health or dental benefits, while temporary contract teachers and continuing contract teachers do.

The majority of TOCs convert to continuing status by accruing enough time on temporary contracts. Only those on continuing contract have a guarantee of continuous work in a school district, and therefore most TOCs and temporary contract teachers aim towards attaining continuing status. To achieve this, they can apply directly for continuing contract postings, but they are not likely to be awarded the position unless there are no other qualified applicants with more seniority. Generally, a TOC must complete between 10 and 20 months on temporary contracts (the length of time varies by school district) before converting to continuing status. The hiring practices involved in getting a temporary contract vary greatly by district and are sometimes very ambiguous. Once in a continuing contract, teachers without sufficient seniority are still at risk of being laid off if a decline in school funding or student number results in a downsizing of teaching staff. These teachers will be given priority for future positions.

In order to be hired as a TOC in BC, a teacher must hold a valid BC teaching certificate. A TOC applies to a school district with his or her resume, university transcript, practicum reports, letters of recommendation, copies of qualifications, and a written account of his 'teaching philosophy' (the written teaching philosophy is an informal account of a teacher's views on teaching and learning). If the school district is interested, the applicant is granted an interview. Once hired, the TOC is added to the list and will begin receiving phone calls. Each school district is operated individually and a TOC must apply to each one for which he or she wishes to work.

The current per diem rate in BC has been harmonized to \$190 per day. If a TOC works four consecutive days in the same district, he or she is paid according to the teacher's salary scale retroactive to the first day worked. This means that \$190 is the minimum amount a TOC can be paid for a day of work. The maximum amount is based on the number of years of experience. TOC assignments are recognized as teaching experience for purposes of placement on the salary scale, with 160 days of on-call teaching being equivalent to one year of regular teaching.

TOCs are generally contacted by telephone the night before, or the morning of, their assignment. A TOC has the option of accepting or declining each assignment depending on whether they feel comfortable with the subject/level or wish to work that particular day. It is expected that the contract teacher will have planned the lessons for the day, and that at the end of the day

the TOC will leave a note explaining what was accomplished, whether there were behaviour concerns, and what should be taught the next day.

1.2.2 TOC Policies

“Substitute teachers have, of course, become significantly elevated in my eyes. With a swift pen will I strike away any suggestion they should be deprived of preps, assigned extra supervision, or pay for coffee. I will always try to welcome them and check on them during the day, ensuring they have all they need. I will do everything I can to recognize them and enhance their status in the eyes of the profession.”

(Vancouver Principal Peter Bayley, after a year of subbing in Australia)

In British Columbia, the policies and procedures affecting TOCs, as with all other teachers, are outlined in the provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement. This agreement is binding for all school districts, but surprisingly it does not contain language that pertains directly to many of the issues raised by TOCs. There is widespread concern among TOCs that the call out system used to dispatch TOCs is not equitable, that there is a lack of health and dental benefits for TOCs, and that TOCs in general suffer from underemployment, with the average TOC making only \$12,073.23 per year (British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), 2005).

The policies outlined in the provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement represent the formal regulations that are enforceable in all school districts across British Columbia. These policies and procedures can be organized into 3

categories: (1) administrative issues (such as holding a B.C. Teaching Certificate, accruing teaching experience, the per diem rate), (2) BCTF issues (such as membership, compensation for facilitating workshops, BCTF stance on TOC services), and (3) a TOC's role in the school district (such as required duties, inclusion in in-service activities, participation in decision making processes).

Several characteristics make these TOC policies and procedures noteworthy. First, by and large these policies are not specific enough to offer clear and direct guidance to administrators or TOCs. For instance:

the functions of a teacher on call should be the same as those of the teacher for whom he/she is substituting, i.e., to give tuition or instruction or to administer or supervise instructional service in a public school.

Specialized functions, such as tutoring, would be performed only if these were part of the regular member's duties. (49.03)

It is unclear whether a TOC must be given the preparation time of the contract teacher, whether a TOC must fulfil supervision duties before or after school, and whether a TOC should take over coaching the football team if such a duty fell on the teacher he or she was replacing. Many school districts have adopted differing interpretations of this particular policy and can do so because it does not fully take into account the complexities of a teacher's functions. This particular policy can be a source of frustration for many TOCs because some districts understand the policy to mean that a TOC should be granted the preparation time of the teacher he is replacing, and consequently pay an additional amount if

the TOC is required to cover another teacher's class during this time. In other districts, the TOC is deemed to be available for use at the discretion of the school and can be asked to cover another teacher's classes during his preparation time, sent to help in the learning centre or can even be sent to do clerical work in the library or the school office. The frustration over these differing interpretations can have a financial component and may also cause TOCs to feel that they are being unfairly treated, but of more significance is the potential presumption by some schools and school districts that TOCs, even when teaching a subject or level outside their area of formal training, do not need to prepare (Bodin & Clarke, 2002). Such a practice may propagate the perception that TOCs are 'babysitters' and possibly reduces their effectiveness as educators*.

* I have experienced firsthand the frustration of TOCs in regards to the different ways school districts approach preparation time for TOCs. I can understand that TOCs do not always need this preparation time and that often a TOC will have nothing to do besides read a novel or surf the internet. On the other hand, since most of my TOCing has been done in science and math (areas I have no formal training in) preparation time is particularly important for me so I can review the textbook, read through the notes, try the assignment questions, or set up science labs. One of the school districts I work in almost always allows TOCs to use their preparation time in whatever way they choose; however, the other school district I work in has generally assigned me an additional class to cover, or has sent me to the learning centre or the library to help out.

One experience in particular stands out in my mind. I was called in to teach science 10 and biology 11, both being subjects with which I have very little experience and no formal training. I was requested by the regular teacher because she knew there were very few science TOCs in the district, but I had a good rapport with the students, and she felt that I followed her lesson plans closely. She did not know she was going to be away that day, and so her instructions included finding other teachers to ask for particular worksheets, looking through her materials to find activities I thought would be useful on the assigned topic, and finding a few videos to show the classes. When I signed in that morning I was asked to report to the TOC clerk at the beginning of my preparation block, which was a standard practice at this particular school. I had not seen the notes left by the regular teacher at this time, so I could not inform the TOC clerk that I had a great deal of actual preparation to do. All the same, I reported to the TOC clerk at the beginning of my preparation block with a large binder and several folders in hand as I was on my way to the photocopier, but I wanted her to know that I had to plan the afternoon classes during this time.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement also contains several declarations that serve to highlight the lack of practical guidance. A statement such as “no person without a valid B.C. Certificate or Letter of Permission should be assigned to a class as a teacher on call except where hiring a qualified teacher on call is impossible” (49.01) may be an important directive from the point of view of maintaining Federation control of the profession, but it is surely arguable that such statements should not compose the bulk of the guidelines, particularly given the paucity of reference to specifically educational considerations. Of more concern are the assertions that suggest educators lack commonsense or general courtesy. It seems sad that it is felt necessary to explicitly mandate that “each school staff should ensure that teachers on call are made to feel that they are welcome additions to the teaching staff” (49.12). In so far as such a statement suggests that this is an active concern, it is unlikely that it will in itself lead to anything being done to address the problem in an effective manner.

The renegotiation of the provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement of June 30, 2006, added some new provisions. TOCs daily rates were increased in accordance with the yearly increases negotiated for all teachers (a 2.5% increase effective each July 1 between 2006 and 2009, and a 2.0% increase effective

To my shock and dismay she was very curt with me and told me that she had already given another teacher a free block so I could take his class. “What do you expect me to do now?” she asked me. “Well,” I told her politely, “I will leave you with these binders and you can plan the afternoon classes and I will just come by after lunch to pick everything up.” She grumbled and called the other teacher to say he would have to teach his own class. When she hung up the phone she said, “Just so you know, K----- is supposed to plan everything when she is going to be away. During this time you belong to us.”

Although the majority of TOC clerks try their best to be understanding when you make it clear that you need to actually use your preparation time to prepare, this was unfortunately not an isolated incident.

June 30, 2010). Moreover, effective April 1, 2006 TOCs earned seniority for days of service, with 19 days being equivalent to one month, and 189 days being equivalent to one year.

The nature of the provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement is such that it allows Locals various freedoms relating to policies and procedures not mentioned or clearly specified in the provincial agreement. There is a great deal of variation between Locals, which has been documented in the 2003 Teacher on Call Local Update conducted by the BCTF. This questionnaire focused on TOC pay and benefits, seniority and hiring rights, TOC roles within the Local, call-out procedures, communications strategies, professional development funds, and bargaining issues, in an attempt to map the similarities and differences in TOC policy and practice in the responding districts. Forty-six Locals, out of a possible sixty, responded to the survey. The diverse approaches to TOC management across Locals, as well as many of the prominent concerns regarding the work conditions of TOCs, are highlighted in this survey.

The raising of the minimum daily rate to \$190 represents a substantial step towards achieving equity among TOCs in different school districts. Prior to the 2006 Collective Bargaining Agreement the daily rates ranged from \$129.45 to \$218.93, as documented in the 2003 survey. This is the most recent survey completed by the BCTF and although it does not accurately reflect current levels of compensation, it clearly illuminates the diversity that continues to exist between districts and provides some insight into the compensation issues that prompted a harmonization of the daily rate. The provisions for health benefits

and vacation pay further illustrate the multiplicity in TOC compensation. All districts included in the survey paid TOCs some amount in lieu of benefits, usually at the rate of \$3.00 per day; however, some Locals paid as much as 5% or even 8%. Many districts offered access to benefits only if the TOC paid 100% of the cost, with many districts noting that the high cost of premiums makes benefits unaffordable for most TOCs. There was a great deal of variation in terms of vacation pay, with some Locals including it in the pay in lieu of benefits, some not paying it at all, and some paying an additional 4% to 8% to TOCs. In 20 Locals TOCs were paid monthly, in 16 they were paid bi-weekly (10 Locals did not specify). Some of the numbers will have changed since 2003; however, it is doubtful that they are any less diverse. The overarching finding of this survey was the lack of consistency between school districts on almost every point of inquiry.

In regard to the question of hiring rights and the eventual conversion to a continuing contract, some districts do not distinguish between TOCs and external applicants while others give TOCs priority. In some Locals, a TOC must work a certain number of days before being given preference over external applicants, but there is considerable variation even then in the number of days or the length of contract required. In some districts TOCs must accrue a certain amount of temporary contract time to convert to a continuing contract (for example: 10 months in 3 years; 15 months of aggregate service with one contract being 6 months or more; 10 months in one year or 20 months in three years).

In contrast to this theme of disparate treatment, it has become apparent that TOCs routinely raise the same issues regarding work conditions and fair treatment, with many of these complaints echoed in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The ranging nature of call out procedures is currently hotly debated among educators in the province, particularly now that the 2006 Collective Bargaining Agreement allows all TOCs to accrue seniority while working on scale. Many school districts now employ computerized telephone dispatch systems that call TOCs when an assignment is available. In addition, many districts employ a combination of a request system and a rotational-by-subject/level system to determine which TOC is assigned which dispatch. Contract teachers can request specific TOCs and, if available, one of these TOCs will be assigned the dispatch. If a teacher does not request a TOC, the computer is programmed to go through a rotation of TOCs who meet the subject and level requirements of the dispatch until it finds one available. In the absence of a specific request, the computer continues through this rotation with each new dispatch in an attempt to maintain a level of equity among TOCs and to ensure that all TOCs receive a reasonable number of assignments.

There are some concerns over the use of automated dispatch systems relating to how long it takes to book days off using the telephone system and the inconvenience of having to answer your phone to receive the assignment, as the computer does not leave messages. But the chief concerns lie with the use of the request system. Many TOCs feel that requesting is a form of evaluation, and

that this is inappropriate in that contract teachers and teachers-on-call hold the same qualifications (“Point/Counter-point”, 2006). The new provisions for the accrual of seniority by TOCs have serious implications in connection with the request system. Since TOCs now earn seniority while working on scale, the request system gives contract teachers some influence over who will earn seniority and who will not. Once a TOC has converted to continuing status, seniority may later determine if he or she is laid off at the end of the school year, as well as which laid-off teachers are recalled in September. Contract teachers argue that if they have found a TOC who works well in their classroom, then it is best for their students if this individual returns to cover future absences and maintain a level of continuity (“Point/Counter-point”, 2006). In large urban areas the request system and the rotation system often work together to ensure that all TOCs have a reasonable amount of work; however, in rural areas and smaller districts it may take a long time for new TOCs to build a reputation and they may receive very little work based on the rotation system alone.

Hiring practices are also a point of contention among TOCs (BCTF, 2003; BCTF, 2005; Duggleby & Badali, 2007). In many cases, the hiring practices of school districts lack transparency and are often not directly based on seniority. Although TOCs are now accruing seniority, in most districts such seniority is not applied until after the TOC has converted to a continuing contract. At this point the seniority will be considered if there are layoffs or recalls. TOCs would like there to be a reasonable amount of transparency surrounding hiring practices, which would allow for reasonable expectations regarding the likelihood of

attaining a temporary or continuing contract (Duggleby & Badali, 2007). Presently, many TOCs are simply 'waiting for a break' and trying to make connections with teachers, administrators and school staff in the hope that someone will recommend them for a position. Alternatively, TOCs would like to be given a position based on their qualifications and teaching ability, rather than their capacity for forming relationships or the mere luck of the draw (Duggleby & Badali, 2007).

There is also concern over unrestricted TOC lists (BCTF, 2003). Some school districts have a maximum number of TOCs allowable at one time, while other districts will hire as many TOCs as apply. Having too many TOCs on a list clearly means that there will be less work for everyone; however, some districts believe that appointing more TOCs than is strictly necessary is a sensible policy since many TOCs are lost through attrition as the school year progresses. TOCs may interpret such a policy as evidence of the school district's lack of concern for them as individuals with financial obligations and career aspirations.

Underlying much of the dissatisfaction experienced by TOCs are monetary issues (e.g. BCTF, 2003; BCTF, 2005; Gonzales, 2002). As mentioned above, historically there has been a great deal of diversity surrounding the compensation provided for TOCs, although this has been reduced to some degree by the standardization of the daily rate. Yet, the lack of health and dental benefits for TOCs remains a substantial concern. Particularly as the time spent working as a TOC has increased and may now last several years. School districts have responded that such a plan would be too expensive.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the use of retired teachers as TOCs (BCTF, 2003). Underemployed TOCs who are struggling to make ends meet are frustrated by the fact that they are competing for jobs with teachers eligible for a pension. Given that almost all new teachers must begin as TOCs, this can be a very trying reality to accept. Some districts have made attempts to ensure that all beginning teachers are dispatched before retired teachers are utilized; however, it is not known if this is true for all districts, or whether such measures are effective in all cases.

Finally, TOCs have often complained about health and safety issues associated with working in different classrooms and schools on a regular basis (BCTF, 2003). This includes being provided with evacuation plans, the location of emergency equipment, the name and contact information for the first-aid officers, and information on students with specific health concerns. Some schools provide this information in a booklet given to the TOC when he or she signs in at the office, while other schools do not. There are also issues relating to the personal safety of TOCs, as some have been confronted in a violent manner by students. When TOCs lack all knowledge of the students, these confrontations can escalate into serious altercations.

In my own experience, there have been occasions on which a school has handled health and safety concerns in a clumsy and unhelpful way. At the beginning of my second year as a TOC, the school district had begun a new initiative aimed at familiarizing TOCs with the health and safety procedures in each school. As a result, the TOC clerks were asking TOCs to become familiar

with the necessary health and safety information and then complete and sign a form in acknowledgment. At one particular school I arrived a short time before the start of classes and was asked by the TOC clerk to watch a power point presentation on that school's health and safety procedures. I was anxious because I wanted to find my classroom and read through the lesson plans in preparation for the day. I began with every intention of absorbing the information in the power point, but it was far too long to be fully understood in the time available, and I was more focused on the necessity of preparing both practically and mentally for that day's classes. In the end I blindly initialled each box on the form and signed the bottom.

Treating matters of health and safety in such a rushed way diminishes the importance of such knowledge, places an added stress on TOCs to accommodate these orientations into an already demanding day, and can potentially leaves the TOC unprepared should an actual safety concern arise.

1.2.2.1 TOC Award in 2006 Collective Bargaining Agreement

The Industrial Inquiry Commission made several binding recommendations relating to TOCs in order to end the collective bargaining dispute between the BCTF and the BC Public Schools Employer's Association (BCPSEA) in October 2005. An awareness of these recommendations provides a better understanding of the current situation of TOCs and offers some insight into the route TOCs have taken to arrive at their current position. These recommendations can be summarized as follows: (1) All TOCs will receive a minimum daily base rate of \$190 per day; (2) TOCs will be paid in accordance

with the provincial salary grid after three consecutive days of work; (3) Payments in lieu of benefits continue to be paid to TOCs; (4) TOCs accumulate seniority while being paid on the provincial salary grid.

The two most important TOC issues which were addressed in this award were the harmonization of the per diem rate to \$190, and the assertion that TOCs will now accrue seniority. Moreover, it is clear that wages, benefits, and seniority represent the greatest concern for TOCs and are issues that have continued to be raised during collective bargaining.

1.2.3 Brief Look at BCTF and BCCT Survey Results

Surveys were conducted by both the BCTF and the BCCT into the perceptions, experiences, and work patterns of TOCs throughout British Columbia. The 2005 TOC Survey, conducted by the BCTF, asked respondents to identify important TOC issues. The survey included 1,861 teachers and found that the most important issue cited by respondents was the hiring practice for attaining a contract (31.4%), followed by the amount of work for TOCs (28.6%). Benefits were also a concern (10.8%), as was call-out fairness (9.9%).

The BCCT, the self-regulatory body of the teaching profession, conducts its own surveys of recent graduates from teacher education programs. In 2003 the BCCT sent surveys to teachers who had received their certifications in 1999 and 2002. The survey was mailed to 3,543 members of the BCCT and usable surveys were returned by 1,651 teachers.

As part of the BCCT inquiry, respondents were asked about their first paid employment. Of those surveyed, 73.7% began their careers as TOCs. Only 17.9% reported their first paid position to be full-time. When asked about their current employment, 39.9% were still working as TOCs, while 44.3% had secured full-time employment.

A comparison between the first paid employment and the current employment of respondents showed a gain of 327 full-time positions, 66 part-time positions, and a reduction of 448 teachers previously reporting their employment as a TOC. Respondents had completed a teacher certification program within 1-4 years of the survey date.

The BCCT survey also attempted to collect data on out-of-field teaching in secondary schools by asking respondents to identify the areas in which they hold a major or minor, along with the subject area they teach most. Out-of-field teaching refers to the assigning of teachers to teach in areas outside their formal training. This practice is common for both TOCs and contract teachers and is arguably a result of the restrictions placed on schools by government funding. Some contract teachers are required to teach in multiple departments in order to schedule each teacher for 7 classes per year, which represents a full-time teaching load in B.C. Furthermore, the lack of available TOCs in specific subject areas, the order in which TOCs are dispatched, and the frequency of multi-subject dispatches, makes out-of-field teaching a widespread occurrence for TOCs. The BCCT survey found the following:

Table 1.1 Percent of Out-Of-Field Teaching

Percent of Out-of-Field Teaching by Subject Area for Secondary Program Graduates			
Subject Area	Number Holding Major or Minor in Area and Teaching the Subject	Number who Report Teaching the Subject Area	Percent Out-of-Field (e.g. $18-2/18 = 88.9$)
Computer Science	2	18	88.9
Mathematics	70	130	46.2
Earth Science	17	28	39.3
Physics	22	31	29.0
Drama	22	31	29.0
Business Education	17	23	26.1
ESL	28	37	24.3
Home Economics	22	29	24.1
Chemistry	47	50	06.0
French	43	33	None
Physical Education	63	55	None
English	131	119	None
Geography	64	45	None
Social Studies	107	93	None
Music	23	16	None
Biology	126	54	None
History	112	58	None

The survey demonstrates a significant amount of out-of-field teaching in business, mathematics, and computing science. By contrast, no out-of-field teaching was found in arts subjects including English, social studies and music. This disparity may be the result of an oversupply of teachers in these subject areas as compared to areas such as mathematics and computer science. This is of particular concern given that many of the subjects in which out-of-field teaching is common (e.g. computing science) would likely be challenging for a teacher who did not have formal training in the area.

1.3 Other Systems

A great deal of the research referred to in discussions of the issues in BC has been conducted in the United States or Britain. Differences inherent in other systems makes direct application of their findings to BC inadvisable. Nonetheless, some of the insights produced by such research may provide a starting point for conducting similar studies in BC, or may raise awareness of issues that had not been considered. Since some of this research will be referenced in this paper, a brief overview of each system is included.

1.3.1 The British Model

The substitute teacher in Britain is often referred to as a supply teacher. Supply teachers are most likely to be young overseas travellers with teaching certificates from Canada, New Zealand or Australia, Newly Qualified Teachers

(NQTs) or other unqualified staff (Barlin & Hallgarten, 2002)[†]. Data collection on supply teachers is problematic because the terminology is not consistent and terms such as “occasional”, “temporary”, “floating”, “emergency cover”, “short-term supply”, “long-term supply”, “overseas”, “agency” and “non-agency” are often used interchangeably to describe supply teachers. In England, the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) uses the term “occasional teacher” to denote full-time teachers on contracts of less than a month, whereas supply agencies include those on contracts of more than a month, and sometimes more than a term. In addition, Barlin & Hallgarten (2002) note that there has been a drastic shift from Local Education Authority (LEA) supply pools to private supply agencies. With the move to the private sector, data collection becomes incredibly difficult, as information is not willingly shared due to the competitive nature of this market.

[†] I spent the 2005/2006 school year working as a supply teacher in London, England. My experience allowed me to better appreciate the differences in the recruitment and assignment of substitute teachers between Canada and the UK. I was originally recruited in Canada by a supply agency that placed teachers throughout the United Kingdom. I was given the choice of taking a full-time position before arriving in the UK, or starting out as a daily supply teacher. I chose the latter because I had heard that some of the schools were quite challenging and I wanted to try out a few schools before accepting anything permanent. I also wanted to have time for travelling and so I wanted to avoid too much preparation and marking.

My first 2 months were spent as a daily supply teacher in Bristol and London. During this time I taught nursery (4 year olds) to A level (grade 12 and 13) in a variety of subject areas. Many days were very challenging (e.g. a small fire, a table thrown across the room, a few fights, and a student jumping out a window), but some days were very enjoyable.

For the remainder of the year I accepted a full-time contract teaching year 7 to A level maths at a high school, where I was one of several overseas teachers on a long-term contract. The school paid the agency, which in turn paid me. I received about £127 per day, but was told by the school that the agency was being paid £180 per day. Looking back, the maths department treated me with a respect equal to that of the regular teachers and I felt included and welcome in all of their activities. Furthermore, the agency provided workshops on classroom management and curriculum along with social events to connect overseas teachers working in London. Despite the challenges in behaviour that are common in many of the schools where overseas teachers are assigned, I thoroughly enjoyed my time teaching in London.

In England, when a teacher is absent for one day, or a few days, his or her classes are generally covered by other teachers in the school during their preparation time. In September 2004 the government and the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) decreed that all schools had to make sure teachers would do no more than 38 hours of cover each year. As a result, the position of cover supervisor, a full-time job covering lessons across the whole curriculum for teachers absent because of illness or coursework, was created. This position does not require any qualifications or training and is paid at a minimum wage (e.g. £8-12 per hour; £40-65 per day). There is very little information, beyond anecdotes, to allow for an evaluation of the cover supervisor position; however, there does seem to be a combination of relief amongst regular teachers at being given some of their preparation time back, and an antipathy for the unqualified cover supervisors who are sometimes felt to make a mockery out of teaching.

The DCSF has demonstrated a dramatic rise in the number of supply teachers (exclusive of cover supervisors):

Table 1.2 Teacher Distribution in England

Teacher Distribution in England (000s)									
	1997	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Teachers	412.8	421.3	429.8	437.1	438.4	442.1	447.0	448.4	448.4
Occasional*	13.6	16.7	19.6	17.5	14.8	14.5	15.1	12.9	13.2

Teacher Distribution in England (000s)									
	1997	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Overseas Trained Teachers and Instructors without QTS	2.5	3.2	4.3	8.1	11.0	11.6	12.1	11.8	11.0
Teachers on Employment Based Routes to QTS**	0.5	0.6	1.3	3.3	4.2	6.0	6.4	6.1	5.7

* 2001 includes occasional teachers without QTS from outside the European Economic Area. Since 2002 all occasional teachers without QTS are included.

** Those of the Graduate Teacher Programme, the Registered Teachers Programme, the Overseas Trained Teachers Programme, or the Teach First Scheme.

Source: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000743/SFR29_2007v3.pdf

In 2007, supply teachers represented about 6.7% of the overall teaching force according to DCSF data; however, agencies have estimated supply teachers to be at approximately 10% of the work force (Barlin & Hallgarten, 2002).

1.3.2 The American Model

The U.S. education model shares some similarities with both the English model and the British Columbian model.

Substitute teachers apply to the school district in which they wish to work and, if they meet the necessary requirements for that district and that state, they may be offered employment. If a substitute teaching position is attained, the substitute teacher will be contacted when assignments are available. Both the American and BC models manage substitute teachers through the school district board office, whereas in England individual schools work with supply agencies or individual supply teachers to meet their needs.

Wyld (1995) notes that up to 10% of teachers in the United States are absent each day. Because of this trend, many states are relaxing their substitute teacher requirements. Approximately half of the US states simply require an applicant to be over the age of 18 and hold a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED), with the national pay average for a substitute teacher at \$65 per day. In the U.S. substitutes receive no health insurance (unless they join a national substitute organization), and no other benefits (National Education Association, 2000-01).

1.4 The Problem

The delivery and management of education has changed significantly as society has evolved. There is an expectation that educators will be responsive to changes in society and adjust accordingly. But, as with any highly complex structure, it is often difficult to ensure that progress in one respect is marked by progress in other respects. Moreover, once changes have begun in a particular direction, it can be difficult to slow the momentum long enough to fully consider the potential consequences.

TOCing is only one part of a much larger and more complex educational structure. The management and implementation of the TOC structure has of course developed alongside the development of the education system as a whole in BC. Much of this development has been a response to the changing needs of schools and school districts. Such change has resulted from an increase in professional development and collaboration opportunities, which has pulled more contract teachers out of classrooms (Varlas, 2001). The overall aim

is to develop a goal of life-long learning amongst teachers, keep up with new advances in technology and teaching techniques, and provide opportunities for teachers to work together on the development of teaching and assessment strategies. As a result an increased number of TOCs has been required. Hiring practices have changed to give schools more flexibility in the face of declining student enrolment and later teacher retirement ages. This has resulted in an increase in temporary contract positions as well as the length of time spent on the TOC list before receiving a continuing contract.

But education, whatever else it is about, is surely concerned with developing understanding through learning. And while there are of course social and other practical considerations to be taken into account, we should always have an eye on what is educationally beneficial. There is very little evidence that educational consideration has played a major part in making decisions about the roles of TOCs. It may be the case that the BC TOC system represents the most educationally worthwhile system of any currently in use, but we need to examine the issue. For it may be that the system serves the purposes of contract teachers and school districts while neglecting the educational needs of the students or the professional requirements of the TOCs themselves. It is important to go beyond purely managerial discussions to an evaluation of the educational role of TOCs in BC.

In the subsequent chapters I will therefore be examining the following questions: What are the strengths and weaknesses, educational and otherwise,

of the current structure? Whom does the current structure benefit? Who ought to benefit from it? and How can the system be improved?

2: PREVIOUS RESEARCH

2.1 Overview of Previous Research

2.1.1 Organization and Management

A relatively small portion of educational research has focused on TOCs; a reasonable amount of TOC inquiry has focused on how to better organize and manage TOCs. Over 70 years ago, Baldwin (1934) set out to evaluate the organization and administration of substitute teaching services and set down several recommendations. Among the most significant were the centralization of the service under the control of the superintendent of schools, the requirement that substitute teachers hold teaching certificates, the use of full-time teachers for supply service, the provision of in-service training, the need for supervision of substitute teachers, and the recommendation that professional qualifications and experience should be recognized in the salary rates for substitute service. Many of the points Baldwin addressed are still being debated today, suggesting that perhaps the issue has not received sufficient attention.

More recently, Vanderlinde (1985) conducted a study on TOCs in a Regina Catholic school division. She made several recommendations for improving the effectiveness of substitute teaching, and noted that the responsibility for these improvements must be shared among school boards, principals, teachers, substitute teachers, and the Saskatchewan Teacher Federation. Like Baldwin, Vanderlinde made a number of practical suggestions

involving substitute teacher participation in professional development, pay equity, the creation of school handbooks, feedback from the principal, and the opportunity for substitute teachers to meet as a group to share concerns. Similar concerns were raised by Dendwick (1993) in a study conducted in Edmonton, and by the British Columbia Teacher's Federation 2005 Survey.

Various conceptual frameworks have been developed to assist in representing the professional demands and the practical realities of substitute teaching. For example, Tomei & Cornett (2002) framed the role in terms of twelve Rs: routines, responsibility, reasonableness, resilience, resourcefulness, retreat, research, respect, reward, readiness, relevance, and reflection. Such frameworks may provide a useful starting point from which to begin discussions; however, there is a danger that such organizational structures could limit dialogue on aspects of TOCing that do not easily fit within the framework.

Jack (1972) documented her experiences as a substitute teacher in the United States in her book "Hey, teach". She wrote up her experiences in story form, and in the process there was perhaps some degree of creative license. Nonetheless, she makes note of many of the same issues in organization and management as Baldwin and Vanderlinde. The following passage demonstrates her sometimes bold recounting of her experiences: "a perfect substitute is a cross between a genius and an idiot. He must be smart enough to handle all discipline problems effectively and do a superb job of teaching any subject in the curriculum without any preparation whatsoever and even without a textbook. Then he must have such a low I.Q. that he doesn't realize he is being exploited

by the administration” (p. 49). Her text is filled with a number of such pointed remarks and offers the reader a look at both the positive and negative facets of her teaching experiences (with the negative aspects receiving proportionately more attention). Her work is not a traditional academic inquiry, and although one might find her rather cynical about the whole substitute teaching experience, her opinions are not too far off those raised by substitute teachers in academic studies.

As time has progressed, technological advancements have assisted in addressing some of the organizational issues related to substitute teachers. Bernasconi (2000) touches on one of these advancements in an article on automated substitute notification – that is to say that use of computers to notify substitutes of available assignments over the telephone. This technology is used in many school districts in British Columbia. By using an automated system, school districts are increasing their efficiency while decreasing their costs. However, it should be noted that such technological ‘solutions’ sometimes create new problems of their own. For instance, concerns have been raised over the loss of human contact, the inability of a computer to consider factors beyond subject and grade level when assigning dispatches (e.g. not providing sufficient travel time between a morning and afternoon assignment), and the reliability of such systems.

Recent research on improving the efficiency and management of substitute teachers reiterates the issues and recommendations of the past (e.g. Abdal-Haqq, 1997; Varlas, 2001; Barlin & Hallgarten, 2002). This may be the

result of the incongruous nature of efficiency and management, two goals which may be perpetually discordant in any feasible framework. Varlas (2001) notes that substitute teachers should be assigned to areas in which they have knowledge or experience. Students are the first to notice whether a substitute is comfortable with the material and the classroom equipment and will adjust their behaviour accordingly. In line with this he suggests making professional development available to substitute teachers. At present, most substitutes are required to pay for professional development workshops, or are at least required to lose a day of work in order to participate. Given the unique situation of substitute teachers, both scenarios discourage such participation and result in substitutes losing out on opportunities to be more effective and knowledgeable in the classroom. Although some may argue that professional development opportunities for teachers do not necessarily lead to appreciable benefits for students, it is clear that a potential for improving teaching exists if such time is spent appropriately, and if it is deemed to be of importance for contract teachers, it should also be available to substitute teachers.

2.1.2 Experiences and Perceptions

Much of the more recent TOC research has centred on the experiences of TOCs and their satisfactions and dissatisfactions with the job. The same core of responses has been found in a wide range of studies conducted in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In terms of satisfaction, substitute teachers cite such aspects as flexibility, diversity of experience, and the relative lack of traditional teacher responsibilities (e.g. staff meeting, report cards) (e.g.

Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Cornwall, 2004). When asked about dissatisfaction, substitute teachers' responses consistently include references to uncertainty regarding the amount and type of work, the lack of relationships with staff and students, the lack of feedback, the low pay, the lack of benefits, feelings of inferiority, and poor student behaviour (e.g. Bodin & Clarke, 2002; Gonzales, 2002).

A BC study of TOC perceptions found the themes of unfamiliarity, uncertainty, misuse, alienation and underpreparedness representative of common experiences shared by TOCs (Bodin & Clarke, 2002). The unfamiliarity and uncertainty arise from the myriad situations and contexts in which they find themselves. A sense of alienation arises from the seeming indifference that they often meet with from regular teaching staff. This study also identified potential teacher misuse of the substitute as a new theme. Numerous instances were noted where the work left by the regular teacher was supervisory rather than educative and consequently relegated the TOC to the role of a babysitter. In some cases, TOCs were asked by the teacher they had been dispatched for to cover additional classes for another teacher ("spare-swapping"). This practice of course takes away preparation time from the TOC. Finally, TOCs felt underprepared for TOCing by their teacher preparation programs. Such programs are focused on full-time teaching, and ignore the reality that most beginning teachers start their careers as TOCs.

Cardon (2002) examined the perception of TOCs held by members of the educational community, the reasons for these perceptions, and the potential

effects. He found an overwhelmingly negative perception of substitute teachers, but also that some of these perceptions do not reflect reality. Further, he found that these negative perceptions were thought by substitute managers, contract teachers, and substitute teachers to have an adverse affect on the substitute teaching pool in terms of quality, quantity and morale. (However, it is arguable that this study, like many others conducted in the United States, is not directly relevant to BC TOCs given the differences between the two systems, particularly the use of unqualified teachers as substitutes in the United States.)

Because of the negative image of substitute teachers held by teachers, principals, and even substitutes themselves, many are leaving the profession in search of better opportunities. O'Malley (2000), working in Human Resources with St. Charles Parish Public School District, describes how "we keep bringing them in the front door but they keep leaving through the back door" (p. 54). Until substitute teachers become a priority, that back door will remain open.

2.2 Pilot study

In 2007 I conducted a small pilot study as a preliminary to my exploration of the topic of TOCs. It consisted of survey data from 7 TOCs and a group interview with 2 TOCs. It was designed simply to discover whether there was any uniformity in viewpoint and to provide me with some guidance on what sorts of issue might be worth pursuing. I wanted to elicit a sense of the degree of the respondents' knowledge of provincial policies and their main satisfactions and dissatisfactions in the role. It turns out that many of the issues raised by those I questioned are the same issues that have been raised before, thus confirming

the ongoing centrality of the concerns raised in the various research studies I have cited. But one distinctive point raised by my inquiry (if those surveyed are to be taken as representative) was that TOCs have very little awareness of the policies that govern their position.

2.2.1 Satisfactions Associated with TOCing

The satisfactory aspects of the role cited by those I questioned included the now familiar flexibility, diversity of experience, relative lack of traditional teacher responsibilities, and shorter hours. They also noted the less familiar opportunity to see others teach as a positive aspect of their positions. The TOCs I surveyed saw their position as providing an opportunity to develop classroom management skills, and to consider which schools they would eventually prefer to work in.

2.2.2 Frustrations Associated with TOCing

In their descriptions of a challenging experience, those questioned in my inquiry referred to uncertainty (e.g. about how many call-outs they would receive, about the nature of their assignments, and how much money they would earn), lack of consistency in school procedures and expectations, lack of a real relationship with students or staff, and a lack of feedback from other teachers or administrators as problematic. They also cited late call-outs for assignments, low pay, a lack of benefits, uncomplimentary teacher assumptions (such as that TOCs are necessarily naive, inexperienced or desperate), unfair treatment by

regular teachers, and poorly organized lesson plans as frustrations that contributed to making TOCing challenging.

3: STRENGTHS OF THE SYSTEM

3.1 Overview

The strengths of the current BC system centre around the release time allocated to contract teachers for professional development and the requirement that TOCs should hold the same teaching credentials as contract teachers.

Without an available list of TOCs, contract teachers would not be able to participate in many of the professional development activities sponsored by the school districts. Similarly, time allocated for teachers in specific departments to meet and collaborate on instructional materials or assessment strategies would be limited or unavailable. In addition, without TOCs contract teachers would likely have to use their preparation time to cover teachers' absences internally, further increasing their workload.

Unlike some other educational models, BC TOCs must be qualified teachers who hold a certificate from the BCCT. TOCs are hired and dispatched through the district board office, which ensures that they hold and maintain the required qualifications to teach in BC schools. This control over credentials greatly reduces many of the worries surrounding the quality control of substitute teachers that have caused concerns in the American system; it may also give the contract teacher a sense of assurance when he or she is absent because of illness or professional development (Darling-Hammond, 1999). This system also creates a job market of sorts for new teachers in a field that is currently flooded

with qualified professionals but does not have a sufficient number of fulltime positions available. As TOCs, new teachers benefit from a wide range of experiences in diverse learning environments. It might also be argued that the system enhances the development of flexibility, resilience, and good classroom management skills, given the variety of experience it provides.

But while attention may be drawn to the broad putative 'advantages', it seems clear that different interest groups have different ideas about what is important. The contract teachers, the employer, the students, and the TOCs themselves do not always agree on what they would regard as the strengths of the system. This is, perhaps, to be expected as each group has different goals and priorities as consequence of its distinct position in the educational framework. That having been said, the educational value of the larger system should surely take precedence over other considerations; the system can only finally be judged acceptable if (perhaps as well as being agreeable to the employer, contract teachers, and TOCs themselves) it is to the educational advantage of the students as compared with alternative systems.

3.2 Contract Teachers

Contract teachers gain a great deal through the current TOC arrangements in our education system, even allowing for minor differences in execution between districts.

Over the years, the use of substitute teachers has been extensive. In the past they were used primarily to cover teacher illness, the illness of a teacher's

child, jury duty, and bereavement; today they are also used to allow contract teachers to engage in professional development, department or team meetings, to escort students to sporting competitions, and even collaborative assessment. Although this means longer absences for contract teachers, students may be thought to gain from various improvements in the overall quality of teaching as a result of the increased professional development undertaken by these teachers. For example, new teaching methods and materials may be developed through this professional discourse, assessment strategies may be discussed and improved, and field trips and theatre productions become possible.

In contrast to the English model, which utilizes regularly and fully employed teachers within a given school as much as possible in the covering of teacher absence, the BC model avoids the use of internal coverage whenever feasible. The BC model is deliberately designed to protect the preparation time allotted to a contract teacher – preparation time that has been awarded through collective bargaining and as such has a legal warrant. Clearly, a teacher requires time to develop units, prepare lesson plans and materials, assess student work, enter marks, and all of the other aspects that go along with teaching. Critics might claim that teachers have a shorter working day and longer holidays than many other professionals, and therefore do not require the regular preparation time that they are currently allotted. It is difficult to determine how many hours an average teacher works per week because it is difficult to determine what constitutes work for a teacher. Clearly instructional time, marking, and preparation should be considered work, but what about

extracurricular sports, school dances, awards ceremonies, commencement, or voluntary training directly related to teaching? The latter activities are the ones that not only make school memorable and rewarding for students, but also require a substantial amount of time and effort on the part of teachers. It cannot be denied that teachers do enjoy long holidays, and many might work a shorter day than some other professionals; however, the monetary compensation of teachers is less than other professions and given the importance of education for society overall, decreasing the preparation time available to teachers would likely have a negative impact by both reducing the effectiveness of teachers and possibly persuading potential teachers to pursue other professions.².

The success of the English system, despite the lack of preparation time, may be in part attributable to the very standardized approach to education in this model. In England, students are generally assessed using standardized tests and, as a result, teaching is very focused on preparing students for these very specific exams. The sharing of teaching materials is therefore an appropriate practice in English schools, which makes it possible for teachers to get by with less preparation time. By contrast, standardized testing was previously limited to grade 12 in BC, and has only recently included subjects in grades 10 and 11 (frequent changes in curriculum requirements also increase the preparation required by teachers). As such, the BC curriculum has allowed teachers a tremendous amount of freedom in their choice of learning materials, but has also created a substantial amount of work in the way of creating units that meet the curricular criteria, preparing materials, and designing assessment tools.

Although the sharing of teaching materials occurs in BC, there is a significant difference in the frequency of this practice when compared with England, thereby increasing the need for preparation time.

Furthermore, the infrequent use of regular teachers to cover the absences of their colleagues may reduce feelings of hostility and pressure within specific departments or whole schools. In England, if a teacher is absent, departmental colleagues will be the first slated in to cover their classes, as this makes the most sense in terms of subject-specific knowledge. If an English teacher is absent, the best candidate to cover their classes would be another English teacher who not only has a background in the subject area, but also has intimate knowledge of the assignments to be completed, the tests coming up, and so forth. This can lead to some irritation and resentment among department members when absences are lengthy or particular individuals are repeatedly absent. Such antagonism could, presumably, have a negative impact on department morale and students. This all sounds rather melodramatic, and no doubt real resentment is rare; however, a school is an isolated microcosm, with its own culture, community and identity, and it is important to avoid giving teachers even the slightest grounds for resentment or impatience with colleagues. It can certainly be said that the BC system minimizes the chance of such grounds arising in relation to absent colleagues.

Another benefit of the BC system is that, in general, one individual is responsible for all of the absent teacher's duties for the length of the absence. This allows some continuity for the employer and the students, as well as the

absent teacher and her colleagues. As a result, information regarding specific classroom routines, procedures for identified students (e.g. students with learning disabilities), lesson plans and school policies need only be imparted to one individual. This also means that only one person will need to report any concerns or issues back to the contract teacher, and this can be done through a single communication. There are clearly time saving benefits here for the contract teacher and the TOC.

The demand that TOCs be fully qualified teachers also gives contract teachers a certain degree of assurance. They know that the substitute has completed a teacher-training program, can presume that generally speaking she has some teaching experience, and can presume that she is familiar with the policies of the school and the district. This is definitely a strength in comparison to the English and American systems, which both make at least some use of unqualified teachers to fill a rising need for substitute teachers, while in BC this only occurs in isolated instances (e.g. remote communities). Many US states require only that the replacing teacher hold a high school graduation certificate, with the situation being much the same with the cover supervisors employed in English schools. The English and US policies are likely the result of a lack of funding for substitute teachers, leaving these positions undesirable to those with higher levels of education. It is probable that the widespread requirement for all teachers in BC to begin as TOCs has assisted in maintaining a sufficient number of fully qualified teachers working in the substitute teacher service in this

province. In England and the US being hired directly into a full-time position is far more likely.

3.3 Employer

Just as the fact that TOCs are qualified teachers benefits the contract teacher they are replacing, it also benefits the school district that employs them. By insisting that TOCs hold a valid teaching certificate, the province of BC is protecting the education of BC's youth. It is true that the cost associated with this policy is substantial; however, with a plentiful supply of qualified teachers in BC the government would have a hard time justifying the hiring of unqualified substitutes.

The centralized hiring and management of TOCs through the board office of each district of course gives school districts considerable control over their TOCs. It also takes the onus of organizing substitute teachers off individual schools, and this may sometimes help to prevent schools from engaging in favouritism (teachers can still request specific TOCs, but office staff and administrators have little influence over TOC selection). This centralized structure also allows board offices to keep accurate records that include the academic backgrounds of its TOCs, the number of TOCs employed, the number of days worked by each TOC, etc. Such information helps to determine where subject or level specific shortages lie, whether the available work is being spread out amongst existing TOCs, how much money is being spent to cover teacher absences, and so forth. This information assists in making decisions related to

the functioning of the system and proactively attempting to prevent foreseeable shortages or cost overruns.

Finally, centralized management through the board office allows school districts to develop TOC procedures and policies that reflect the demographics of the specific school district. For example, smaller school districts can maintain a smaller list of TOCs, rural districts can begin their call outs earlier so that TOCs have time to get to the schools, and urban districts can offer incentives to secure TOCs in a competitive market. The disjointed, semi-private system employed in England lacks communication between schools and agencies and is therefore unable to determine the needs of different communities in order to develop policies or procedures appropriate to particular situations.

3.4 TOC

There are several positive aspects of the TOC system from the perspective of the TOC himself. In particular, TOCs are exposed to a wide range of experiences as they fill in for different teachers, in different schools, in different subject areas. This allows TOCs to gain further insight into which levels, subjects, and kinds of school they prefer, and can help to focus their preferences when it comes to looking for a continuing appointment. They have the opportunity to examine the different ways teachers approach the curriculum, the myriad ways classrooms can be organized, and the various ways in which students are assessed. The difficulties teachers face in trying to experience and evaluate alternative teaching practices by observing and collaborating with their colleagues has often been noted as a contingent weakness in teaching. Hence,

beginning your career as a TOC may offer some advantages compared to taking on a full-time contract right after university. At the very least, TOCs are made aware that there are many different approaches to teaching, and from these experiences TOCs are able to select teaching styles suited to themselves and can develop a teaching approach that employs many different practices in the same classroom. Similarly, TOCs are exposed to different situations that may help build a variety of classroom management skills.

The TOC system creates a job market for new teachers in a field that is currently suffering from oversupply, particularly in the humanities and in highly populated urban areas. The continuing gains for TOCs, in terms of compensation, benefits, and professional status, have assisted in making the job of substitute teacher more desirable (some continuing teachers are actually electing to become TOCs). Without the TOC system, it is likely that many graduates of teacher training programs, particularly those in the areas of oversupply such as English and social studies, would find it difficult to land a paid teaching position within a reasonable amount of time. As a result, many with teaching aspirations would choose to follow alternative career paths, regarding completing their teaching certification without a good prospect of employment as a waste of time.

3.5 Student

The benefit of the BC system to students is the relative consistency in educational experience that it provides. No doubt many would agree that with the right materials an individual can successfully learn a range of topics in the

absence of a formal teacher. But BC's policy of providing a teacher for every school day and each individual class suggests that it is not an unreasonable belief to claim that a better approach to education is the inclusion of a teacher in the process. Whether the teacher is formally instructing the class, supervising independent or group work, or simply available should she be needed, this policy also indicates a preference for learning as ideally a social activity (alternatives might be assigning a task and leaving a senior pupil to supervise, or assigning textbook questions and sending students to the library to work independently. These alternatives leave the students without the option of assistance from the replacing teacher and may suggest that for some students in specific classes the teacher is expendable). In addition, much of what the TOC has to offer goes beyond purely academic knowledge and centres around social development, something that cannot easily be gathered from a book.

There is a great deal of overlap between the benefits for contract teachers, TOCs, employers and those of the students in particular. Given that student success is an ultimate goal of all of these groups, it is not surprising that many of the benefits to a particular group also lead to benefits for students themselves. The professional development of teachers results in improved learning opportunities for students; the protection of contract teacher preparation time allows teachers to spend sufficient time preparing lessons and assessing students; and the centralized organization of the TOC system ensures that students will always have a fully qualified teacher available to assist them.

3.6 Summary

It is difficult to determine which group benefits the most under the current TOC system. Contract teachers gain a great deal; however, many of these gains lead to further gains for students. TOCs seem to gain the least under this system, with many of the benefits that can be identified being somewhat trivial. It is perhaps the case that many teachers would find alternative avenues for exploring the diversity in teaching and developing effective classroom management skills if they were given full-time positions upon graduation. As lengthy periods of TOCing are a relatively recent phenomenon, it is also possible that the experiences of TOCs may have little or no bearing on their success as regular contract teachers given the number of effective teachers currently practicing that were never required to work as TOCs.

4: WEAKNESSES OF THE SYSTEM

4.1 Overview

Many of the strengths of the system were of more immediate benefit to contract teachers than TOCs or students; correspondingly, many of the weaknesses work particularly to the disadvantage of TOCs and students.

Under the 2006 Collective Bargaining Agreement in BC, TOCs were awarded placement on the provincial salary grid after three consecutive days in any assignment. This means that as long as a TOC works in the same district for three days in a row, on the fourth day (retroactive to the first) he or she is paid at a rate that reflects his or her experience, as opposed to the standard base rate for TOCs. Prior to this award, a TOC was only paid to scale while working on the same assignment for four days or more. This change reduces the incentive for TOCs to commit themselves to lengthy assignments, and the resulting increased workload, and leads to obvious disadvantages in terms of the consistency of instruction and assessment.

Another concern involves student accountability. When a TOC enters the classroom he or she is often a stranger in the school and therefore must adapt quickly to the new environment while attempting to maintain authority and the continuity of classroom procedures for the sake of the students. This balancing act is not lost on the students. The BCTF reports that 64% of TOC assignments are only for one day (BCTF, 2005). In most cases, the classroom teacher will

return the next day and the TOC will be assigned to another school, which reduces student accountability for inappropriate behaviour or lack of focus. Internal teacher coverage increases accountability because students have an expectation of consequences. Although the replacement of the contract teacher with a TOC is designed to provide continuity, perhaps in some cases this introduction of an outsider in the school and the classroom reduces continuity overall.

As for the TOC, one of the major concerns is that most TOCs are also beginning teachers. In a profession that loses up to 44% of new teachers in the first five years, TOCing can be a deterrent that prevents beginning teachers from staying in the profession (Litke, 2000). Research has found that TOCs experience feelings of insecurity due to the nature of on-call work (e.g. Cornwall, 2004). The resulting fragmented and unrewarding experience eventually pushes these new teachers out of the profession.

One aspect of TOCing that has been frequently documented is the difficult nature of the job. TOCs have to learn new classroom routines and new school procedures, meet new staff and students, and teach lessons in varying subjects with little or no preparation. Moreover, TOCs often have to deal with classroom management problems without being given information regarding students with behavioural, learning, or psychological difficulties. The research findings have continued to reveal the same difficulties among TOCs and substantiate the overall stress associated with this unique position (e.g. Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Cornwall, 2004).

The lack of support systems and social structures within the district can be particularly disconcerting, as new teachers need more support and are the most likely to suffer from teacher burnout because of the difficulty of navigating a new curriculum, creating new lesson materials, and adapting to the diverse responsibilities of a teacher. Furthermore, the transient nature of TOCing can make it ill-suited to beginning teachers.

4.2 Work Conditions

Research into TOCs has consistently found that TOCs do not feel that they are adequately compensated for their work or that their professional status is recognized by students, teachers, or administrators (e.g. Cardon, 2002; Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Cornwall, 2004).

TOCs have cited concerns over how much work they will receive and the corresponding financial struggles associated with this, the inability to form real relationships with both teachers and students, the frequency of sparse lesson plans and unclear instructions, a lack of information regarding school procedures and a perception of inferiority in relation to contract teachers (e.g. Cardon, 2002; Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Cornwall, 2004). Some improvements to the working conditions of TOCs have been made (e.g. the standardization of per diem rates negotiated in the 2006 Collective Bargaining Agreement). But more could surely be done. Such concerns will not be solved at the bargaining table; but require a change in the approach to TOCs at both the school and the district level. TOCs are certified teachers in BC and should be treated as such. The fact that TOCs

in BC have expressed concerns over their perceived lack of professional status should be addressed with the utmost speed by school districts.

4.3 Isolation

One of the most troubling concerns raised by TOCs is their feeling of isolation among teaching professionals (e.g. Bodin & Clarke, 2002; Duggleby & Badali, 2007). The nature of TOCing makes it very difficult to connect with other teachers, students, and even other TOCs. The resulting isolation generally comes at a very inopportune time for these teachers, as many are just beginning their careers and require as much support and encouragement as possible from the educational community. Moreover, TOCs are not given the opportunity to take part in school events such as theatre productions, sports, school dances, and field trips unless they do so on a volunteer basis after hours. This disconnection from school culture can eventually be demoralizing.

Efforts have been made by TOC committees in many districts to provide TOCs with social networking opportunities. Such efforts need to be increased and TOCs should be consulted in the process of developing such programs. With increasing importance being placed on the social development of students and social responsibility, the social development and community structures of TOCs must not be overlooked.

4.4 Continuity

Continuity is important in education and can have an effect on the academic and social development of students, especially for younger students. The TOC

system is designed to provide a level of continuity in education, but in some ways it can also upset the continuity of the classroom. The BCTF describes TOCs as “certified and qualified individuals who replace a regular classroom teacher for the purpose of continuing the instructional program, maintaining discipline, and generally promoting the educational welfare of the students” (BCTF Handbook, p. 10). Continuity is therefore a goal of the overall system, but the use of TOCs may actually create discontinuity through the addition of a “stranger” to the classroom. The TOC brings his own background, experiences, beliefs and perceptions to the classroom and is confronted with the task of implementing another teacher’s plan and teaching strategy. Some level of continuity is gained by having a certified teacher continue in the absence of the regular teacher, but in some cases there may be a cost associated with having an outsider attempt to adopt another teacher’s plans and strategies that may be divergent from those of the TOC.

Special education classrooms represent a unique situation in which an outside teacher may not be able to provide the necessary consistency in routines to maintain the comfort or safety of students[‡]. This may also be true in cases in

[‡] I have been assigned the role of special education teacher on more than one occasion and I have found these days to be immensely stressful and I can only assume that they were similarly stressful for the students. I have no formal training (and very little experience) with special needs students and have never represented myself as a special education teacher to the school districts in which I have worked. In BC, a TOC has the same legal responsibilities as the regular teacher, yet I was unprepared to meet the physical, emotional or academic needs of the students I was assigned.

which the TOC is assigned to teach subject areas or levels outside of her field. In some of these circumstances, alternatives should be considered with the goal of continuity in mind (e.g. the use of internal staff to cover lessons or the assignment of independent work). Since there are so many factors that may influence the continuity of instruction in the absence of the regular teacher it is important that teacher absences be limited to unavoidable causes such as illness and professional development activities that are likely to have a positive benefit for the students themselves.

4.5 Out-of-Field Teaching

One of the most startling facts about the British Columbia TOC system is the extent to which TOCs are called upon to teach outside the areas and levels in which they were trained. The BCCT 2003 Recent Graduates Survey stated that up to 89% of teachers in computing science were teaching out-of-field (teaching out-of-field means that they were teaching either grade levels or subjects for which they had not been formally prepared or qualified). Richard Ingersoll (1995) raised warning bells about out-of-field teaching in the United States based on data from the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (an annual survey of elementary and secondary teachers by the National Centre for Educational Statistics (NCES)). Ingersoll found that almost one-third of all high school math teachers have

Each time I was dispatched to replace a Special Education Teacher I was placed in charge of 8 to 10 students and 3 or 4 Special Education Assistants (SEAs). The SEAs are certified to assist special needs students but do not hold teaching certificates. Most of the time the SEAs have been wonderful in helping me to feel comfortable, taking care of the physical and academic needs of the students, and overall making sure things run as smooth as possible. Regardless, I could not help but feel uneasy about my position of responsibility and utterly unprepared to properly deal with severely disabled students who could not speak or even use the washroom without assistance. In these cases I really felt like merely a warm (and rather useless) body.

neither a major nor a minor in math or in related disciplines such as physics or engineering. Almost one-fourth of all high school English teachers have neither a major nor a minor in English, literature, communications, speech or journalism. He also found that nearly half of all students taking chemistry, physics, earth science or space science are taught by teachers without even a minor in any of the physical sciences. Of equal concern, more than half of secondary school students are being taught history by a teacher who holds neither a major nor a minor in history.

Ingersoll, a former secondary school teacher, has taught in both the United States and Western Canada. Based on his own experience, he has found out-of-field teaching to be far less common in Canada than it is in the United States. In Canada he felt that out-of-field teaching was “frowned upon” and occurred in only rare situations, whereas in the United States it is a widespread and common practice. He suggests that public perceptions of education, and of teachers in particular, may play a large part in explaining the differences between the two countries. In Canada teachers are generally respected as highly skilled professionals, while in the United States teaching is often seen as less demanding, and therefore requiring less skill, than high-status professions (e.g. doctors and lawyers).

But is BC really doing much better than the United States in terms of limiting out-of-field teaching? With 89% of TOCs in computing science teaching out-of-field, Ingersoll’s praise of Canada may not be warranted. This number is at the extreme end, but the BCCT survey also found that 20-45% of TOCs taught

out-of-field in earth science, math, business education, physics, drama, ESL, home economics, and chemistry (BCTF, 2003)[§]. My own TOCing experiences in the 2006/07 school year provide one example of the range of subjects a TOC might expect to teach during a school year. I hold majors in English and psychology but, as the table below indicates, these were not the subjects in which I taught most frequently:

§ I myself have done a great deal of out-of-field teaching. I hold a B.A. in English and psychology, but most of my teaching has been outside of English and none of it has been in psychology. I have taught in a variety of subject areas (including science, math, art, drama, video media, first nations studies, social studies, physical education, automotive, foods, home economics, wood work, metal work, special education, learning assistance, and elementary school). I have also held temporary contracts in math and science in both England and BC.

On one particular occasion, I was dispatched for an “English” assignment on further notice (meaning that the assignment did not have a definitive end date and could last several days or several months). When I arrived at the school I quickly discovered that the dispatcher had taken great liberty in claiming that this was an English dispatch. The position included 2 English 10 classes, video media 8, acting 11/12, drama 9, drama 10, directing 12, and film 11/12. My initial response was one of panic. In high school I had always avoided drama because it was outside of my comfort zone and now I was required to teach it for what could be an extensive length of time! I also didn’t know anything about video cameras or editing films.

Besides the diverse array of courses I was expected to teach without formal training and little or no experience, several other factors contributed to making this a particularly difficult assignment. The regular teacher was away because of a planned surgery and originally a more qualified TOC was found to take the position for the 6 weeks she would be gone. This TOC ended up leaving to accept a continuing position in another district. Another TOC was found to replace her, but she did not want to work every day and soon left the position. A third TOC was assigned and she stayed on until she discovered that report cards would need to be written and then announced that she would not be returning. This is the point at which I was called and somewhat coerced into accepting the position under the false pretence that it was an English assignment.

In the end I survived because I am adaptable, resourceful and efficient. I taught myself to use a video camera an hour before teaching it to the grade 8s. I learned the basics of the film editing program through trial and error. I did some online research for acting assessment strategies and games to play with the drama students. I even overcame my fear of drama and participated in the games with the students! And although the English classes were in my area of training, I had to try to learn the unique assessment criteria used throughout this school and mark almost 6 weeks of assignments.

I may have made it through this assignment, and the students may even have learned a little, but I know that these students would have achieved far more under the instruction of someone with background knowledge and experience in drama and video media.

Table 4.1 Frequency of Subjects Taught as a TOC

Frequency of Subjects Taught as a TOC in 2006/07	
Subject(s)	Frequency
Auto Technology	1
Carpentry	1
Chemistry	1
English	14
Learning Assistance	3
Mathematics	15
Physical Education (PE)	1
Planning	2
Science (up to gr. 10)	21
Special Education	2
English/PE	1
English/German	5
English/Math	1
English/Science	1
English/Social Studies	2
English/Video Media	1
Home Economics/Resource	3
Math/Calculus	3
Math/Planning	5
Science/Biology	2
Science/Chemistry	1
Science/Math	21
Science/PE	1
Science/Portfolio	1
Social Studies/History	1
Social Studies/Math	1
English/Math/Science	4
Learning Assistance/Art/Library	8
English/Earth Science/Social Studies	1
Science/Math/Planning	30

Frequency of Subjects Taught as a TOC in 2006/07	
Subject(s)	Frequency
Math/Humanities/Computers	1
Math/Science/Physical Education	1
Math/Science/Biology/Physical Education	2
English/Economics/Social Studies/Science	1
Math/Science/Home Economics/French	1
English/Drama/Video Media/Acting/Film	9
TOTAL	169

The table includes a total of 169 assignments, 14 of which (8%) were full English assignments and 25 of which (18%) included at least one English class in the dispatch. Overall, during the 2006-07 school year I taught (at least partially) in my field 23% of the time. Not only is the extensive amount of out-of-field teaching evident from these numbers, but the frequency of multi-subject assignments suggests that there may be a considerable amount of out-of-field teaching on the part of regular contract teachers as well.

The use of teachers to teach any subject or level regardless of qualifications, clearly implies the belief that, once trained, a teacher is capable of teaching any subject. But this is, to put it mildly, highly questionable. Knowledge of subject matter may not be a sufficient requirement in effective teaching, but surely it is necessary. It could be argued that an intelligent teacher with a great deal of teaching experience should be able to teach any subject area or grade level. This cannot be the case. A teacher who has not completed formal training

in a specific subject area is unlikely to match a fully qualified teacher in terms of clear and complete concept explanation, linking topics and connecting to the larger picture, going beyond the textbook, and providing students with a full experience of the complex facets of the curriculum. One might argue that if a teacher devotes enough time to preparing lessons and materials his teaching would be comparable to that of a fully qualified teacher. But, it is implausible for a teacher to match the depth of knowledge gained by completing a major or a minor in a subject area during a semester or a school year. There would likely be a great deal of public concern if it was uncovered that some doctors were trained as engineers or that some lawyers had graduated from medical school instead of law school. Law, medicine, and engineering all require a great deal of intelligence and skill, but that does not mean that a talented lawyer does not require additional formal training to become a doctor. If we are going to insist that our students learn chemistry and social studies, than it seems only proper that we provide them with teachers who have studied these areas and can uphold a high quality of instruction and demonstrate the value in these subject areas through their own comprehensive studies. If teachers are teaching by looking ahead in the textbook and working backwards from the answer key, are we providing anything more than a bright student could achieve through independent study?

In spite of Ingersoll's applause for the minimal amount of out-of-field teaching he noted while teaching in Western Canada, the number of TOCs teaching outside their subject or level in BC has been increasing over the years.

Contract teachers are also often teaching subjects or levels for which they are not formally qualified. In 1997, the BCCT reported that 25.2% of all teachers (including teachers-on-call) taught within their teaching field only 50% of the time or less, 38.8% taught within their field 51-99% of the time, and only 36% taught within their field 100% of the time. For TOCs, 27.9% taught within their field 50% of the time or less, for 52.5% this was true 51-99% of the time, and for 19.6% this was true 100% of the time. In terms of levels, 20.7% of TOCs were teaching at the level they had been trained to teach only 50% of the time or less, 50.4% of TOCs were teaching at their level 51-99% of the time, and 28.9% of TOCs were teaching 100% of the time at their level. If only 36% of teachers (19.6% of TOCs) are teaching subjects which they are qualified to teach and only 28.9% of TOCs are teaching at the level for which they were trained, we must presume either that we have a serious problem or that our system of training and qualifying teachers is not very significant. The former seems the suitable line to take.

What is to be done about out-of-field teaching? Ingersoll suggests that the problem is a particularly difficult one due to the complex structure of managing teachers. Education has evolved from the beginning of the first organized schools to include multiple layers of administration, teacher unions, and university teacher training programs, all of which influence the organization and assignment of teachers in different ways. In the United States out-of-field teaching is more acceptable to a public that, in general, appears to undervalue the role and contributions of teachers. Out-of-field teaching has become

commonplace as a result of the problems associated with recruitment and retention of teachers in a low status profession. Teachers in BC enjoy a higher status in the eyes of the public and this, along with gains in compensation and work conditions for all teachers, may decrease the need for assigning teachers outside their subject areas and grade levels.

Ingersoll also noted, although to a lesser degree, the role administrative control and teacher unions play in the frequency of out-of-field teaching. In most cases, the principal of a school gets the final say in which teacher is assigned to which classes. Many factors, beyond a teacher's qualifications, will play a role in the principal's choice of teacher assignments and may include teacher turnover, the number of students in a given year, financial restraints, and even the extracurricular involvement of teachers. To add to this, seniority rules imposed by teacher unions may require that a qualified science teacher be laid off at the end of the school year due to a decline in student enrolment, with her science classes being given to a non-science teacher with more seniority.

In BC, the choices of principals and union regulations may result in some instances of out-of-field teaching for both contract teachers and TOCs; however, Ingersoll suggests that the way to get qualified teachers in every classroom is to elevate the status of teaching into a well-paid and respected occupation. This is unlikely to be directly applicable to BC, but has indirect implications. In BC out-of-field teaching by TOCs was found in areas such as business, sciences, and mathematics while it was not found in areas such as the humanities and physical education. This suggests a need to recruit specifically for these areas in order to

balance out the number of available, and qualified teachers, across the subject areas.

4.6 Hiring Practices – Teacher Professionalism

Changes to district hiring policies and collective agreements have resulted in an increase in the number of teachers who begin their careers as TOCs, and a decline in the number beginning with a full-time teaching position. The 1988 BCCT Survey reported 46.3% of teachers beginning as TOCs, in 1997 this number was up to 71.5%, and in 2003 it was 73.5%. In 1988 41.3% of teachers began their careers with a full-time position; in 2003 this number had decreased to 17.9%. It is now generally a requirement for a teacher to be a TOC within a district prior to being hired on as a full-time employee. The increase in the number of teachers beginning their careers as TOCs may be related to an increase in teacher absence for reasons other than illness. With more time being allotted for professional development, collaboration, and out-of-school events, a larger number of replacement teachers has become necessary and led to the changes in district hiring practices.

One of the most controversial issues for TOCs is the call-out procedure which determines which TOC is given which assignment. Surely fairness is important here, and there are ongoing debates on how to ensure the system is fair while still making an effort to assign TOCs based on subject areas and levels. Wrapped up in this discussion is the issue of request systems and their effect on seniority. Many districts employ a request system that allows teachers to request specific TOCs to replace them. This practice is controversial for two reasons.

First, in smaller districts it can be very difficult for new TOCs to get work because the teachers do not know them and therefore do not request them. Yet, the established TOCs do not want to drop the request system, as they feel that they are being acknowledged for their hard work and commitment by being requested to return to a classroom. Secondly, the new provincial bargaining agreement states that TOCs will now accrue seniority while being paid on the provincial salary grid (retroactive to the first day, after 4 days in the same district). This seniority is not applied until the teacher has attained a continuing contract, at which time it will be considered in the event of layoff or recall, or any selection procedures that take into account seniority. The objection to this is that by requesting one TOC in preference to another, the contract teacher is objectively advancing the former at the expense of the latter. The request system remains controversial, but is widely employed in districts around the province.

The hiring of retired teachers to work as TOCs is another point of contention within the teaching profession. Many districts hire retired teachers; however, there are usually policies in place that are designed to ensure that beginning teachers do not suffer from a reduction in work as a result. For instance, it is common for districts to call out retired teachers only after all other available teachers in that subject area have been dispatched. Often, though, this does not apply if the retired teacher has been specifically requested. By contrast, some districts have a policy of not hiring retired teachers as TOCs if they were previously employed as full-time teachers in that district. The practice of hiring retired teachers is possibly a result of the fluctuation in TOC numbers,

with retired teachers serving as a cushion should the number of available TOCs drop during the school year, or should there be a lack of TOCs in specific subject areas (particularly sciences and math). Many retired TOCs in high-demand specialty areas work almost every day and are often requested to fill short-term vacancies which include senior level classes. Clearly, if there really is a need to employ retired teachers as TOCs the whole business of recruiting teachers at the university level, as well as the school district level, needs to be examined. Why can the districts not anticipate teacher shortages more accurately and hire accordingly? Why are universities graduating an excess of English teachers and not enough math teachers? What will happen when these retired TOCs really do retire and there is no one to teach senior physics classes or senior mathematics? The use of retired professionals in teaching is unusual and should not be accepted lightly, since it has such obvious ramifications for the opportunities for new teachers and will act, at least in some part, as a barrier to the transition of these new teachers into continuing contracts.

Finally, the elusive hiring procedures of some school districts make it very difficult for some TOCs to get full-time contracts^{**}. It is assumed that really good

^{**} In one of the school districts I work in it is widely known that the TOCs with the most connections get offered temporary contracts leading to continuing contracts (e.g. through nepotism or former teachers of their own). I have used my own connections at times, and although I know that I possess many of the qualities of a good educator I sometimes feel as if my social skills are being recognized rather than my teaching ability.

Recently a fellow teacher on a temporary contract shared with me how she had managed to secure her first temporary contract. There had been an incident at one of the schools in which a teacher had been arrested for inappropriate conduct with a student. In order to fill this position, the vice-principal requested a list of qualified TOCs from the board office as a means of selecting a candidate. Given that he merely had a list of names he chose to work backwards alphabetically and ended up hiring the first TOC he called.

TOCs will eventually impress the right person and will be given an opportunity to demonstrate their full potential by taking on a temporary contract. This brings up the possibility that those teachers who remain on the TOC list represent some of the least capable teachers in the field (along with those that have had the least success at playing the game). Beyond the initial interview, TOCs in general are not evaluated in a direct way, with indirect evaluations being limited to the comments of other teachers and the frequency of being requested to return to a classroom. Moreover, TOCs receive very little feedback from their fellow professionals, and only a small amount of feedback from students. There is the implicit suggestion that the TOC position does not require the same amount of competence and responsibility as that of the regular contract teacher and therefore evaluation is not necessary. To evaluate TOCs would require a great deal of careful consideration on the part of school administrators in order to be both accurate and effective, but the current ad hoc system of indirect evaluation by administrators and other teaching staff is certainly problematic. Immediate revision is necessary to ensure that the current “who you know” system of informal evaluation is replaced with a more comprehensive system.

All of the TOCs on the list were qualified (and since TOCs do not accrue seniority they were all equal in that respect too) and therefore a random selection could be considered fair. But I still felt a sense of injustice. My name would have been on the list too, but right in the middle. If all vice-principals started from the top or the bottom alphabetically when selecting candidates for temporary contracts I would never be offered one and would never convert to continuing status – all because of my last name! These are the types of situations that frustrate TOCs because it is a matter of luck rather than one of ability.

4.7 Educational Value of the TOC Concept

There is very little literature available to assist the TOC in being successful in the classroom. The BCTF produces a TOC Handbook, but it is for the most part confined to classroom management issues, conversing with parents, reporting requirements and other essential, but functional, TOC issues. There is little or nothing on what the TOC should aim to achieve in the classroom, how to assess whether these goals have been reached, and other such topics related to teaching practice rather than simply practical concerns. A section of the provincial bargaining agreement is devoted to policies and procedures affecting TOCs (see Appendix 1), but includes only vague regulations governing the management of TOCs. There is a noticeable lack of concrete direction offered in any document relating to TOCs that outlines in a useful manner how TOCs are meant to contribute to the education of students. Given the distinct differences between the role of a TOC and the role of a regular classroom teacher, teacher certification programs have historically lacked direction specifically for the TOC. Many documents point out the myriad ways in which TOCs are different from contract teachers in terms of their responsibilities and consequent teaching challenges, but it seems there is an assumption that this difference has no bearing on the education of students. But such differences, particularly the lack of continuity and lack of status, must surely effect the TOC's contribution to the educational growth of students in ways that make it divergent from that of the regular contract teacher. It is paradoxical that the most inexperienced and vulnerable category of teachers is given the least guidance.

The TOC is considered very much a necessity in the BC educational system. Teachers get sick and a replacement needs to be arranged in order for classes to continue with the least disruption possible. Professional development and collaboration have also become essential to good teaching practice and therefore TOCs are required to cover this lost instructional time. This shift in the use of TOCs has been made partly because research has suggested that there is a need for the continued professional growth of teachers, and that there may be benefits in terms of student achievement resulting from collaboration among teachers (Regional Educational Laboratory, 2007). But the system seems to have been developed without considering the effect on the academic and social growth of students. The limited research on substitute teachers has shown them to be ineffective in terms of the education of students (Olson, 1971). Such research must be applied cautiously to BC TOCs as it is predominately American, but at the very least it suggests a need for similar studies in BC. Clearly placing a relatively inexperienced teacher in an unfamiliar classroom, in an unfamiliar school, in the middle of another teacher's unit on a subject he may not be familiar with makes it extremely hard for him to further the educational development of students.

4.8 Summary

Teaching is the only profession that requires 5 years of university and starts its professionals as temporary workers with no definitive timeline for converting to a full-time position. Teachers consistently express a desire to elevate the professional status and image of teachers, and to increase the

standing of this profession, and therefore other structures for admitting new teachers must be explored. The TOC concept must not be used simply because it has sufficed thus far, but should be examined closely to determine how, and if, it assists in the education of BC's youth. Educational quality must not be sacrificed to mere practicality.

5: POSSIBLE CHANGES

There is an obvious tension between the various practical points that must be considered when making suggestions towards improving the TOC system in BC, and the educational aims of the system. This tension is not easily balanced; however, any suggestions for possible improvements must, in my view, focus on the educational goals first and then consider the issue of practicality in terms of finances, convenience, and reasonable operating policies for all parties involved.

Based on past research and the arguments put forth in this thesis, there are several educational recommendations and various practical suggestions which can be made. The practical suggestions are linked with the educational aims as such changes may permit TOCs to focus more on their educational effectiveness and provide a stronger structure from which to develop educational strengths.

5.1 Educational Value

All our decisions relating to schooling should first and foremost be made in the light of what is educationally desirable. To be sure there are various practical restraints, and other issues such as health and safety considerations, but ultimately what we decide to do should be guided by our understanding of what will most benefit students educationally. To date very little research has focused on the educational effectiveness of TOCs, and there are few specific teaching theories that can be practically employed by TOCs in the classroom. Further

research is necessary that includes reference to the educational aspects of the TOC role.

5.2 Out-of-Field Teaching

One of the seemingly most obvious improvements to the current system would be an attempt to eliminate the use of TOCs to teach either subjects with which they are unfamiliar or age-groups whom they have not been prepared or trained to teach. There appears to be a widespread view that a good teacher can teach anything to anybody. But this is most implausible. If I neither know history, nor appreciate the business and methodology of historians, how can I be expected to help others understand some particular historical situation or problem? Of course, I can regurgitate 'facts' gleaned from the internet or keep ahead of the students in the textbook, but will this really count as good teaching or educating? Similarly, someone who is trained and effective at teaching science to sixteen year olds who already has some kind of scientific background is not necessarily going to be successful at teaching 'science' to ten year olds. Thus our willingness to accept substitute teachers teaching in situations for which they are not qualified must surely be challenged. Granted that no system can guarantee a constant supply of appropriately qualified teachers for all occasions, ours could be improved upon this respect.

The reduction of out-of-field teaching must begin at the level of undergraduate and teacher training programs. Recruitment programs should be put in place to inform students which teachable subjects are in the highest demand and encourage students to take advantage of these opportunities.

Reorganization at both the undergraduate and teacher training levels should be considered as a means of combining teachable subjects into one program. In this way, a student could become fully qualified in two subjects, while completing only one Bachelors degree. This is a realistic proposal as many dual major degrees currently exist, and creating such degrees specifically with teachers in mind would simply be an expansion of existing practices. School districts may also need to consider the implementation of incentive programs to both encourage university students to pursue certain teaching areas, and to retain teachers currently in those areas. Such incentives could be monetary, but might alternatively be focused on rapid hiring practices and immediate continuing contracts for such areas.

Although call-out procedures are generally designed to dispatch by subject area and level first, it is sometimes the case that a contract teacher requests a TOC that is not qualified to replace her. TOCs may also be assigned dispatches for which they are not qualified the evening before and when an assignment for their particular subject or level comes in the following morning there are no qualified TOCs available. Careful planning and deployment of TOCs will help reduce such situations, as might the use of a human dispatcher as opposed to an automated system.

5.3 Teacher Training Programs

At present, teacher training programs ignore the reality that most beginning teachers will start their careers as TOCs. The difficulties associated with TOCing may in part be due to a lack of preparation and in part due to

unrealistic expectations on the part of new teachers. Teacher preparation is focused on preparing student-teachers for the realities of full-time teaching positions. This includes methodology courses in pedagogy that assume a teacher has his own classes, as well as practica in which a student-teacher is assigned his own classes for an extended period of time. Some programs include a 'substitute day' in which student-teachers swap classes for one day in order to practice preparing for a TOC to cover one's own classes and to gain a small amount of experience as a TOC. This one day spent on TOC preparation is grossly disproportionate to the actual time a teacher will likely spend as a TOC in BC.

5.4 Hiring Practices

It is essential that all TOCs have a clear understanding of the general hiring practices in their school districts, and can anticipate how long the process of attaining a continuing contract may take. Yet, at present hiring practices are generally vague and in many districts are at least in part based on the preference of school principals (e.g. in some districts principals decide which TOCs are given temporary contracts and through these temporary contracts TOCs are able to convert to continuing status). A better system would be one in which TOCs compete against each other based on their qualifications or experience for particular positions; however, a seniority-based system might also provide the necessary level of fairness. The problem with many of the current hiring practices is that teaching ability and fairness appear to be secondary to a TOC's affinity for building relationships with administrators. At the very least the

procedure for hiring should be clearly laid out for TOCs so that they may hold reasonable expectations about their likelihood of attaining a continuing position, as well as the timeframe in which it is likely to occur.

5.5 Allocation of TOCs

The isolation experienced by many TOCs contributes negatively to the professional development of many beginning teachers, yet this is a concern that can be readily addressed by school districts. Besides the regular TOC position, many BC school districts also employ 'priority TOCs'. These TOCs are either assigned to one school in which they cover teacher absences in any subject area within that school, or they are dispatched before any other TOCs in a school district, regardless of the subject area. In the latter case, the TOC has generally converted to continuing status, but is waiting for a full-time contract and has no choice but to spend this time on the TOC list. This practice not only encourages, but depends almost entirely on, out-of-field teaching. The benefits of a priority TOC assigned to only one school can be partially realized by assigning TOCs to a few schools, rather than dispatching them to any school in a district. With some planning, TOCs can be divided by subject area and allocated to a small number of the total schools in the district. This would help foster the necessary support, positive relationships, and access to school culture while reducing the need to teach out-of-field.

TOCs should also be included in all professional development and social events available to teachers in their assigned schools. TOCs are teachers after all, and if professional development opportunities are essential for regular

classroom teachers, the access should be the same for TOCs. Currently, many school districts require TOCs to pay to participate in these workshops, with some funding available to cover the expenses if TOCs take the steps to apply for it. Moreover, for TOCs who work in more than one school district, participating in professional development days means losing a potential day of work, a sacrifice that is not easy for many impoverished TOCs.

5.6 TOC Committees

Most school districts have TOC Committees which serve as a united voice for otherwise disconnected TOCs. This resource is greatly underused and perhaps undervalued by TOCs themselves. The nomadic lives of TOCs make it difficult for the unified voice to be heard, and therefore for concerns to be raised or change to take place. But increased effort on the part of current TOC Committee members, as well as the school districts themselves, might be made to encourage involvement in such committees. This would do something to alleviate the sense of isolation felt by TOCs, while providing a support network and valuable feedback from TOCs that is often left unvoiced.

Many school districts offer mentorship programs that connect beginning contract teachers with those that have more experience. Such programs should be expanded to include TOCs, who could benefit greatly from the knowledge, resources, friendship and guidance of a more seasoned teacher. Such a program may also help TOCs to feel less nomadic and provide them with a sense of belonging within the school district.

5.7 Work Conditions

Many of the complaints voiced by TOCs relate to the feeling that they are not being treated fairly. Fairness among TOCs themselves, and among teachers in general, is a genuine concern that has not been fully addressed at the school district level, nor in collective bargaining. These concerns stem from many of the organizational structures affecting TOCs, including dispatching systems, access to professional development, hiring practices, and benefits. An increased involvement of TOCs themselves in TOC Committees would assist in making these concerns heard during collective bargaining, while more awareness among contract teachers and administrators would reduce some of the concerns that cannot effectively be addressed through legislation. For instance, many TOCs have complained of being treated as inferiors by contract teachers. While the Collective Bargaining Agreement officially calls upon contract teachers to make TOCs feel welcome in schools, such a policy is not enforceable in reality. Some school districts have actually required contract teachers to spend one day a year working as a TOC in order to remind them of the difficulties inherent in this role. Such efforts are likely more effective than official policy changes in addressing these types of complaint.

5.8 Summary

The current lack of research on this topic indicates that we need to get more comprehensive and accurate data regarding all aspects of TOCing. But, based on the information we do have, there are some changes that will perhaps yield noticeable benefits. First, changes should be made to teacher training

programs in order to better prepare beginning teachers for the realities of TOCing. Second, the practice of assigning TOCs to teach out-of-field should be greatly reduced or eliminated whenever possible. Third, TOC Committees and other support systems should receive more attention and become a more integral part of the TOC experience. Finally, changes need to be made to improve the working conditions of TOCs.

6: CONCLUSIONS

Clearly further research and discussion is needed on the TOC system in BC. Given the increasing role of TOCs, it would be wise to take the time to better understand this group of educators and their position in the larger educational picture. In the meantime, here is a brief summary of the conclusions that I have tentatively drawn in respect to the questions initially posed.

6.1 What are the strengths of the current structure?

The most uncontentious strength of the current structure is that BC requires that all TOCs be fully qualified teachers. This requirement is upheld throughout BC, except in some of the remotest locations where exceptionally small populations make such a requirement impractical.

Secondly, the system encourages and supports the professional development and collaboration of regular classroom teachers.

Thirdly, the system protects the preparation time available to contract teachers.

Fourthly, a central hiring and dispatch system through school district board offices facilitates management and organization. Shortages are more easily identified and dealt with.

Finally, the unique nature of the TOC position can provide beginning teachers with a varied set of experiences likely to prove useful in their

subsequent teaching careers. The diversity of experience allows TOCs to appreciate the great range of possible approaches to teaching, classroom organization, lesson planning, and subject matter. TOCs have considerable opportunities to observe the practice of other teachers, in part because they do not have such responsibilities as writing report cards, marking work and attending staff meetings.

6.2 What are the weaknesses of the current structure?

The lack of continuity and, particularly for the student, predictability, is one potential weakness. In one sense, of course, the use of substitute teachers is a way of providing continuity in the education of students. But it is at least arguable that bringing in outsiders, strangers to the students who are sometimes unfamiliar with the ways of the school and the material being taught, on balance constitutes a lack of continuity that may be disruptive. It has been suggested that student productivity diminishes as TOCs are perceived to have no on-going authority.

Secondly, TOCs are not prepared for the specific challenges of temporary teaching in their teacher preparation programs, or in their teaching practica.

Thirdly, and relatedly, little support, guidance or advice is available to TOCs, and as a result many report feeling isolated from the rest of the teaching community. For these reasons in particular TOCing can prove to be exceptionally challenging immediately following graduation from teacher training programs.

Fourthly, there is the problem of the increasing extent to which TOCs are required to teach either subjects or age-groups for which they have not been prepared or trained. This seems to have been an unplanned response to the changing needs of schools and has perhaps been further fuelled by the general desire of TOCs to please their employers (in the hope of increasing their chances of a regular contract) by accepting any assignment offered.

Fifthly, work conditions and organizational issues have consistently been cited as creating serious problems for TOCs. In particular, concerns have been raised over compensation, inequitable call-out procedures, and unclear hiring practices. The increasing use of retired teachers as TOCs also makes many uneasy regarding the implications for beginning teachers.

It is largely as a consequence of these perceived weaknesses (particularly out-of-field teaching) that one might raise the question of the educational desirability of this system.

6.3 Whom does the current structure benefit?

Different aspects of the current substitute teaching structure benefit different people, with no one group emerging as the sole beneficiary or loser. Given the interconnectedness of contract teachers, TOCs, and students, it is important to fully appreciate how a seeming benefit to one group may affect the other groups.

The benefits to contract teachers are most readily apparent. They have a great deal of flexibility to take time off for personal reasons such as illness, as

well as for professional development opportunities. For the most part, their preparation time is protected as they are rarely required to cover the absences of other contract teachers within their schools. The assurance that TOCs are qualified teachers allows for a degree of confidence about maintaining a quality of teaching in the absence of the regular teacher, making absences less stressful and more manageable. Students may also benefit from some of the aspects of the system that benefit contract teachers. For example, students will benefit from maintenance of the quality of teaching and, indirectly, from the professional development and so forth that this system gives to teachers. On the other hand, when it goes wrong, when, for example, a TOC is not qualified or prepared to teach either the subject matter or the age group assigned, the students will be the main losers.

TOCs themselves probably benefit the least from the current structure. There is something to be said for the diversity of experience that results from TOCing, and the resulting chance to develop a variety of classroom management skills, but overall TOCs are faced with some very challenging working conditions. The unpredictability of work may result in financial hardships, and the lack of benefits is an obvious disadvantage. The variant and ambiguous hiring practices sometimes frustrate TOCs and prevent them from having reasonable expectations regarding when they will be awarded continuing contracts. What this leads to is a high degree of job dissatisfaction.

6.4 Who ought to benefit from this structure?

Teachers and TOCs have, of course, as much right as anyone to expect a system that is beneficial to them. But at the heart of any educational system there should surely always be a concern for the benefit of the students. However, if a system deters good people from entering the profession, the students will ultimately suffer. The quality of the education provided must be the central consideration in designing a substitute teaching system and an essential part of maintaining high educational quality is recruiting and retained high quality substitute teachers. As we have seen, few complaints are raised by contract teachers, or students regarding the current TOC system. On the other hand, available literature attests to some consistent dissatisfaction among TOCs.

6.5 How can the system be improved?

Further inquiry is needed to determine the most effective improvements; however, certain possibilities are already apparent.

The current system is guided by the notion of continuity, with the aim of the TOC providing continuity of instruction in the absence of the contract teacher. On the other hand, introducing a TOC, a “stranger”, into the classroom may not actually achieve the level of continuity desired. However, even if continuity is not achieved, it is not necessarily a bad thing, even from an educational perspective, to invite a “stranger” into the classroom. Something can be said for the variety of experience offered to the students by interacting with different teachers who have different backgrounds and teaching styles. It can be argued that schooling should not only be concerned with cognitive development and the acquisition of

knowledge, but also with social and emotional or cultural development. The “stranger” in the classroom may be able to address some of these other aims in ways the contract teacher could not, simply because she is a “stranger”. The educational imperative is important when making any decisions related to schooling and the use of TOCs, and the issue of continuity, must be considered. However, it may be that education is not always the most important thing when students spend time with a TOC. During this time, other skills and types of knowledge may be developed that are also important and desirable. Clearly the issue of continuity isn’t as simple as claiming that continuity is an essential part of good education. More thought is needed on such issues as what exactly constitutes continuity, continuity in respect of what, and continuity for whom, prior to empirical research into what ways and to what extent the current TOC policy helps or hinders continuity.

Once a better understanding of continuity in the classroom is achieved the development of a systematic theory of substitute teaching can be undertaken. Such a theory must recognize the idiosyncrasies of the position and outline the educational and other goals that the system is supposed to meet. It is important too that any such theory be made accessible to TOCs. I have tried to suggest that any such theory should, in particular, refuse to countenance any out-of-field assignments for TOCs, for few, if any, would argue that out-of-field teaching is likely to be educationally valuable for students.

A second area where there is fairly clear room for immediate improvement is in preparing student-teachers for the role of TOC. As has been noted,

although the majority are going to have to begin their teaching careers as TOCs, teacher-training programs simply ignore the particularities of this role. By extension, a third way to improve the current situation would be to provide more guidance to TOCs, as well as more support.

Finally, there must be a continued effort to resolve various specific issues relating to working conditions. It is unlikely that quick and agreeable resolutions will be reached on all, or even many, of these points. For example, should we condone or deplore an increased use of retired teachers? But with some guidance from a coherent theory of substitute teaching, decisions can be based on a mutually understood and accepted understanding of what being a TOC really entails.

Other models and approaches should also be considered. The mere fact that the current TOC system has been around for so many years does not in itself make it an educationally desirable system. Models from around the world should be evaluated, with positive aspects considered for inclusion in the BC system, as BC strives to remain a world leader in education.

7: NOTES

¹ Cardon (2002) labels a doctoral dissertation exploring the substitute teacher service in public schools conducted by Connors (1927) as the first study ever conducted about substitute teaching. Since Connors (1927), there have been studies conducted in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada that have raised similar issues regarding the management and organization of substitute teachers (e.g. Baldwin (1934), Nelson (1972), Vanderlinde (1985), Anderson & Gardner (1995), Abdal-Haqq (1997), Barlin & Hallgarten (2002), Tomei (2002), and Varlas (2002)). The experiences and perceptions of substitute teachers has also been explored in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, but a large portion of these studies are relatively recent (e.g. Jack (1972), Dendwick (1993), Bodin & Clarke (2002), Cardon (2002), Gonzales (2002), Cornwall (2004), Duggleby & Badali (2007)).

² In a 2001 report on teacher workloads and stress, the BCTF cited studies done in Nova Scotia and England that placed the average workweek of a teacher at about 52 hours (Naylor, 2001). It is difficult to determine the accuracy of these numbers as the studies failed to identify what is included in the definition of work. A 52-hour working week perhaps seems unexpectedly long, but regardless of that and the uncertainty of the figure, these studies do indicate that many teachers feel that they are over-worked. On the other hand, some would argue that teachers enjoy too many non-teaching hours and long holidays to warrant their current level of monetary compensation. According to the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2006) the average teacher in BC makes \$64,489 per year, while the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (Long, 2007) reports the average wage of a Chartered Accountant in BC as \$186,544 per year (in BC the education required for teaching and accounting is comparable). A CA might work more hours than a teacher, but given the important responsibilities placed on a teacher, the numerous school events attended after hours by most teachers, the fact that many teachers enrol in educative courses during their holiday time, and that teachers make a significant contribution to society, the gap in compensation is not obviously justified.

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APPENDIX: TOC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN THE 2006 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

8.1 Teachers on Call

8.1.1 POLICIES

49.01—That no person without a valid B.C. Certificate or Letter of Permission should be assigned to a class as a teacher on call except where hiring a qualified teacher on call is impossible.

(71 AGM, p. 10)
(90 AGM, p. 76)

49.03—That the functions of a teacher on call should be the same as those of the teacher for whom he/she is substituting, i.e., to give tuition or instruction or to administer or supervise instructional service in a public school. Specialized functions, such as tutoring, would be performed only if these were part of the regular member's duties.

(Dec 75 Ex, p. 17)
(Reviewed Dec 79 Ex, p. 19)

49.05—

- a. That BCTF members should be used as teachers on call.
- b. That only if no teacher on call who is a BCTF member is available, should a non-BCTF member be employed.
- c. That every school in a district should have access to a list of teachers on call who are BCTF members.

(Jan 78 Ex, p. 5)
(Nov 86 Ex, p. 4)

49.07—That appropriate pre-service and in-service training programs should be provided in every school district for teachers on call and for the members with whom they work.

1. The development and planning of these programs should be the responsibility of the local school board in consultation with the local association.
2. The funding of these programs should be the responsibility of the local school board.

(Dec 75 Ex, p. 18)
(Reviewed Dec 79 Ex, p. 19)

49.09—That teacher replacements who do not have teaching certificates be encouraged by their local associations to work toward obtaining such certification.

(Dec 75 Ex, p. 19)
(Reviewed Dec 79 Ex, p. 19)

49.11—That teacher on call assignments should be recognized as teaching experience for purposes of placement on the salary scale, with 160 days of on call teaching being equivalent to one year of regular teaching.

(Dec 75 Ex, p. 19)
(Mar 81 Ex, p. 10)

49.15—That the per diem rate for a teacher on call should be 1/189th of that member's regular scale placement in accordance with that member's experience and certification.

(84 AGM, p. 27)
(91 AGM, p. 59)

49.17—That teachers on call with teaching certificates or letters of permission should be compulsory members of the BCTF.

(79 AGM, pp. 17-18)
(Nov 86 Ex, p. 4)

49.19—That the BCTF opposes the reduction of teacher on call services.

(Sept 82 RA, p. 3)

49.21—That locals be encouraged to establish a registry of teachers and teachers on call seeking employment and create an accountable procedure to discuss and monitor hiring at the local level ensuring that the number of days of teacher on call experience in the district be an important consideration whenever a teacher is hired.

(95 AGM, p. 28)

49.23—That locals provide for the participation of teachers on call in the decision-making structures of the local, including representation on executive committees and staff representative assemblies, and on advisory committees.

(Feb 91 RA, p. 7)
(June 94 Ex, p. 19)

49.25—That the local priority for meeting teacher on call needs continue to be the improvement of the economic status, employment security and working conditions.

(Jan 89 RA, p. 8)

8.1.2 PROCEDURES

49.04—That locals make provision for associate membership for teachers on call who have been accepted as associate members of the BCTF.

(June 75 Ex, p. 6)
(Reviewed Dec 79 Ex, p. 19)

49.06—That locals be encouraged to make provision for teachers on call to participate in local association activities, particularly in in-service education activities.

(June 75 Ex, p. 6)
(Reviewed Dec 79 Ex, p. 19)

49.08—That teachers on call who are members of the local association should have access to all other in-service programs on the same basis as other members.

(Dec 75 Ex, p. 18)
(Reviewed Dec 79 Ex, p. 19)

49.10—That each school staff should be responsible for providing teachers on call with a practical written guide outlining the routine and emergency procedures followed at that school.

(Dec 75 Ex, p. 18)
(Reviewed Dec 79 Ex, p. 19)

49.12—That each school staff should ensure that teachers on call are made to feel that they are welcome additions to the teaching staff.

(Dec 75 Ex. p. 19)
(Reviewed Dec 79 Ex, p. 19)

49.14—That where a teacher on call works in more than one school district, the teacher on call shall choose the local association of which he/she shall be a member.

(Feb 76 Ex, p. 8)
(May 90 Ex, p. 28)

49.16—

1. That teachers on call be compensated for:
 - a. performing the duties of an elected BCTF position, or
 - b. facilitating a BCTF-sponsored workshop, or
 - c. serving on a BCTF committee or task force,
 - d. staff rep training and PD rep training

when such work, including travel time, occurs during regular school hours in which they would normally be available to teach.

2.
 - a. That such compensation shall be at a per diem rate of 1/189 of the member's regular scale payment, or the rate of pay for teachers on call, in accordance with the collective agreement then in force in the teacher's own district, whichever is greater.
 - b. That, to receive compensation under 49.16(1), TOCs must:
 - i. be registered and active with a school board,
 - ii. indicate what their per diem regular scale rate is,
 - iii. indicate any restrictions on availability.
 - c. When a TOC engages in any of the tasks under policy 49.16(1) during the time that he/she would normally be working in a part-time teaching position, the compensation would not be at the TOC per diem rate. Instead, the federation would reimburse the member's school board at the TOC daily rate, pursuant to a leave of absence request for that member. (The TOC would, however, be paid his/her regular salary by the school board in accordance with the part-time position.)

(93 AGM, p. 12)
(May 95 RA, p. 15-16)

49.18—That a major effort be made by the BCTF and locals to achieve compulsory membership in the BCTF as a condition of employment for teachers on call.

(84 AGM, p. 43)
(Nov 86 Ex, p. 4)

49.20—That the BCTF distribute the Lesson Aids Teacher on Call Resource Booklet to all new BCTF teachers on call members via local offices.

(95 AGM, p. 28)

49.22—That each local be encouraged to establish a procedure to ensure all TOC members have ability to vote in local polls or surveys.

(Jan 95 Ex, p. 29)