Supporting Teachers Through Career Shocks to Prevent Attrition

by

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Dedication or Acknowledgement

To Micah Keys, my family and friends near and far for supporting and encouraging me through my own career shocks. Your unconditional love and support have been so impactful as I journey through my career. Everyone should be so lucky to be surrounded by unconditional love and support such as yours as they navigate their way through life's changes. I love and appreciate you.

For anyone who is going through a career shock - you are not alone. Experiencing a shock is just that – shocking. Left in the wake of a shock is a person feeling powerful emotions and questioning what might be next for them in their career. Navigating through this process is not easy. Whatever you are feeling during this experience is valid. Remember that you are stronger than you seem, braver than you know, and that you are not alone. Have courage. I hope the recommendations in this capstone help you through your career journey, wherever it may lead you.

For Kim Conger – I could not have done it without you, Gams. You are a true testament to the power of accountability to change a person's life. You inspire me. May this research assist you in navigating any shock that may come your way. You are meant for great things in this life, and you will change the world. In fact, you already have.

Abstract

Teacher attrition is a complex problem; many factors can impact and influence teachers as they consider leaving the profession. High rates of teacher attrition can lead to teacher shortage, which poses problems for school districts, students, and for society. Career shocks are known to trigger deliberation regarding the future of one's career trajectory, but have not been examined in the teaching context as an influence on attrition. This capstone drew attention to this gap in the research, explored and answered the question: How can the school system support teachers through career shock, reducing burnout and attrition? The Job Demands-Resources model was used as a framework to examine the impacts of career shocks and other barriers to teacher longevity in the profession. A review of the literature first explored contributing factors to burnout syndrome in education, teacher turnover intention, and teacher attrition. Next, the impacts of positive and negative career shocks on employees were examined. Finally, a review of various supports for employees who have experienced career shocks was presented. Recommendations for school districts and principals are offered to support teachers through positive and negative career shocks specific to the education context, focusing on support via the addition of job resources.

Keywords: Job Demands-Resources Model, Negative Career Shocks, Organizational intervention, Positive Career Shocks, Teacher Attrition, Teacher Burnout, Teacher Retention, Teacher Turnover Intention.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Teaching is an incredibly demanding profession. For teachers, no two days are the same, their resources are limited and their job demands are never ending. Without support and care for those doing this work, this environment can be a recipe for burnout and attrition. Many countries have begun to experience a teacher shortage due to attrition. Teacher attrition is highly researched, and many studies examine burnout, but there is another, lesser-known factor that can influence and impact a teacher's decision to remain in the profession or move on to a new chapter in their careers. Enter the career shock: an impactful event, triggering major career deliberation and potential transition. Put more simply, for a teacher who has experienced a career shock, they might suddenly find themselves at a crossroads, wondering: should I stay, or should I go?

This capstone investigates how teachers' experiences of burnout and career shocks are linked with turnover intention and attrition, and how school districts and school leaders can support their teaching staff through career shocks as a means of increasing retention and reducing attrition.

Background Information

Attrition in the teaching profession is well documented, with researchers studying a multitude of contributing factors. Kelchtermans (2017) eloquently captures the drive behind this research as "the need to prevent good teachers from leaving the job for the wrong reasons" (p. 965). Understanding the process that ultimately ends with a teacher leaving the profession is key

in determining what interventions could be implemented as being impactful towards retention (Kelchtermans, 2017).

Academic researchers worldwide study factors that influence attrition in the teaching profession to better understand the motivations of the teachers who leave. In Arizona, where 24% of teachers left the profession after their first year in 2014, teachers' perception of working conditions and relationships between teachers and their mentors seemed to mediate retention and attrition (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Other studies have echoed that working conditions can push teachers to leave the profession (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Brandenburg et al., 2024). In a study examining the role of verbal and physical violence and related stress and anxiety, 43% of teachers surveyed expressed intentions to quit the profession (Mcmahon et al., 2023). In the Finnish context, 25% of teachers surveyed had experienced persistent intentions to leave the profession, with an additional 25% having experienced these same thoughts momentarily (Räsänen et al., 2020). In schools across the world, it is clear that a significant portion of teaching staff are considering, and even acting on, leaving the profession.

In our Canadian context, attrition is also a prevalent issue, with multiple bodies tracking statistics and conducting interviews to better understand teacher attrition and thus, improve targeted efforts to improve teacher retention. The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF-FCE) (2025) Parachute survey of teachers across all provinces and territories in Canada reported that within the last year, 45% of teachers have considered leaving the profession, with around 70% acknowledging staff shortage, especially for teachers specializing in French language and special education. The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (2025) collected survey data to look at trends that influence turnover intention. A relationship between turnover intention and access to mental health counselling support at school emerged; teachers working at schools without a

mental health counsellor expressed the highest rate of turnover intention at 19%. Teachers who had experienced violence, bullying or workplace harassment were also more likely to express turnover intention. Only around half of teachers who expressed that their current mental health was very poor or were unhappy about their job indicated that it was likely they would still be teaching in two years' time. Having a manageable workload and professional autonomy over teaching methods and assessments were also associated with lower turnover intentions. In total, 14% of survey respondents said it was unlikely or very unlikely that they would still be teaching in British Columbia's public system in two years. The results of this survey highlight "that BC's teacher shortage must be understood as a crisis in working conditions" (p. 9).

In tracking the percentage of Alberta teachers leaving, the College of Alberta School Superintendents (2024) reported that between 16-21 school authorities (districts) had between 0-5% of teachers leaving between 2019-2023. Over the same period, there was an increase in districts with between 6-10% of teachers leaving. Looking at 2023 alone, 18 districts saw up to 5% leave, another 18 had up to 10% leaving, 10 up to 15% leaving, 6 up to 25% leaving and 1 had more than 30% of their teachers leave. In summarizing the reasons for teacher attrition during this time period, several themes emerged, with life change being the highest reason at almost 79% and followed by being overwhelmed at 15%. The "availability of qualified and experienced teachers impacts the success of student programs and … educational experiences;" as attrition rates rise, districts may experience direct impacts on the students they serve (p. 97).

The Government of Alberta (2013) looked at attrition rates of teachers within their first five years in the profession. From the 2004/2005-2006/2007 school years, on average, 10% of teachers left after their first year, 6.6% after their second, 5.9% after their third and 4.6% after their fourth. Statistics on teachers who had left the profession within their first five years of

teaching and had not returned after five years were also tracked; for teachers hired between the years of 1998-2007, between 18-27% of these teachers left the profession within their first five years of teaching. Though this data is not current, it is worth including as part of the conversation around attrition in the Alberta context, specifically for teachers new to the profession. This data sparked funding for research to better understand why such high percentages of early career teachers in Alberta leave teaching within their first five years, and why as many as 25% of new education graduates in Alberta never teach at all (Clandinin et al., 2015).

The Alberta Teachers' Association (2025) surveyed 39 teachers who had left or were planning to leave the profession to gain more insight into the reasons impacting their decisions. Teachers surveyed listed a mix of personal and professional reasons for leaving teaching, as well as what would need to change to influence them to stay. In order of prevalence, the following drivers most influenced these teacher's decision to leave: Work load / work life balance (91.7%), inability to meet the needs of all students (72.2%), political environment (66.7%), parental expectations (58.3%), curriculum changes (52.8%), aggression concerns (47.2%), pay (38.9%), health considerations (36.1%) and loss of autonomy (33.3%). These teachers were also asked to consider their colleagues' turnover intentions; 36.1% felt that up to 25% of their colleagues could be considering leaving, and 33.3% felt the percentage could be as high as 50%. While this sample size is small, it provides a snapshot of the factors that influence attrition in Alberta's teaching context specifially. Alberta's leaving teachers share many similarities with teachers around the world, however, we can glimpse how Alberta's political landscape is also a factor of attrition in this region.

These Albertan sources of data on attrition are of special interest to me, having worked as a teacher in Alberta since 2016. As I researched and looked for trends in attrition data and

compiled and synthesized information on why teachers in Alberta are leaving, so many of the reasons and quotes from these teachers echo my own experiences. As the years have gone by, I too have found myself feeling increasingly burnt out with each passing year. It has become increasingly difficult for me to continue to plan, teach, assess, and build relationships with students in the ways that I want to with the time and resources available to me. As the public education system in Alberta continues to become more strained with less funding, more students, and fewer supports for effective inclusion, I have despaired that I am no longer able to perform the duties of my profession in the ways I was capable of in the past. I did not want, nor plan, to ever leave my career in the K-12 education system that I was so passionate about making a difference in. However, as my mental health status started to affect my ability to teach, I started to come to terms with the idea that I might need a change. I might need to leave a broken system before it breaks me. I will likely become one of the attrition statistics I have been studying, soon.

The idea of changing careers after almost a decade of honing my craft as an educator is terrifying to me. Even though everything is pointing me to the fact that a change might be healthy and even necessary for me, I struggled immensely with the decision of whether I should stay or go. Staying would not be healthy for me. Leaving will be a shock. Either decision will require resilience and support. As I explored topics of career adaptability and resilience through career change for this capstone, my research led me to the topic of career shocks. I was immediately intrigued and saw myself and my own career experiences reflected in the research. Experiencing career shocks triggers a process that for some may end with a decision to leave their current job. I began to wonder: could career shocks also be connected to attrition in the teaching profession? If so, could certain resources and supports be put into place to lessen their effects, reducing the attrition rate?

Statement of the Problem

Many studies have explored the reasons for teacher attrition, and others have explored the impacts of career shocks, however, there is little research on career shocks in the field of education or their impact on teachers specifically. Career shocks, or events that impact and trigger deliberation regarding one's career, can lead to career change (Akkermans et al., 2021; Seibert et al., 2013). While certain types of career shocks are universal in that they could impact people in a variety of careers, different types of shocks can be more prevalent in certain career fields, as demonstrated by previous research that has focused on groups like executives (Korotov, 2021), academics (Kraimer et al., 2019), nurses (Zhang et al., 2024), Red Cross volunteers (Petrovi et al., 2021), MBA holders (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021), employees of banks (Ali & Mehreen, 2022), and entrepreneurs (Rummel et al., 2021). In the field of education, attrition is a concern; districts and schools aim to reduce attrition and increase retention to avoid experiencing teacher shortages (College of Alberta School Superintendents, 2024; Walker, 2024). By examining teachers' experiences of career shocks in the education context, recommendations can be made for more tailored support and resources to be developed in response. Offering appropriate job resources to support teachers through certain shocks may impact their decision to stay or leave the profession of teaching, and subsequently, influence attrition rates.

Purpose of the Paper

Teachers may experience a variety of career shocks throughout their careers. The information and recommendations presented in this capstone are meant to inform the creation of policy and resources by school districts and school leaders to provide appropriate and timely resources to teachers experiencing a shock. By identifying shocks specific to teaching and

preparing resources in advance, districts are better positioned to mitigate their impacts on teachers by providing support immediately following the shock. Good fit supports may help teachers recommit to their teaching role rather than transition to a new career stage, lessening rates of attrition that occur immediately following a career shock.

This research is meant to be used by teachers, principals, leaders of school districts, and researchers. Teachers can use the information in this capstone to learn more about career shocks: what they are, some common examples, what it feels like to experience one, and how shocks trigger career deliberation and are connected to turnover intention. My hope is that this research better equips teachers to recognize career shocks and advocate for support for themselves as necessary in response. As school leaders, principals have influence over certain aspects of school culture that can act as job resources for teachers undergoing career shock. The recommendations in this research can assist them in being more intentional in implementing and reinforcing what is already helpful to someone going through a career shock and making adjustments to improve what is not. Similarly, school districts have the power to address career shocks at an organizational level, through policy, professional development, and standard operating procedures that can be developed for specific career shocks. They also have a role in bringing awareness to these resources so teachers can access them as necessary. The recommendations this capstone offers aims to assist school districts as organizations with ideas for implementation of these goals. Finally, there is a gap in academic literature concerning career shocks in the field of education, and their connection to attrition. I hope this capstone highlights this gap and encourages future research in this area.

Research Question or Thesis Statement

This capstone addresses the following research question: How can the school system support teachers through career shock, reducing burnout and attrition?

Positionality Statement

My own experiences with career shocks, burnout syndrome and turnover intention sparked my interest in these topics as the foundation of this capstone. In addition to contributing to the greater body of research, I am personally invested and can deeply relate to these topics from my time as a teacher. I have personally experienced several career shocks but did not know there was a name for these types of career events until I began this endeavor. The research I conducted has helped me to reflect on my experiences in a new light and equipped me to better handle future shocks as my own best advocate. Unlike career shocks, the concept of burnout was not new to me. Protecting oneself from burnout through practicing self-care is a frequent message that has been engrained into me over the years during professional development. However, I didn't understand the full scope of how to recognize the dimensions of burnout until I began researching, and once I did, I recognized many of my own symptoms in the literature on burnout in education. Though I learned the terms turnover intention and attrition through the process of researching for this capstone, I recognized that turnover intention was an idea I was already seriously considering, and that attrition may be in my future.

The focus of this capstone is supporting teachers experiencing career shocks as one avenue of preventing attrition. When I began this capstone research, I was on medical leave from my teaching position and deliberating if I should stay in the profession or move on. I wished to do research that would be helpful for me, and others like me, who were at this sort of career crossroads. The career shocks I experienced, in conjunction with my job demands, led me to

experience significant burnout, which affected both my mental and physical health in my role as an educator and student counsellor. I did return to teaching for a short time, before experiencing a recurrence of my condition and finally deciding that it is time for me to move on. For me personally, it was healthier to leave than to stay; the recommendations that I make in this capstone will not be supports I will ever experience, at least not as a teacher.

While coming to this decision, I was supported with health benefits that allowed me to access sick leave, counselling and psychological interventions, and career and occupational counselling services to help me heal and reflect on what might be next for me. My husband, family and friends were all incredibly supportive as I took the necessary time to reflect, heal, and ultimately come to the decision to leave teaching. It is also worth noting that I have no dependents and am part of a dual income household. I have ample savings that I can fall back on if it takes a while to find a career that is a better fit for what I am looking for out of my life.

Not every teacher who experiences a career shock will share my positionality. Nor will every teacher have access to the same support and services that I was privileged with during my time of shock and burnout which allowed me to come to the decision to leave teaching. Leaving the profession is not an option some teachers have access to, for reasons financial, geographical, or otherwise. It is for these teachers, and the teachers who choose to stay in the profession, that I hope will benefit from the recommendations in this capstone.

Theoretical Framework

This capstone views factors leading to attrition and career shocks through the lens of the Job Demands-Resources model developed by Demerouti and Bakker. Job demands are the aspects of a job that require ongoing mental and physical effort to complete; these can be physical, social, or organizational in nature, and are associated with physical or psychological

costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). The greater the demands, the greater the costs to the individual (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Job resources refer to aspects of a job that either are helpful in achieving the goals of one's work, reducing the demands of the job or the costs of demands on the employee, or promoting personal growth, development, and learning (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Job resources are necessary to address one's job demands and can be organizational or social in nature (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Organizational resources include pay, career opportunities and job security (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), as well as autonomy and control, variety within one's role, and opportunities for development and in decision making (Demerouti et al., 2001). Social resources come in the form of support given by peers, colleagues, and family, as well as team climate in the workplace (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Job resources can also be accessed at the task level through "skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and performance feedback" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 313).

When different types and levels of job demands and resources are present in one's work environment, they interact with each other and can be predictive of both job strain and worker motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). When job demands are high and job resources low, employees experience job strain and report more exhaustion and cynicism, whereas when job resources are high, the effect of the high job demands leading to burnout was reduced (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources are helpful in influencing motivation levels of employees who face high job demands, and can act as a buffer against job stress, as well as lead to an increase in engagement and work performance, and a decrease in cynicism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Resources which help one to achieve their work goals can influence extrinsic motivation, while resources which help individuals to foster personal growth, development and learning impact

intrinsic motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Organizations can utilize the job demands-resources model to identify the strengths and weaknesses of departments and positions; subsequently, interventions can be implemented which aim to increase job resources and reduce specific job demands that may be causing the most strain on employees as a way to increase engagement and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Though the job demands-resources model is typically utilized in research related to burnout, career shocks have also been studied through the lens of this model; negative career shocks can be viewed as job demands, while positive shocks may act as job resources (Kraimer et al., 2019). Viewing negative career shocks as job demands that would create job stress presents an opportunity to research which additional job resources could potentially buffer the effects of the shock. This model emphasizes the importance of the presence of job resources for employees who experience high job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), making it a good fit to examine effective supports for teachers. This capstone utilizes this model to examine negative career shocks as job demands and positive career shocks as job resources. Specific job resources that school districts can provide teachers as interventions and support following a career shock to buffer its effects are offered in this capstone.

Significance of the Study

Akkermans et al. (2021) highlights the importance of examining contextual factors that may predispose certain groups or people to specific career shocks. Workers in diverse sectors may experience a variety of shocks over the course of their careers and may benefit from different types of support unique to their occupational context as the experience triggers deliberation on how to proceed. While many researchers have studied career shocks, their effects on workers, and even ways to support workers through specific shocks in different sectors of the

workforce, this capstone research is significant because it addresses a gap in career shock literature concerning the impacts and effects of career shocks on teachers specifically.

School districts want to retain talented teachers to avoid shortage and continue offering robust educational programming; it is within their best interest to consider how career shocks may be a barrier to this goal. Leaving the profession of teaching is a potential outcome following the experience of a career shock. Districts can anticipate and try to mitigate the effects of shocks their teaching staff may experience by offering appropriate resources following these events to support their teachers through them with increased resilience. Doing so may influence how that teacher chooses to proceed as they deliberate following the shock, encouraging them to recommit to the role of teaching with support over pursuing other career pathways.

This capstone provides recommendations that can be implemented at the district and school levels to provide resources to support teachers through a variety of career shocks specific to their work context. An awareness of these recommendations can help districts in their efforts to retain talented and experienced teachers by offering applicable support as they navigate through different career shocks over the course of their teaching careers. With higher levels of teacher retention, the quality of learning goes up, which will continue to have a positive ripple effect on students, their families, and society.

Definition of Terms

Attrition - Kelchtermans (2017) defines teacher attrition as "qualified teachers, leaving the profession, for reasons other than having reached the age of retirement" (p. 962).

Burnout - Schaufeli et al. (2020) describes burnout as a work-related mental state; a syndrome consisting of related symptoms around the ability and willingness one has to invest energy into their work. They name exhaustion, cognitive and emotional impairment as three dimensions

surrounding an inability to invest energy, and mental distance as a dimension of unwillingness to invest energy. They also name psychological distress, psychosomatic complaints and a depressed mood as secondary dimensions of burnout that individuals may also experience.

Career shocks - Seibert et al. (2016) define career shocks as "a distinct and impactful event that triggers deliberation about potential career transitions ... occur[ing] at a specific time and place and impact[ing] thoughts and feelings about your career status and future career direction." (p. 245-246).

Turnover intention - Räsänen et al. (2020) describe turnover intention in teachers as "intentions to leave the teaching profession entirely" (p. 839). Liu et al. (2021) point out that teachers come to this intention after having worked for a period of time and giving considerable thought to the idea. Turnover intention is different from turnover behaviour; intention represents a possibility of leaving, while behaviour would indicate action has been taken to leave (Liu et al., 2021).

Outline of the Remainder of the Paper

Chapter 2 will provide a review of the literature on several themes connected to the research question. The first theme explores challenges to teachers remaining in the profession. This section will explore the topic of burnout and its contributing factors as experienced by teachers, the impact of burnout on teachers' professional efficacy, and how burnout can be addressed through interventions. Factors that influence turnover intention and its connection to burnout are also discussed in this section. Finally, influences connected to teacher attrition and retention are explored. The second theme examines literature on career shocks. This section explores the differences between positive and negative shocks, what someone undergoing a career shock may experience, how career shocks are related to career deliberation and transition, and diversity considerations related to career shocks. The third theme reviews research on

supporting people through career shocks. This section explores the role that human resources can play in offering support that mitigates career shocks and examines ways in which negative shocks can be reduced and positive shocks can be amplified through specific resources and interventions.

Chapter 3 offers practical recommendations that school districts and school leaders can adopt, develop, and implement to better support teachers experiencing career shocks as a means of reducing attrition. Several examples of negative and positive career shocks that are relevant to the teaching context are highlighted, with ideas of specific resources that could support teachers through each shock.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will delve into current literature related to the research question: How can the school system support teachers through career shock, reducing burnout and attrition? The first theme, Challenges Impacting Teachers' Longevity in the Profession, will explore the second part of the research question, specifically focusing on burnout, turnover intention and attrition as the main challenges. Educators' experiences of burnout are examined through contributing factors, followed by an analysis of burnout's impacts on teacher's self-efficacy and suggestions from the literature for the reduction and prevention of burnout amongst teachers. Turnover intention is examined next, both as it relates to burnout, and with additional influencing factors that impact teachers' intentions to leave the profession. Attrition rounds out this first theme; negative factors that push and positive factors that pull teachers from the profession are examined, and ideas for teacher retention are explored. The second theme, Career Shocks, will provide context on different types of shocks, their effect on those experiencing them, and the impact that they have on one's decision making and relationship to their work. The final theme, Ways to Support People Experiencing Career Shock, looks at the role of human resources in offering good fit supports for different types of shocks, and how different organizational contexts aim to reduce the effects of negative shocks and support employees through positive shocks with specific resources and approaches.

Review of Research Literature

Challenges Impacting Teachers' Longevity in the Profession

Burnout

Burnout is classified as a syndrome of related symptoms that affect one's ability and willingness to invest energy into their work due to their mental state (Schaufeli et al., 2020). Physical and psychological exhaustion, mental distance or depersonalization, and impaired emotional and cognitive states are core dimensions of burnout that correlate with each other positively (Maratos et al., 2024; Pakdee et al., 2025; Schaufeli et al., 2020). Depressed mood (Pakdee et al., 2025; Schaufeli et al., 2020), psychological distress and anxiety, and psychosomatic complaints are secondary dimensions of burnout experienced by some in addition to one or more of the core dimensions (Schaufeli et al., 2020). In teachers, emotional exhaustion shows up frequently in symptoms like chronic fatigue, fewer available emotional resources, emotional fragility, and overwhelm (Barros et al., 2025). Burnout can also impact their interpersonal relationships and is associated with feelings of low personal accomplishment (Barros et al., 2025). Those with burnout syndrome may experience physical symptoms like musculoskeletal pain, poor sleep cycles, and are more likely to perceive themselves as having a poorer quality of life (Pakdee et al., 2025).

When examining the dimensions of burnout using the job demands-resources model as a framework, exhaustion is associated with a job's demands, while a lack of resources is connected to the mental distance or depersonalization one may feel towards their work (Demerouti et al., 2001). Demerouti et al. (2001) explains that the development of burnout follows two processes. First, over taxation due to the difficulty or quantity of demands of work leads to the exhaustion dimension of burnout. Second, a lack of available resources to support the demands of the job

leads to a reduction in motivation and withdrawal or disengagement as a protection mechanism response. In summary, when job demands are high and job resources are low, exhaustion and disengagement are experienced in response; the burnout syndrome occurs. The authors suggest taking job demands and available resources into account during job design to reduce the probability of experiencing exhaustion and disengagement from the role. Reducing or redesigning the demands of the job may have a preventative effect on exhaustion, while providing job resources may have a positive effect on employee engagement. They note that the interplay of demands and resources leading to burnout will differ across areas of the workforce, where the job demands and access to resources will differ depending on the nature of one's work and their organization. When designing burnout interventions, taking the unique work environment into account helps employers to focus on reducing the job demands that have the biggest impact on their employees and offer job resources that address those demands to have the greatest impact on preventing burnout syndrome (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Much research has been conducted on contributing factors of burnout in teachers. In their systematic review, Mijakoski et al. (2022) found 61 determinates of burnout over 33 studies. A lack of job satisfaction is a highly predictive determinant of burnout in teachers (Agyapong et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021; Martí-González et al., 2023; Mijakoski et al., 2022). Workload pressures also result in extensive job stress for teachers over time (Agyapong et al., 2022; Martí-González et al., 2023; Mijakoski et al., 2022). The job demands of teaching are extensive; lesson planning, grading and assessment for heterogenous classes and extracurricular activities all contribute to long work weeks (Barros et al., 2025). More time pressure (Barros et al., 2025; Martí-González et al., 2023; Pakdee et al., 2025), long working hours (Barros et al., 2025; Pakdee et al., 2025), a lack of autonomy and shared working values (Barros et al., 2025), and an increase in the levels

of conflict and violence one is exposed to (Barros et al., 2025; Martí-González et al., 2023; Reddy et al., 2018), further contributes to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization teachers may experience (Barros et al., 2025; Martí-González et al., 2023; Pakdee et al., 2025; Reddy et al., 2018). The job demands of teaching are also emotionally demanding; teachers manage a variety of behaviours in their complex classrooms with appropriate discipline, assist their students with learning emotional regulation skills as they navigate difficulties, anxiety and fear at school, and navigate interactions with stakeholders that may be emotionally charged (Barros et al., 2025). These types of demands have only increased for teachers since the COVID-19 pandemic (Martí-González et al., 2023). Other determinates that contribute to teacher burnout include teacher self-efficacy, neuroticism, a perceived collective exhaustion among teaching staff, classroom disruptions, role ambiguity, and conflict relationships (Mijakoski et al., 2022).

Several school-related and demographic factors have associations with burnout rates among teachers. The perceived difficulty of subjects taught, the grades taught and methods used to instruct all contribute to burnout rates among teachers (Agyapong et al., 2022). In their scoping review, Agyapong et al. (2022) found contradicting evidence on burnout's association with a teacher's gender, with some studies finding burnout was higher among female teachers, and others reporting that male teachers experienced burnout at higher rates. Studies examined by Agyapong et al. (2022) also differed on the level of teaching experience most associated with burnout rates. While teachers who are newer to the profession may be enthusiastic, they are also more likely to lack self-fulfillment and personal accomplishments. Conversely, veteran teachers may have more management skills, experience and tools to help prevent burnout, but may experience boredom in their assignments, leading to exhaustion.

Burnout's impact on teachers extends to their internal view of themselves. Self-perception can become distorted when one is exposed to stressful situations over time (Pakdee et al., 2025). Higher self-criticism has also been positively correlated with the depersonalization dimension of burnout (Maratos et al., 2024). Burnout can leave teachers with feelings of reduced professional efficacy (Barros et al., 2025; Mijakoski et al., 2022; Räsänen et al., 2020; Schaufeli et al., 2020), especially for teachers who experience more discipline management in their role (Mijakoski et al., 2022). Liu et al. (2021) describes this as "ability panic," and interestingly, recommends that teachers address this at an individual level by seeking out and making time for professional development and study to increase their capabilities to adapt to the pressures of their role, with no mention of how schools or districts might address this issue (p. 6481).

School leaders, family members and society can all play a role in reducing burnout in teachers. Poor leadership, unclear institutional goals, inadequate orientation to the organization and a lack of autonomy have a detrimental effect on burnout in teachers; school leaders have an opportunity to address these factors directly through policy and organizational culture (Mijakoski et al., 2022). Schools can support their teachers through developing and maintaining a positive school climate (Barros et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2021), and a good interpersonal working environment with mentorship (Pakdee et al., 2025). Ensuring teachers are provided with resources and equipment needed to do their work effectively and avoiding administrative work unrelated to the teacher's role is also recommended (Liu et al., 2021). Providing teachers with individual autonomy (Barros et al., 2025) and reducing workload where possible are also encouraged (Liu et al., 2021; Pakdee et al., 2025). School leaders can also take an active role in providing training for teachers to improve their resilience (Liu et al., 2021), and institutionally build up resources and systems to increase supports that teachers can access as preventative

measures to burnout (Barros et al., 2025; Pakdee et al., 2025). Social support from others can increase self-esteem, self-efficacy, and use of coping strategies (Martí-González et al., 2023). Families of teachers are encouraged to be understanding, provide care and engage in entertainment to help reduce anxiety related to the job (Liu et al., 2021). From a societal view, expectations of teachers must be reasonable, and the responsibility of supporting students is one that must be shared, rather than being placed solely on schools and teachers (Liu et al., 2021).

The greater a teacher's resilience skills, the less likely they are to experience burnout (Agyapong et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021). Teachers lacking resilience will have difficulty adapting to changing environments, may passively avoid challenges, have difficulty coping with the tasks of their work, and lack competence and self confidence in their abilities (Liu et al., 2021). These teachers may experience difficulties in their relationships with colleagues, feelings of loneliness, meaninglessness and worthlessness (Liu et al., 2021). Teachers with higher resilience and more positive emotions tend to thrive despite difficult circumstances, increasing their ability to remain in the profession (Agyapong et al., 2022). Self-compassion also assists teachers in preventing and coping with burnout symptoms and is associated with decreased depersonalization (Maratos et al., 2024). Research around emotional intelligence in teachers as a mediator to burnout has found that while it can act as a protective factor individually, it alone is not sufficient in protecting individuals from emotional exhaustion and the effects of burnout (Barros et al., 2025).

Burnout is shaped by organizational contexts and is a response to the conditions of work, as such, individual protective factors alone are not sufficient in preventing burnout among teachers (Barros et al., 2025). Broader organizational resources are a crucial part of support and can amplify a teacher's individual protective factors (Barros et al., 2025). A holistic approach to

preventing burnout is necessary; intervention research should focus on improving teachers' working conditions and increasing organizational supports available to them (Barros et al., 2025). This approach addresses the organizational pressures teachers face and relieves them from being solely responsible for preventing burnout through individual protective factors.

Turnover Intention

Prolonged stress and burnout experienced by teachers can result in an intention to leave the profession (Engle et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2021). Liu et al. (2021) found "the more serious job burnout is, the more serious turnover intention is" (p. 6418). Teachers who feel they are treated unfairly, experience overwhelm with additional work outside the scope of their role (Liu et al., 2021), feel unsatisfied by their work or experience burnout, are more likely to experience resistance towards their work and an intention to leave (Engle et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2021). Emotional exhaustion (Jyoti et al., 2015), and prolonged work-related stress presenting as physical and mental symptoms are predictive dimensions of burnout associated with turnover intention (Liu et al., 2021; Räsänen et al., 2020). In the Finnish context, around one in four teachers experienced persistent turnover intentions while another one in four experienced turnover intention momentarily (Räsänen et al., 2020). For teachers whose turnover intentions persist, the reasons for their intention don't always remain the same (Räsänen et al., 2020).

Multiple factors outside of burnout also influence teacher turnover intention. A combination of factors influence turnover intention, including workload concerns, changes in school systems and societal expectations of teachers, challenges in interactions with parents and students, and a lack of personal commitment to teaching (Räsänen et al., 2020). Experiencing verbal and physical violence from students and their parents, or less commonly from colleagues and administrators can also be predictive of turnover intention among teachers, both directly and

indirectly via the anxiety and stress these events produce (Mcmahon et al., 2023). Rapid change and reform in school systems, coupled with limited resources to cope with and support new demands, also impact teacher turnover intentions; teachers are left feeling disappointed and unappreciated when the everyday realities of teaching aren't considered in system-wide decision making (Räsänen et al., 2020). When professional support, trust and autonomy were lacking for teachers in their interactions with stakeholders, parents, students and colleagues, turnover intention increased (Räsänen et al., 2020). For some teachers, a lack in opportunities for career growth, or a frustrating disconnect between their "career aspirations and everyday realities of the profession" contributed to their turnover intentions and was classified as a lack of commitment (Räsänen et al., 2020, p. 850). This was the most frequent reason for turnover intention when the survey was first completed, especially by participants who did not answer again five years later, suggesting that teachers whose turnover intentions are motivated by personal reasons related to commitment may be more likely to act on their intention to leave the profession (Räsänen et al., 2020). Jyoti et al. (2015) suggest utilizing high performance human resource practices to reduce emotional exhaustion and turnover intention among teachers, specifically in the form of "extensive training, performance management programmes, […] empowerment in the decision-making process and […] recognition for […] performance/contribution[s]" (p. 446).

Attrition and Retention

Attrition, or when teachers choose to leave the profession, can be motivated by a variety of reasons that may be system wide, school based, or personal to each teacher (Räsänen et al., 2020). Often, the decision to leave the profession of teaching is due to a combination of factors and reasons that have built up over time (Brandenburg et al., 2024). Leaving is not a decision teachers come to lightly and is often an emotional process; for many, months or even years of

deliberation occur before finally leaving the profession (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Brandenburg et al., 2024). The decision to leave may be accompanied by feelings of guilt, as teachers reflect on how their attrition will negatively impact the students in their care (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022).

Predominately, reasons for attrition are negative emotional and psychological factors; a loss of passion for teaching is common (Gundlach, 2025), and many teachers experience feelings of burnout, stress and exhaustion in response to heavy workloads and administrative work (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Gundlach, 2025), or feelings of dissatisfaction or unhappiness with school leadership, the workplace environment, and student behaviors (Brandenburg et al., 2024). Many of the reasons for attrition stem from something that is lacking. Teachers listed a lack of respect, personal satisfaction, professional learning opportunities, infrastructure, recognition, professional autonomy (Brandenburg et al., 2024), collegial support (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Brandenburg et al., 2024), opportunities for advancement, preparedness for the realities of teaching, shared pedagogical vision (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022), connection with students and interest or competence in the assigned subject to be taught as reasons they chose to leave the profession (Gundlach, 2025). Other reasons for attrition included being accused of an illegal offence, a desire to improve their physical or mental health (Gundlach, 2025), salary, family responsibilities (Brandenburg et al., 2024), or experiences with threats or violence in the workplace (Zurawiecki, 2013).

Attrition is not always motivated by negative factors; for some teachers, leaving the profession is motivated by a pull towards something positive rather than a push to leave something negative. One reason for attrition that is more positive but much less common is when teachers experience a desire for a change or new challenge in their careers (Gundlach, 2025). For

example, one teacher anticipated working away from the classroom for a short time, but upon discovering her enjoyment for the new, higher paying role, opted not to return (Brandenburg et al., 2024). An enticing opportunity offering better salary or improved working conditions and work-life balance than those available in the teaching profession may be enough to pull a teacher away from the classroom (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Brandenburg et al., 2024). Male teachers are more likely to consider turnover intention and eventually leave due to positive pull factors than their female counterparts (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Räsänen et al., 2020).

Gundlach (2025) makes the case that when looking at attrition, it is also helpful to examine the reasons for migration from school to school. When research around teacher migration is viewed as a decision teachers make to move schools while research around retention is viewed as a decision teachers make to remain in the profession, this neglects to account for involuntary migration and its effect on teacher attrition (Gundlach, 2025). Having experienced involuntary migration personally, I appreciate the notion that it is interconnected with attrition and is worthy of further consideration and study. Connected to involuntary migration is the lack of job security often experienced by teachers newer to the profession. Teachers on temporary contracts experience more job insecurity, often teach less desirable assignments, and may work with many different school teams and student groups while simultaneously having fewer opportunities to build deep bonds; over time, these factors can have physical and mental impacts on teachers' wellness and personal lives (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022).

When reasons for retention were examined, teachers listed connection with their students, financial commitments, and collegiate relationships as their top reasons to remain in the profession (Gundlach, 2025). Two of these reasons stress the importance of the quality of relationships in job satisfaction for teachers. Job satisfaction is especially important for teacher

retention in the rural context (Engle et al., 2024). Teacher leadership, especially non-instructional practices have also been found to impact teacher retention (Engle et al., 2024). Effective mentorship relationships, especially in schools serving students in poverty, also impacts retention (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Less common reasons for retention were the teachers' children and families, their passion for their teaching assignment, a sense of duty, limited opportunities in other professions or sectors, a lack of other training, to utilize accrued leave time, and job security (Gundlach, 2025). It is worth noting that though teachers may be considering leaving the profession due to dissatisfaction, "financial commitments, lack of perceived alternatives, or fear of losing job security" are reasons that teachers who otherwise might leave instead choose to remain (Gundlach, 2025, p. 3092). For new teachers, the presence of specific job resources can impact retention, namely general support through structured guidance and induction programs, learning and sharing with colleagues in professional learning communities, receiving mentorship, feeling a sense of belonging and connection at school, cooperation with colleagues, clear goals with support to achieve them, and appreciative school leadership (Göregen et al., 2024). For novice teachers, teacher voice on school policy and how to run their classrooms is also impactful for retention (García et al., 2022).

What can schools do to address attrition and increase retention? Gundlach (2025) suggests "interventions to address teacher wellbeing, job satisfaction, and professional fulfillment," as these are necessary elements of teachers' working environments directly related to retention (p. 3092). García et al. (2022) identifies greater teacher autonomy, supportive work environments, addressing school problems and strong teacher morale as having strong impacts on reducing teacher attrition in novice teachers especially. Cultivating a work environment where teacher voice is part of decision making and creating an atmosphere of support for each

other to address issues can also have a strong influence on teachers' decisions to remain in the profession (García et al., 2022).

Since the factors that influence teacher attrition are often complex and cumulative in impact, a multifaceted approach to addressing attrition that is just as complex will be necessary (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022; Brandenburg et al., 2024). Conducting exit interviews with teachers who choose to migrate to other schools or leave the profession can offer insights in which areas teachers may need more training, support, or intervention to address working conditions (Brandenburg et al., 2024; Gundlach, 2025). Retention of all teachers is neither feasible nor always favorable, as it is not in the best interests of schools to retain "unenthused, exhausted, disconnected, or unhealthy employees who wish to leave to improve their health and wellbeing, or […] pursue other career interests or life events" (Gundlach, 2025, p. 3093). Teacher unions also play a role in reducing teacher attrition, as much of their work is centered around empowering teachers and improving their work experiences through advocating for better working conditions, supportive work environments, and resources for professional development (García et al., 2022).

It is important to acknowledge COVID-19 as a bridge between this theme, and the following themes on career shocks and supporting employees through shocks. COVID-19's relationship to the topics of burnout, turnover intention, attrition and retention has been studied, and recommendations suggesting ways that teachers could be supported through this type of career shock were offered. The teaching context has changed since these studies were conducted; we now have widespread access to COVID vaccines and policies to prevent the spread of infection have since been relaxed. Going into great depth with research and recommendations for this type of career shock is outside the scope of this paper.

Career Shocks

Defining Career Shocks

Seibert et al. (2016) define career shocks as "a distinct and impactful event that triggers deliberation about potential career transitions ... occur[ing] at a specific time and place and impact[ing] thoughts and feelings about your career status and future career direction" (p. 245-246). Career shocks force one to pay attention to "the implications the event has for the likelihood that her current plans will help achieve her current work goals in a manner consistent with her values and ideals" (Kraimer et al., 2019, p. 133). After experiencing a career shock, one ponders whether they are the "the right person in the right place" (Petrovi et al., 2021, p. 605). Career shocks can lead one to rethink their values and mission in relation to their job and question their identity as it relates to their work; they trigger in depth reflection and have a tangible impact on the direction of one's career (Petrovi et al., 2021). They can cause one to question their competency and reassess their ambitions (Zhang et al., 2024). When determining if an event should be classified as a career shock, one should also consider if it impacts one's motivation or opportunity to work, is unexpected or has unpredictable consequences impacting one's ability to work and is extraordinary for the individual who is experiencing it (Pak et al., 2021). Workers who are regularly exposed to highly stressful, challenging situations daily, are more likely to be exposed to events that could constitute career shocks (Petrovi et al., 2021). Shocks typically occur outside of the control of the person experiencing them, and can occur at national, organizational, or individual levels (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021). Shocks can stem from many sources, including your organization, your family, the labour market, geopolitical influences and environmental occurrences (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021).

The same event, while qualifying as a career shock for one person, may not for another, making it difficult to measure career shocks with a standardized tool (Pak et al., 2021). When experiencing an event that could potentially be classified as a career shock, effective coping strategies can help to prevent it from becoming a shock with greater influence on one's career. For example, Pak et al. (2021) notes that an increase in work demands may not be problematic for an individual who is supported through the transition with sufficient resources. Conversely, those without resources or coping skills may experience negative effects on their career in response to a negative shock or may not be able to benefit from potentially positive shocks. When one's career is deeply meaningful to them or could be considered a calling, Petrovi et al. (2021) found that in this circumstance, a career shock can have one of two very opposing impacts; one either recommits to the role, or leaves the job, organization or calling entirely, making a drastic shift in career.

Career shock events can be triggered by internal factors such as changing personal goals or career aspirations, or external factors outside of one's control (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Seibert et al., 2016). Some career shocks can be anticipated, such as marriage, pregnancy, or a planned relocation (Seibert et al., 2016). Though anticipated, these events still can be shocking, generating feelings regarding career status and prompting reflection about career transition (Seibert et al., 2016). Other types of career shocks are unanticipated and can catch one off guard, unprepared to handle change in the aftermath of the shock (Seibert et al., 2016). Sustaining an injury, suffering from an illness, or an unexpected loss of job are examples of career shocks that one may not be anticipating, but would still prompt one to contemplate their career status, and potentially impacting thoughts one has regarding the future direction of their career (Seibert et al., 2016).

Positive and Negative Shocks

Career shocks are generally classified as positive or negative, and as such, have positive or negative effects or impacts on one's career (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Seibert et al., 2016). Classifying a shock as positive or negative is based on how it is perceived initially by the person experiencing it, rather than positive or negative consequences the shock has on their career (Pak et al., 2021). Petrovi et al. (2021) note that "the same event may have different consequences for different individuals," highlighting that the outcomes of career shocks are not necessarily the most important factor in identifying whether or not a shock has occurred (p. 609). In one study which examined career shocks from a job demands-resources perspective, positive career shocks were seen as job resources that can increase one's engagement with their work and facilitate development in achieving desired goals, while negative shocks were seen as job demands that decrease one's engagement with their work as they perceive that they are failing to reach certain goals (Kraimer et al., 2019).

Positive career shocks are events that signal one is doing well in their current course of action, and that were they to continue that trajectory, they would be presented with additional opportunities (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Seibert et al., 2016). Positive shocks are associated with increased employability, both within and outside of the organization where one experienced the positive shock (Ali & Mehreen, 2022). Feelings of joy, excitement and pride may arise, in addition to more complex feelings like doubt about the future, anxiety regarding changing workload, and loss of the role as it used to be (Korotov, 2021). Examples of positive career shocks include receiving a promotion or a raise in compensation (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Kraimer et al., 2019; Nair & Chatterjee, 2021), receiving an award in recognition of service (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Kraimer et al., 2019), or experiencing success in projects (Ali & Mehreen, 2022;

Nair & Chatterjee, 2021). Examples of positive shocks can vary depending on organizational context, for example, being recruited by another university, being elected to a leadership position, winning a grant and being published in a prestigious journal are positive shocks someone working in academia might experience (Kraimer et al., 2019).

Experiencing a positive shock has a positive effect on one's engagement with their work; experiencing multiple positive shocks over time can have an impact on motivation, engagement and satisfaction as one progresses through their career (Kraimer et al., 2019). For academics, the effects of experiencing a positive shock had a greater impact than the effects of a negative shock on work engagement (Kraimer et al., 2019). Positive shocks can also increase job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Yang et al., 2025). Although these types of career shocks are typically welcomed, career adaptability may still be required if the shock leads an individual to deliberate a career change (Seibert et al., 2016). An example would be in receiving an unexpected job offer, during which adaptability skills will be called upon when determining how to successfully transition (Seibert et al., 2016). One potential negative impact of positive career shocks is that continued success with one's current career track can potentially lead to stagnation; current success can prevent one from pursuing their other career goals (Seibert et al., 2016).

Negative career shocks require one to rely on their adaptability and resilience skills and can push one toward career withdrawal or disengagement (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Seibert et al., 2016). Confronting career shocks with resilience and career adaptability skills can turn what may have begun as a negative, shocking event into a positive event (Seibert et al., 2016). For example, a negative career shock can inspire networking behaviours as a proactive coping mechanism, which can positively impact one's perceived employability (Zhou et al., 2023).

Negative shocks often bring pressure, making it difficult for one to expand their career focus fully as their perceptual field narrows in response to the shock (Ali & Mehreen, 2022). Negative shocks can lead to a loss of career development and reduced engagement with one's work, prompting a revision of career goals and utilization of adaptability skills to make transitioning easier (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Kraimer et al., 2019). Undergoing a career shock typically results in a very intense emotional state that influences attitudes and behaviours, which in turn can greatly influence one's next choices (Korotov, 2021). A negative shock can bring about distrust towards or disengagement from the organization (Petrovi et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2025), negative attitudes, bitterness, lower career success (Petrovi et al., 2021), and lower career self-efficacy or aspirations (Korotov, 2021; Petrovi et al., 2021). They can leave one feeling undervalued by their organization, and feeling emotions like anger, frustration, anxiety, and fear (Korotov, 2021).

Job events that could be classified as negative career shocks include having a mentor leave your organization (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Nair & Chatterjee, 2021; Seibert et al., 2016), a failure to meet an important deadline (Ali & Mehreen, 2022), receiving a negative or poor performance review, an adverse political incident with one's work unit (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Kraimer et al., 2019; Seibert et al., 2016), relocation for a job (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021), a reduction in one's team (Ali & Mehreen, 2022), having difficulty finding a job (Kraimer et al., 2019; Seibert et al., 2016), failure to receive an expected assignment or promotion (Kraimer et al., 2019; Nair & Chatterjee, 2021; Seibert et al., 2016), fallout with a boss or colleague (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021), unexpected loss of job (Ali & Mehreen, 2022), or a major organizational change (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Kraimer et al., 2019; Nair & Chatterjee, 2021; Seibert et al., 2016). As with positive shocks, organizational context can also impact the types of negative

shocks one might encounter, for example, Red Cross workers identified emotionally intense work demands, conflicting values, a clash in approach and media hostility as career shocks they encountered (Petrovi et al., 2021). Negative career shocks can also be personal in nature; these events occur outside the workplace, but are still impactful on an individual's reflections about their future career direction and will require adaptability and resilience (Ali & Mehreen, 2022). Some examples of such events include one's spouse being relocated for their job, experiencing a marriage or divorce, having a baby, having a family member diagnosed with a debilitating illness, caring for one's elders, or the death of a family member (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021; Seibert et al., 2016). Negative career shocks can lead to one questioning their abilities, their past choices, their future opportunities, and can lead to an intention to quit or to pursue a new job opportunity (Ali & Mehreen, 2022; Seibert et al., 2016).

The Impacts of Career Shocks

Experiencing career shocks impacts one's available resources, either positively through addition of resources, or negatively through removal of resources (Akkermans et al., 2018). Positive shocks may offer an increase in resources such as perceived employability and self-efficacy; negative shocks reduce or deplete the number of available resources one has access to (Akkermans et al., 2018). Pak et al. (2021) found that in most cases, career shocks in both the work and private life domains were connected to a loss of resources. They also found that private life career shocks were often associated with an increase in demands at home, which negatively impacted the employee in their work domain, while career shocks in the workplace could either increase or decrease perceived job demands and thus, impact the employee negatively or positively.

When career shocks change the job demands or available resources one is used to, they may question whether their current role remains a good fit; this is referred to by Pak et al. as demands-abilities fit (2021). When the shock results in an increase in resources, the employee's demands-abilities fit improves (Pak et al., 2021). If job fit improves following the shock, one might experience an increase in ability, motivation and opportunity to continue working (Pak et al., 2021). Conversely, if the shock negatively impacts the availability of resources or the job demands of the role are altered in a way that is perceived as problematic, the demands-abilities fit decreases (Pak et al., 2021). An increase in job demands that is not accompanied by an increase in resources also decreases a person's demands-abilities fit (Pak et al., 2021). If there is a mismatch in person-job fit due to shock, Pak et al. (2021) found that ability, motivation and opportunity to continue working all decreased. In contrast, if desired by the employee, a decrease in job demands following a shock can increase demands-abilities fit (Pak et al., 2021).

Finally, it is important to consider diversity when discussing the impacts of career shocks; different populations may be more prone to or affected by certain shocks (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021). Nair & Chatterjee (2021) found that in the Indian context, it is expected that certain career shocks will have significant career effects due to cultural and gender norms. In their findings, women are more likely to be affected by shocks like a spouse relocating for a job, pregnancy and childbirth, while men were more likely to be affected by shocks related to caring for an elderly parent. Age or career stage also impacts the likelihood of certain shocks occurring or being more significant in their effect (Kraimer et al., 2019; Morgeson et al., 2015; Nair & Chatterjee, 2021). In India, examination outcomes, which have a direct correlation to the stream of education and career pathways one takes, may be the first negative career shock that one experiences if the expected outcome does not match up with the actual outcome received (Nair &

Chatterjee, 2021). Shocks like exam outcomes, marriage, pregnancy and childbirth tend to affect participants at earlier stages of their careers, while resistance to relocation and eldercare tend to impact those in the mid to late stages of their careers (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021).

Ways to Support People Experiencing Career Shock

The Role of Human Resources

Human Resources (HR) can impact the available resources employees use to respond to career shocks (Hofer et al., 2021), and can mitigate the effects of negative shocks and enhance the effects of positive shocks by offering additional job resources in response (Pak et al., 2021). Pak et al. (2021) identified four types of HR supports to help employees through career shock: developmental practices, maintenance practices, utilization practices, and accommodative practices. Developmental practices help workers improve their job performance through additional training (Pak et al., 2021), and are also recommended as a means of reducing turnover intention among employees (Jyoti et al., 2015). Maintenance practices help employees sustain their performance through the addition of resources, utilization practices capitalize on an employee's experience, knowledge and competencies in ways that are a good fit for their current situation, and accommodative practices lessen job demands for employees who can no longer perform at previous levels (Pak et al., 2021). Utilizing a good fit combination of these practices with employees who undergo career shocks can help provide relevant resources or reduce strain in their role to assist with coping (Pak et al., 2021). When support from HR is given immediately following the shock, job misfit can be circumvented, or job fit can be improved (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021), preventing turnover due to a shock changing the perceived fit of an individual for a specific role (Petrovi et al., 2021). Jyoti et al. (2015) found that emotional exhaustion, which mediated an employee's turnover intention, can also be reduced through high performance

human resource practices. Strong organizational policies to support those going through shocks related to maternity and eldercare is helpful for retention (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021).

Support from supervisors and organization leaders has been found to assist employees in coping with career shocks (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021; Pak et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2024), strengthening the effects of positive shocks and reducing the effect of negative shocks (Zhang et al., 2024). In Pak et al.'s (2021) study, employees who shared their shock with their supervisor appreciated offered supports for both work related and private life career shocks, either from the supervisor directly or through offered HR resources. Stating expectations explicitly with supervisors and being assertive when requesting support is helpful when navigating a career shock (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021). These authors also suggest training managers to better handle interpersonal issues through open communication to understand their employees' expectations; doing so can proactively avoid shocks related to conflict or fallout in the workplace. For shocks due to organizational transitioning, leaders can lessen the impact of the shock through addressing concerns and inspiring confidence among employees (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021), and "providing them with realistic information about the consequences" of the shock (Hofer et al., 2021, p. 487). Whenever possible, organization leadership should take action to prevent negative career shocks from occurring (Hofer et al., 2021).

Accommodations given in response to private life career shocks allowed participants to adjust better to "the increased demands or loss of resources at home and work" and helped to optimize job fit for the individual (Pak et al., 2021, p. 528). The authors stress the importance of working with employees to find personal solutions, especially in response to burnout related career shocks, and propose the following:

> "Receiving support from the supervisor and colleagues after experiencing a career shock in private life diminishes the negative effect or strengthens the positive effect of the career shock [...] through improving demands-abilities fit by increasing resources and reducing demands or [...] by meeting the needs of employees. [...]
>
> Receiving accommodative practices after experiencing a career shock in private life diminishes the negative effect or strengthens the positive effect of the career shock [...] through improving the demands-abilities fit by reducing demands." (p. 529)

For instances where an employee's spouse is being relocated for work or upon marriage to someone in a different city, some organizations were able to support their employees through finding them a role within the organization in the new city (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021). Participants at later stages of their careers are often more unwilling to relocate, and in some instances, they were able to work with their employers to reach a compromise that was acceptable to both the employer and employee (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021).

For career shocks that occur at work, development and utilization practices are more helpful in recovery from the shock than accommodations, as these supports improve person-job fit (Pak et al., 2021). Supervisors can mitigate the effect of a career shock by customizing solutions for their employees with personalized work arrangements (Pak et al., 2021). Supervisors can be trained to address employee responses to shocks with understanding, empathy and consideration (Yang et al., 2025), connect their employees to helpful HR resources for different career shocks, and in how to structure conversations when discussing supports (Pak et al., 2021).

When employees expect support but do not receive it, career shocks are aggravated; in more extreme cases, the perceived lack of support is why the event becomes a career shock (Pak

et al., 2021). Not receiving expected support impacts employees similarly to losing resources; their ability, motivation, and opportunity to continue working are all impacted (Pak et al., 2021). If a career shock in an employee's private life leads to threats of being fired, the stress is associated with an increase in demands (Pak et al., 2021). A lack of organizational resources in response to career shocks can have significant impacts on the sustainability of an individual's career (Pak et al., 2021).

Individuals can help themselves through work related shocks by requesting specific supports (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021; Pak et al., 2021). Individual self-management and job-crafting behaviours can assist employees in coping with shocks (Zhang et al., 2024), and influence one's ability, motivation, and opportunity to continue working after experiencing a career shock (Pak et al., 2021). Individuals can work with their direct supervisors to customize or tailor individual solutions in response to career shocks in the workplace over general HR practices (Pak et al., 2021). This approach may not be universally helpful, especially following shocks where there is fallout between a boss and employee or between colleagues; experiencing this type of shock leaves employees feeling anxious and unsafe, and deliberation regarding their career choices and development follows (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021). Employees' perceptions of their favour within their organization also impacted the way they interpreted decisions made by their superiors; perceptions that one had fallen out of favour triggered deliberation regarding remaining in the same role (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021). During performance reviews with managers who lack clear and open communication with their employees, employees are not comfortable negotiating for special considerations, opting instead to find a new job rather than state their expectations (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021). These employees did not reverse their decisions to resign, even if their organization expressed willingness to meet their expectations,

out of fear that superiors would hold their decision to quit against them in the future (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021).

Reducing the Impact of Negative Shocks and Supporting Through Positive Career Shocks

Emotional response to a career shock can have impacts on one's career (Korotov, 2021; Petrovi et al., 2021). Investigating the effect that shocking events have on career outcomes can assist researchers in better understanding how to support people who experience them (Petrovi et al., 2021). Understanding how career shocks are processed emotionally (Korotov, 2021; Petrovi et al., 2021), cognitively, and how the interaction between a person and their work environment impacts outcomes following career shock is helpful in designing resources to lessen their negative impact (Petrovi et al., 2021). Ideally, resources to "reduce their frequency and duration, and increase their predictability, controllability, and valence," as well as help the individual with their cognitive response and emotional coping in response to the shock, would be developed (Petrovi et al., 2021, p. 610).

Petrovi et al. (2021) examined how an organization, specifically the Red Cross, utilizes resources to reduce the impact of negative shocks and to capitalize on the effects of positive shocks. They found that in extreme cases, career shocks resulted in learned helplessness when the person did not have the resources or resilience to handle it. Helping someone to process their initial reactions to a career shock can assist them in having the agency to choose how to respond (Korotov, 2021). By encouraging an employee who has undergone a shock to take actions to gain personal perspective about it and integrate it into a personal narrative, it could help to further develop their ability to recover from additional career shocks in the future (Petrovi et al., 2021). Though the initial reaction to the event may be negative, gaining perspective upon reflection of how the work fits one's values or calling can be helpful (Petrovi et al., 2021). Petrovi et al. (2021) recommend sharing events that constitute career shocks in the context of a

communication skills training course to potentially mitigate the effects of future shocks for others.

As an organization, the Red Cross is unique; the work they do to offer support during crisis has created an organizational culture where supports that could potentially mitigate the effects of a career shock are already present to support workers through the stressful events they are exposed to daily (Petrovi et al., 2021). These include training in psychological first aid, organizational and collegial support built into the culture of the organization, the development of manuals for dealing with tough situations one may encounter on the job, training to recognize the signs of burnout, and fostering an attitude of jumping in to help someone who is overwhelmed (Petrovi et al., 2021). These elements of the organizational culture and efforts to support one another were described by the authors as a type of "vaccine" against career shocks (Petrovi et al., 2021, p. 608).

Korotov (2021) examined how executive coaches supported managers immediately following their experience of a career shock. Coaches in each case study supported the executives through processing their shocks, helping their clients to come to realizations through reflection. Coaches can encourage their clients to share facts and feelings in a space that is free from judgement, and assist them in reflecting on and processing how their emotions may directly impact their decision-making process (Korotov, 2021). Restoring the agency of the person being coached is a key objective and helping the client to understand the consequences of potential actions helps to inform their next steps (Hofer et al., 2021; Korotov, 2021). The coach can connect the client to relevant resources that could be impactful and support the client as they select their next goals and steps (Korotov, 2021).

Coaches can tailor their approaches to each client and their shock; some strategies include: interpreting emotional reactions to the situation as data, identifying one's goals and how they compare to reality, reflecting on limitations that may stem from beliefs and assumptions, reflecting on what is within one's control, completing visioning activities, brainstorming potential options, exploring resources that can be accessed, providing relevant psychoeducation on related topics to the shock, and assisting the client on creating short term goals or action plans (Korotov, 2021). Coaching interventions can help clients better anticipate career shocks in certain industries, expand their options for next steps, create back up plans, and reconcile personal and professional goals (Korotov, 2021). It is important to remember that the social context of each client must be considered when viewing outcomes; there are other factors outside of coaching that also influence career strategies, choices made, and final outcomes (Korotov, 2021).

In the context of academia, Kraimer et al. (2019) posit that positive shocks can be utilized as job resources, helping one through future negative shocks they encounter with increased resilience in response to increased demands. These authors suggest that especially for those in the mid-career stage, working towards building positive resources through support networks can be especially helpful, as one can utilize their network as a means of putting negative shocks into perspective, as well as offer opportunities for alternative roles should one be seeking a change. To support those in their mid-career stage, department heads are encouraged to prioritize building and maintaining supportive working environments with opportunities for building up positive resources (Kraimer et al., 2019). As academics enter later stages in their careers, positive career shocks tend to have a greater effect on engagement and career satisfaction, while experiencing a negative shock has the opposite effect (Kraimer et al., 2019). Department heads

are encouraged to continue to nominate them for awards, encourage their teaching and research efforts, and encourage them to pursue leadership roles to maximize the benefits of these positive shocks on this demographic (Kraimer et al., 2019).

Summary

Teachers experience many job demands; these can serve as factors that contribute to burnout or push teachers towards attrition from the profession when they do not have the available resources to meet them. Career shocks place additional demands on or remove resources from employees who experience them. They act as a watershed moment in one's career as deliberation of potential career transition is triggered by the shock. For teachers already experiencing dimensions of burnout or persistent thoughts of turnover intention, experiencing a career shock could serve as a catalyst for attrition. Supporting someone experiencing a career shock with resources can reduce the severity of the shock and its influence on their career as they process and consider their next steps.

Chapter 3: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions

Summary

The aim of this capstone is to address how the school system can support teachers through career shocks to reduce burnout and attrition. Education is an expansive, mission-focused field, where many who are drawn to this type of work feel called to make an impact on the lives of young people. Burnout is common in this type of mission driven work, and as Petrovi et al. (2021) indicated in their research, when those in mission driven fields experience career shocks, they tend to either recommit to their role, or leave entirely, making a career shift. It is quite likely that teachers will experience one or more career shocks thoughout their careers. In response, school districts and principals are presented with an opportunity to potentially have some influence over whether these teachers choose to recommit or transition away from their role after experiencing career shock.

While literature on career shocks in the education sector is lacking, suggestions from research focused on other sectors can be adapted by school districts as they strive to support their teachers through career shocks to improve retention. As indicated in the Pak et al. (2021) study, human resources and managers can assist employees who have experienced career shock by either increasing the resources the employee can access, or in reducing demands on the employee as they navigate shocks. To achieve this in the education sector, districts and principals can create policies that aim to reduce the negative impacts of career shocks and develop helpful supports for teachers to access immediately following a shock. As discussed by Nair & Chatterjee (2021), it is in the interest of organizations to support their employees through career shocks as a means of retaining talented individuals to continue working for the organization.

As shown in the literature, teaching is a complex role with many demands, and without enough resources, teachers may begin to experience the dimensions of burnout and contemplate leaving the profession. Experiencing a career shock can also cause one to contemplate moving on when there aren't enough available resources to cope with the shock while simultaneously meeting the demands of the job. As an organization, school districts wish to retain teachers with skills, knowledge, and experience to meet the demands of teaching. Retaining talented teachers drives the search for the best supports and applicable resources to aid teachers in meeting the demands of the job, especially for teachers experiencing burnout or career shock.

There is only so much within the control of school districts and principals to reduce the demands of teaching through elimination, though this is encouraged where possible. Lessing the impact of demands on teachers through organizational practices, interventions and targeted supports implemented at the district and school level is perhaps more realistic. By increasing the resources that teachers can access to cope with career shocks, school districts can have a positive effect on increasing resilience and self-efficacy in teachers. The following recommendations can be utilized by school districts and principals as practical and impactful ways to provide supports to their teaching staff when career shocks make the job feel particularly demanding.

Recommendations

Increasing Awareness of Available Support

Ensuring that teachers are aware of resources already in place to support them through expected career shocks is a first step. As new resources are created, effective communication is key to ensure teachers are aware of their existence and know how to access them as needed. Digital resources can be stored in a hub that teachers are introduced to and shown how to navigate upon being hired in the onboarding process. Resources on a variety of topics and career

shocks can be organized here, with links and instructions on how to access supports that are available. As additions are made to the hub, district email alerts can be sent to teachers to keep them informed about new available resources. Opt-in professional development on the organizational supports available for certain career shocks may also be helpful. These sessions offer opportunities to ask questions as one is navigating a shock, can help to connect teachers to applicable resources that can lessen the impact of the shock or increase their capacity to work through it, and help teachers to have more agency in requesting specific supports.

One example of opt-in organizational support for an expected career shock was a virtual workshop offered by my school district, where the Alberta Teacher's Association presented an introduction to Maternity and Parental Leave. Though having a child is an expected shock that is personal rather than professional, it can still trigger deliberation about one's future career direction; it is a big change that will bring new demands into a teacher's life. By hosting this workshop, the district supports their employees by guiding them through the process of accessing leave, as well as offering information on how to access additional supports as needed, helping the teacher to navigate this career shock with more resilience. By participating, those attending can now face this expected shock with an action plan they can use to navigate next steps and now have more information on where to go if they have more questions or need more support, lessening the effect of the shock.

As districts create strong organizational policies and invest in the creation of helpful resources to mitigate career shocks, principals can connect teachers to these supports. School leaders are often involved in the creation of these resources or learn about them during district principal meetings, and this positions them well to spread awareness of their existence to teachers in their buildings on a regular basis. This can be done universally during staff meetings,

as well as with a more targeted approach if a certain teacher may need certain resources to navigate a specific shock. The more knowledgeable a principal is on what supports are available, the better they can connect their teachers to targeted, helpful resources to navigate shocks, since the principal is often the first support a teacher will go to upon experiencing a shock. District resources aren't always available to support teachers during certain career shocks. In these cases, principals can use their positions as leaders to either advocate for more targeted support and resources at the district level, or can connect the teacher to available community resources outside of what is offered by the district.

Responding to Common Shocks in the Education Sector

Job Insecurity

One common expected shock that many teachers will experience, especially at the beginning of their teaching careers, is that of job insecurity. Though this is a more predictable shock with temporary positions having an end date from the start, teachers in these positions will expectedly feel stress and pressure during this stage of their career. Teachers who take on a variety of assignments experience increased job demands; unlike those in permanent positions, they have fewer opportunities to draw from a foundation of resources and experience. Not only is this frustrating for teachers, it can have them feeling that they lack control over their career, influencing turnover intention and attrition.

While temporary teaching assignments exist for a variety of reasons and will never disappear, there are some things that school districts can do to lessen the impact of this type of shock on its temporary teachers. From the organizational level, it is important for districts to communicate the hiring process with transparency and clarity. This assists teachers through this stressful time in better knowing what to expect and when to expect it. Listing positions that will

be available in the coming year as soon as budget projections and student numbers are available is the best practice. The earlier districts do so the better, as this gives teachers more time to plan and search for their next opportunity, as well as benefiting districts in their ability to retain talented teachers rather than losing them to districts who hire earlier or to positions outside of K-12 education. Offering an opt-in, in-person/virtual hybrid session (recorded for future reference) can act as a job resource; a session that explains what to expect throughout the upcoming hiring process and offers opportunities to ask questions for clarification can help to alleviate stress associated with an upcoming job search. Offering this type of support at the district level ensures that all temporary employees receive the same information, and feel more capable and equipped to handle securing their next teaching assignment. Additionally, temporary teachers may also benefit from connecting with each other for the purpose of support.

Principals can assist temporary teachers in their buildings by offering extra check-ins during this stressful time of year, encouraging them to ask questions about the hiring process and request additional support from leadership as needed. Offering to give a positive professional reference in the form of a letter or via phone interview, as well as forwarding available opportunities and encouraging temporary teachers to apply for them are other ways principals can support their teachers if they are not able to offer a position in their own buildings. Finally, during this stressful time, principals can offer positive praise that is specific to that teacher's skills and emphasize the positive impact they have had on the school community during their time in the role. Having one's skills and abilities recognized in this way can act as a resource that contributes to self-efficacy during a time where one might confuse a lack of opportunities with a lack of personal ability.

Change in Assignment

Another common shock that teachers experience throughout their careers is that of a significant change in assignment. This may be an expected shock that teachers who are looking for a change request for themselves, or unexpected based on changes in enrollment numbers or due to unforeseen circumstances. During any given year, a teacher may suddenly be assigned one or more new grade levels or courses to teach with few or no resources to support them through this change. As a result, their job demands significantly increase, as they will need to spend additional time curating or creating resources for new curriculum and adapting their knowledge and skills to fit the new assignment. In response, districts can seek creative ways to increase the resources teachers can access to meet their new job demands.

As an organization, districts can begin by taking measures to reduce the unexpectedness of this type of shock through transparency and communication. Being open about projected numbers and upcoming teaching roles can help teachers to brace for change that they know is coming and offers opportunities to poll staff to discover who may be willing to take on new challenges through a transfer round of hiring and position placement. This practice can help districts to select who among their teachers may view a change in assignment as a positive shock rather than a negative one.

To support teachers in new positions with curricular resources, districts can foster and encourage opportunities for collaboration within and between schools to connect teachers in similar assignments to each other. District wide professional development sessions for teachers with similar assignments can be excellent opportunities for offering teachers time to share best practices and resources with one another and with the district, who can organize and categorize these resources digitally by course, grade level, and curricular objective to act as an archive and

resource hub that can be accessed by any teacher in that assignment. Collaboration can also lead to opportunities for mentorship, where teachers with more experience can be paired with those who may be new to the role. An email group that includes all district teachers in a certain assignment can be a great resource for teachers to ask questions and request specific help that their more experienced peers may be willing to offer and support with. Including district lead teachers in these groups can give insight into what resources may be lacking district wide that can be developed by the teachers in these lead positions and then shared back to the group.

Rapid Organizational Change

At times, districts enact rapid changes that place additional demands on teachers. This can be especially shocking when change is not accompanied by adequate resources to cope and adapt. Organization wide shifts in recommended assessment practices, required reporting tools, and mandated teaching methods and resources for instruction can be shocking for teachers for several reasons. Many teachers value having autonomy to teach in ways that work best for them and their students; when district priorities and initiatives clash with a teacher's best practices, they may experience frustration. When big changes are enacted without teacher consultation or input, the implementation can also be a shock. This is especially the case when time and resources for smooth integration and teacher training are not accounted for in planning, or when the change is perceived to be unhelpful by teachers, thus becoming more of a job demand and less of a job resource.

Rolling out big changes can be less shocking for staff with a few considerations. First, before committing to a big change that will impact a lot of teaching staff, it is wise for the district to poll staff or hold focus groups to determine what changes may be welcome in filling a need versus change for change's sake, which may be met with resentment from teachers. Not only will

this practice give districts and principals insight into what their teachers need and value, it also contributes to self-efficacy, as teachers who feel they are meaningfully involved in school decisions and goals are more invested in their ability to effect change. For changes that will require new learning and training for all teaching staff, I recommend training several people from each school first as a beta group before wider implementation. By doing so, districts can collect feedback on whether implementing this change district wide would be well received or not based on the experiences of the test group. Additionally, training a test group can give insight into what parts of the process may be trickiest to learn and offers opportunities to use this insight to develop more comprehensive guides and practices for training. A test group would also provide insight into the length of time it would realistically take to be trained to the point of independent capability. This helps districts create realistic timelines for implementations, can inform chunking of information for training during professional development so learning does not become overwhelming, and helps to train school leaders and lead teachers first to act as support for their school's teaching staff when it is time for wider implementation. Finally, it is well documented that teachers experience many job demands in their day-to-day roles, and learning and implementing a big change contributes to these workload pressures; as much as possible, pairing the addition of new learning with the removal of a different pressure can assist teachers from feeling overwhelmed during implementation. If this isn't possible, the addition of resources to support through change, like provided time for professional development to learn, practice, and implement change during a teacher's regular working hours can prevent feelings of overwhelm.

Job Action

A career shock that over 51 000 Alberta public, separate, and francophone teachers experienced this year was a province wide strike. Some teachers may have expected this shock, others may not have, but all were impacted. A career first for many of the teachers affected, this strike was a clear message to Alberta's government that teachers in Alberta needed action and change to address workloads. Teachers advocated reducing job demands by addressing class size and complexity and increasing job resources by hiring additional staff and increasing compensation. Unlike the previous career shocks, teachers cannot look to their districts and principals for support during a strike, but rather, turn to one another, the leadership of their union representatives, the wider community, and their government officials.

Throughout the strike, many stakeholders provided resources to reduce the effects of this career shock on teachers. Immediately, locals sprung into action as a main provider and coordinator of resources. They set up strike centers where members could connect with each other for support, seek answers to questions, and share concerns with local leaders. They organized events like rallies and walks where teachers and their supporters could connect in solidarity. They also shared information with members about local and community supports for members who needed financial assistance or help with groceries while they were not earning pay. Provincial union executives kept members in the loop with the status of bargaining efforts with email updates every few days, and shared answers to frequently asked questions. Support from the community was evident, with many local businesses offering perks, free items or discounts to show their solidarity with teachers. The community also assisted in advocating for increased resources alongside teachers in reaching out to their provincial representatives through phone calls, letters and emails, sharing concerns and asking for meaningful change. This outpour

of support may have lessened the effects of this strike as a negative career shock for some teachers.

This strike had a disappointing and frustrating conclusion for Alberta teachers; after three weeks, Bill 2: The Back to School Act, was passed, using the notwithstanding clause to legislate teachers back to work. In the end, teachers lost about 8% of their yearly earnings over the 16 day strike and were stripped of their Charter rights to collectively bargain until 2028. Teachers were forced to accept an agreement that 90% had previously rejected and did not adequately address their top concerns regarding job demands and resources. The subsequent return to work had teachers feeling many intense emotions like anger, frustration, powerlessness, defeat, and despair, which would have amplified the effects of this negative shock. I do not recommend that other governments look to Alberta as an example of resolving job action from a career shock and job demands-resources perspective. Instead, governments and teaching unions should strive to bargain with one another in good faith, making an effort to reasonably reduce job demands and increase job resources for teachers, thus improving the quality of education for the students that both parties serve.

Workplace Violence in Education

Although not explicitly explored in this capstone, I recommend future research on the topic of supports and best practices to address workplace violence in education. Workplace violence is becoming a common shock that many teachers are experiencing. Of 4771 teachers surveyed across Canada in 2024, 55% reported experiencing violence or aggression over their past year of teaching, however, only 25% who reported incidents felt that their health and safety committees took appropriate action in response (Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF-FCE), 2024). As organizations, school districts work to create, continuously evaluate and improve

policies to prevent and minimize the potential of workplace violence, as well as establish procedures for reporting and investigating incidents of violence that do occur. With a low percentage of teachers feeling appropriate actions were taken in response to the violence they experienced, I recommend future focus on supports that teachers perceive to be helpful after experiencing workplace violence or aggression.

Increasing Job Resources

Nomination for Awards

Receiving an award is a positive career shock that can increase job resources. Districts should seek opportunities to nominate and honor their staff for teaching awards, honors and accolades, both formally and informally. Districts can recognize innovation, leadership, years of service, and many other amazing qualities in their teaching staff. There are many ways to do so, from district wide memos or newsletters to formal banquets and award ceremonies. Districts can also encourage parents and other stakeholders to do the same through community recognition initiatives. On a school level, principals can also foster an environment of recognition by providing opportunities for staff members to offer kudos to each other during meetings, recognizing teachers during school wide assemblies or over the intercom, or writing a kind email or note privately. Regular recognition of good work increases teachers' self-efficacy, which is a job resource teachers can access when they experience negative career shocks.

Supporting Teachers Through Positive Shocks

Teachers can also benefit from support and resources to strengthen the effects of positive shocks that come with additional job demands. For example, a teacher promoted to a counselling or leadership role will experience new job demands as they navigate their new position's responsibilities. Though the new role may be an exciting change and perceived as a positive

shock, without resources to help navigate the new job demands, overwhelm can take over. Mentorship opportunities for connection, collaboration, and to ask questions as one navigates and learns a new role is a job resource that can combat overwhelm. Additionally, digital hubs of resources and tips can be positive job resources for teachers in transition, offering a starting point and reference guide to meet the demands of a new role. To maximize the effect of these resources, mentors should be provided with time in their schedules for mentorship, development and maintenance of digital resource hubs. Without dedicated time, mentors may see their role as an additional job demand that is perhaps less urgent or important than their other demands, which results in this resource becoming less effective as it falls to the wayside.

Creating Positive Work Environments as a Job Resource

Not only are positive work environments a protective factor against burnout, they can also be a powerful job resource that supports one through career shock. School leaders can directly influence and foster positive work environments through the norms they cultivate. Encouraging teachers to create separation between their work and personal lives can positively contribute to work climate. One example is encouraging teachers to communicate by email within set working hours, so they do not feel obligated to be available at all hours of the day. This type of norm acts as a job resource especially helpful for teachers dealing with shocks that are personal in nature.

Creating norms that center wellness for teachers is another contribution to a positive work environment. Strengthening opportunities for staff to gather and connect during wellness initiatives additionally fosters interpersonal relationships, an additional job resource one can access during times of shock. Investing in spaces that are comfortable, welcoming and allow all staff to gather and mingle is the first step; the next is encouraging staff to utilize these spaces.

Social connection naturally happens over food and drink; holiday potlucks, gathering 30 minutes before the bell to visit over a provided hot drink, shared meals like salads or soup, eating lunch together on a professional development day, or a snack schedule are a few ways this could occur. School spaces can also be utilized as job resources for a variety of wellness initiatives; the learning commons for an informal book club or a mindfulness practice, the gymnasium for a group workout, the school grounds for a group walk, or a picnic area to enjoy lunch in the fresh air. Building norms for how spaces are to be used is also an important part of creating a positive work environment. For example, the staff room is not the space for venting about students, but a place for positive conversation and connection with one another. Staff can pair up with a wellness accountability buddy for regular check-ins, encouragement and celebration of each other as needed, acting as a resource for one another. By making positive connection and wellness a norm, it creates opportunities for teachers to rely on these job resources during times of career shock or burnout, lessening their impacts.

Acknowledgement as a Job Resource

Teachers are faced with many job demands and meeting them all is extremely difficult. When school and district leaders regularly acknowledge this difficulty, it can contribute to teachers' self-efficacy and act as a job resource. When acknowledgement is absent, teachers may feel alone and isolated in not being able to adequately keep up with job demands. They may question their abilities, blame themselves for not being good enough, or feel reluctant to ask for assistance or help for fear of seeming incapable. Reluctance to seek support exacerbates the effects of career shocks, as one feels pressure to cope with the shock independently without seeking support or job resources. It is recommended that leaders regularly acknowledge challenges and communicate how they can support teachers through them as a standard of

practice. This helps to create an environment where teachers are more likely to seek out support when they need it, including when they are experiencing career shock.

Conclusions

Experiencing career shock is just that: shocking. Whether a teacher sees the shock coming or is completely blind sighted, the experience is likely to leave them feeling strained and overwhelmed due to an increase in demands, or a decrease in available resources to do their work at pre-shock levels. These events trigger deliberation and can drastically shift one's career trajectory off its current course. In the teaching profession where attrition is already a concern, it is in the best interest of all stakeholders to work together to support teachers through career shocks in an effort to prevent attrition due to shock. By recognizing the impact that career shock events can have on teachers' decisions to remain in the profession, school systems can better plan for and deliver tailored support to teachers who are experiencing shocks. In doing so, this can assist teachers in coping through career shocks with resilience rather than choosing to leave.

Armed with these understandings, those invested in the longevity of teachers' careers must first seek to become more familiar with common shocks experienced by those working in the teaching profession. Once identified, supports and job resources to combat the effects of these shocks can be crafted and utilized. The recommendations offered in this capstone are only the beginning of the conversation around supporting educators through career shocks. As demonstrated by research conducted on career shocks in other sectors of the workforce, each unique work context comes with varying susceptibility and occurrences of certain shocks. It is only once we improve our understanding of common career shocks in the education context that we can better support those experiencing them with effective support.

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