

A Grounded Theory Analysis of Beginning Teachers' Experiences: Illuminating Leadership Capacities

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Based on a grounded theory analysis of beginning teacher experiences, this article describes the process identified as negotiating the paradox of *loving the idea of being a teacher* but not necessarily *liking the work as teacher*. Beginning teachers recognized the often overwhelming professional responsibilities of teaching, yet assumed personal responsibility for creating contextually relevant learning experiences for students. This analysis includes an unprecedented finding in that participants manifested what were coined *leadershiping* skills, attitudes and characteristics to describe what they themselves do as leaders. Further, it discusses the fact that while beginning teachers perceive themselves as teachers and they know the tasks they perform are leadership-type activities, the word *leader* is embedded in the culture of education in such a manner that only those with administrative duties are considered leaders. The study also considers how the image of beginning teachers may be enlarged to foster critically conscious practitioners.

Introduction

Beginning teachers often function in a mode of sustained experimentation. The responsibility of being a professional educator can in fact be most daunting to the novice teacher who must, with seemingly intense urgency, cater to an array of professional responsibilities while becoming acclimatized to measures of accountability. Effective induction programs facilitate this professional transition from preservice to classroom teacher with the intent of improving teaching to improve student learning. The research context was approached with a concern about the sporadic and inconsistent conditions that define teacher induction practices (see, for example, Weiss & Weiss, 1999). Induction was understood as a formal and comprehensive process of initiating beginning teachers into the teaching profession (Bullough, 1988; Duncan-Poitier, 2005; Renard, 2003). Induction programs facilitate a transition between preservice education and the inherent responsibilities of being a first year classroom teacher (Bartell, 2005). Effective induction programs can not only significantly curb new teacher attrition (Tushnet, Briggs, Elliot, Esch, Haviland, & Humphrey, 2002; Weiss & Weiss, 1999) but more importantly can improve novices' teaching practice and student learning (Leithwood, Fullan, Watson, 2003; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). Teacher induction and mentoring, understood primarily as the pairing of an experienced teacher with a novice (Portner, 2002), are the responsibility of each respective school board in Ontario, Canada.

Research attests to the fact that beginning teachers in Ontario are often given the most difficult teaching assignments (McIntyre, 2002), and not surprisingly but particularly similar to American trends, more than 60% of school boards in Ontario considered teacher retention as an issue of significant concern (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2000). In response, induction programs have been implemented in numerous school boards across Canada and the United States with a candid emphasis on what Strong and Baron (2004) cited as the positive impact of mentors on beginning teachers' professional development (see also Feiman-Nemser, Parker, & Zeichner, 1993; Strong & St. John, 2001), and on the socialization of new teachers in the respective school cultures (Chubbuck, Clift, Allard, & Quinlan, 2001; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Rippon & Martin, 2003).

Purpose and Key Findings of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the induction experiences of various new teachers in their first year of practice. More specifically, it examined beginning teachers' reflections on their pedagogical practice, their perceptions of teaching and learning, and their observations of individuals in formal school leadership roles. The beginning teacher participants struggled to negotiate the paradox of loving the idea of being a teacher, but not necessarily liking the work as a teacher. The study identified their need to be *affirmed* by an external source or individual as the basic social psychological process¹. The problematic nature of this expectation was that participants risked becoming dependent upon the affirmation bestowed by others to appreciate and recognize their unique contributions. These valuable contributions made the profession as rewarding as participants claimed it *could be* but *not* necessarily always *was*. Of particular interest, participants' descriptions of their professional capacities that were grounded in the data and subsequent theory development were identified as dimensions of beginning teacher leadership.

Teacher Leadership as a Theoretical Framework

Traditionally, the focus of leadership has been squarely rooted in the school principal (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Hay Management Consultants, 2000). There has been, however, a significant accumulation of literature (Fullan, 2002; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, to name only a few) that attests to the critical relationship between leadership and sustainability as a regenerating force to improve schools. Elmore (2000; 2003b; 2006) as an example, broadly defines distributed leadership in schools as extending beyond organizational hierarchies to enact individual teacher agency. The following statement by Hargreaves and Fink (2003) draws implications from the findings of this research:

In a world of high expectations, rapid change, and a youthful profession in the first decades of the 21st century, teachers cannot be merely the targets of other people's leadership. Instead, they must see themselves as being – and be encouraged to be – leaders of classrooms and of colleagues from the moment they begin their careers. (p. 700)

Teacher leadership assumes multiple identities (Fullan, 1993) that vary from the formal roles recognized in the organizational hierarchy of schools to the more informal (Bascia, 1997; Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000) as alluded to in the context of this research. The literature in the area of teacher leadership accounts for teachers' capacities to engage in a constructive manner in purposeful, broad-based learning in the school community whereby knowledge is sustained within meaningful relationships between individuals (Lambert, 2002). It includes teachers' ability to reflect and rationalize their endeavors in light of shared beliefs (Lambert, 1998). Teacher leadership, it is suggested, occurs in a collaborative context where individuals are committed to improving the learning of students (Little, 1993). The capacity to exercise teacher leadership, according to Crowther, Hann, and McMaster (1999), entails both professional competencies and school cultures that encourage professional learning in a trusting environment.

So, too, the concepts of distributed, diverse, and transformational leadership have been extensively cited in the literature to describe leadership influence carried out by different individuals at all levels of the organization (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Gronn, 2002; Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Watson, Levin, & Fullan, 2004), as a shared social influence (Foster, 2004; Yukl, 1998; 1999), and as creating mutual goals and common vision within an organization respectively (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, and Hann (2002) found that teachers need to feel empowered for their endeavors. Teacher leaders, according to these authors, embody principled pedagogical action and exercise the power to influence meaning for children and adults. They call for educational communities of leaders that exercise teacher leadership initiatives as a component of their professional development.

¹ The Basic Social Psychological Process is described as a problem that emerged in the data that was common to all participants (see Eaves, 2001; Hutchinson, 1993).

Although there exists a rather voluminous collection of research in the area of teacher leadership, the overt emphasis rests on formally recognized positions of additional responsibility and to a lesser extent on classroom teachers. Dimensions of leadership are, however, seemingly ignored in the context of beginning teachers.

Methods

This paper is based on a study that explored the induction experiences of 95 entry-year elementary school teachers across various regional school boards in Ontario, Canada.

Participants

Preliminary vetting included the consideration of all mid-sized provincial school boards that offered a comprehensive induction program in a strict alignment with the professional standards of the Ontario College of Teachers (as the governing body for the province's 200,000 teachers), a program vision, support from supervisory officers as senior board administrators, and a mentoring component that accounted for personal and professional traits of mentors in their selection process (Bartlett, Johnson, Lopez, Sugarman, & Wilson, 2005; Moir & Gless, 2001; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Four school boards were invited to participate in the study, three of which remained for the duration of the project. The school principals or school board supervisory officers responsible for the teacher induction program in each of their respective school boards facilitated the initial contact with those participants who volunteered for the study. The sample consisted of 95 elementary school beginning teachers assigned teaching responsibilities in one of grades one to eight. From the cohort of 95 participants who completed two surveys (at the beginning and conclusion of the 2005-2006 academic school year) 30 volunteered to participate in focus group interviews at the end of the school year, while six new teachers participated in private semi-structured interviews between October and May of the same school year. The survey responses provided a clearer understanding of beginning teachers' reflections on their pedagogical practices and their perceptions of teaching, learning, and formal school leadership during the induction period. The semi-structured interviews allowed for the clarification of the emerging themes as they evolved in the data collection. Five focus groups consisting of six participants were interviewed at the conclusion of the same school year. Demographically, 66% of participants were female and 34% male; the majority of participants were between 26 and 35 years of age.

Procedure

The triangulation design of this qualitative research examined beginning teachers' perceptions of their teaching practice, the expectations of their schools, the support they received from induction providers, mentors, administrators, and colleagues, and their observations of school leadership practices. The study investigated the expectations and impressions of beginning teachers during their induction into teaching. Typical survey questions included the followings: (a) Describe the type of support received from your mentor, colleagues, and school administrators during your first year of teaching; (b) What should a mentor know and be able to offer a first year teacher?; and (c) How would you describe some of the positive contributions you have made to the classroom, school, and community? Focus group questions included: (a) What were the two greatest challenges you faced this year? and (b) What could the school board induction program have done to further support and enhance your practice in the classroom? The semi-private interview questions were characteristic, but not limited to, the followings: (a) What areas of practice did you feel most inadequate about during the first year?; (b) Who distinguished themselves as leaders in your school and describe their specific characteristics?; and (c) What advice would you offer to a first year teacher next year?

All instruments were administered during non-instructional hours. Induction coordinators were provided with a description of the study and instructions for participants. Instruments were previously field-tested under similar circumstances with other cohorts of new teachers. For validation purposes, the triangulation design contributed to a more explanatory examination of participants' reflections.

Data Analysis

Given the tenets of grounded theory research, observations that were grounded in the data conceptualized the direction of the analyses (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory is not predictive about outcomes. The data were interpreted qualitatively using the characteristics of analytical induction and constant comparison of grounded theory and, hence, were not quantifiable (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A cyclical process of interview, transcription, and initial examination was employed in order to explore the relationships between emerging themes and their respective concepts, eventually subsuming codes into more abstract categories and ultimately into theory (and, hence, the concepts of coding, grouping, theoretical sampling, constant comparison, and theoretical saturation). Grounded theory is a highly formalized approach that accounts for the significant information in the data as it emerges in the respective relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Constant comparison juxtaposes codes and categories for similar themes and eventually subsuming the data into more abstract categories and then into theory (Backman & Kyngas, 1999; Glaser, 1978; 2002). The core category, according to grounded theory, emerges in a similar comparative, non-linear, and analytical process (Glaser, 2002; Stern, 1980). The findings stem from a component of a previous study that identified the contribution of the conceptual categories from the semi-structured interviews towards the emerging grounded theory (Cherubini, 2006).

Results

Many of the results described in this paper are consistent with other studies in that beginning teachers experience difficult initial circumstances (see, for example, Kirby & Grissmer, 1993; Montgomery Halford, 1998; Russell & McPherson, 2001), receive inadequate professional support during induction (see Johnson & Kardos, 2002; Linton, Eberhard, Reinhardt-Mundragon, & Stottlemeyer, 2000), are subject to inconsistent mentoring practices (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Feiman-Nemser et al., 1993; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000), and have limited opportunities to exercise self-initiated change (Hargreaves, 2004). The study identified participants' need to be *affirmed* by an external source or individual as the basic social psychological process of entry-year teachers. Figure 1 (p. 31) describes in detail the results of the coding processes and statements of relationships as they evolved towards the basic social process. The problematic nature of this expectation was that individuals risked becoming dependent upon the affirmation bestowed by others to appreciate and recognize their unique contributions. These valuable contributions made the profession as rewarding as participants claimed it *could be* but *not* necessarily always *was*.

A Grounded Theory of Entry-Year Teachers' Induction Experience

Beginning teachers struggled to negotiate the paradox of loving the idea of being a teacher, but not necessarily liking the work as a teacher. This core category manifested itself within the interrelationships of each subcategory's respective properties and as a result was directly connected to the data.

The tensions of the paradox: Struggling with liking the work as a teacher

Needing to be affirmed, participants struggled with managing the various professional challenges that were often described as stressful. Participants anticipated being affirmed in the absence of having a genuine recognition of developing a sense of their own self-affirmation, thereby contributing to the tension inherent in the paradox. The ability to effectively manage the clerical duties while tailoring lesson plans for the unique learning needs of their students became taxing, especially when a mentor,

administrator, or colleague did not affirm their endeavors. As this participant wrote, “There are so many things you need to get done between 8 and 3 o’clock and it can be frustrating when you are there alone and you don’t have the time to do it all. I think that frustration just goes on the children.”

Participants repeatedly shared their anxieties about adequately tending to the different personalities and cultural influences of their students without receiving a sense of validation by an external other. Curricular and extracurricular expectations contributed to participants’ sense of being overwhelmed. Another beginning teacher observed, “I see people struggling every day because they are not organized and they have all these responsibilities coming at them from everywhere.” Lacking a sense of affirmation, participants became emotionally and physically drained with the routines and expectations of *the job*. The mentor and protégé relationships, too, were often inconsistent in maintaining continual communication and, more important for participants, not always validating. Typical of participants’ responses was this individual’s candid explanation, “In your first year you are just looking to survive and get through it. Mentors have their own classes and workload so they cannot be there every time you want them.” Another participant shared, “just because they are mentors, it does not mean they do not have their own problems. They have their down days, too.” This is indicative of the research that demonstrates the emotional demand of a mentoring arrangement for both the new teacher and mentor (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Erickson, 2005).

Participants admitted that they struggled with focusing on student development and achievement. They experienced a great deal of stress catering to students’ learning abilities. The perception existed that workshops did not properly in-service them in addressing what this participant identified as “the neediest kids in my class.” They commented upon how academic labeling of students in the respective program streams seemed to correlate to students’ sense of self-esteem, “The students know they are different because they are treated differently and other kids know it.”

The tensions of the paradox: Loving the idea of being a teacher

Given the challenges of the job, however, participants adamantly acknowledged their resolve in sustaining a strong commitment to understanding students’ multicultural perspectives while asynchronously catering to their development as learners. Indicative of other comments this teacher said, “You have to know your stuff because the focus has to be on how each student understands what you are teaching. They are all so different.” Participants respected the diversity of their students embraced the responsibility of assuming an active role in shaping students’ learning. Dialoguing and networking with experienced colleagues were perceived as means to enhance student development because veteran teachers “can help with understanding the chemistry of a room.” Participants readily distinguished their influence as new teachers as positively impacting students’ lives. As this participant suggested, “We have so much to give to these kids. Though every teacher might take a different approach one of the great things we can do is collaborate with other people. It is that interaction that is going to make learning much more successful.”

Participants said that dialogue between protégés and mentors, though sporadic, provided opportunities to gain insightful perspectives from experienced colleagues. In order to successfully implement mentors’ contributions, participants repeatedly acknowledged the utility of reflecting upon their new learning. As this teacher said, “One of the great things about what I do is having the chance to really think about what I see and learn from my mentor. Then I figure out how that would work best for my kids given what I have to offer.” Another commented, “You have to be reflective. You have to be really open-minded and willing to listen to criticism without taking it personally.” Another interviewee stated, “There’s so much to learn from the great teachers. You walk into their class and you can see learning. It’s neat to go back and do it with your own students.” Despite the challenges associated with the job of teaching, participants reflected upon their affinity for being a teacher. “First year teachers come with new ideas and suggestions...you have a lot to offer,” one individual asserted. They believed in the important role that professional growth had on improving their practice. Characteristic of others was

this comment, “I realize now that my contributions on staff mean something because even though the year almost killed me some days, I am proud of what I did for each and every one of my students.”

A different teacher wrote, “Sure it has been a war sometimes, but I see how I got better and where my students ended up. I know I made a difference!” They recognized the advantages of developing reflective practice. They recognized their contributions to student learning and development. These individuals aptly summarized, “Yes! I lost sleep this year, but those moments when you know kids are feeling better about themselves because of what you did make up for the sacrifices,” and “The only thing I underestimated more than the stress of the job was the impact of my role on students that when I look past the long hours and worry gave me an incredible warm feeling inside like I have never had before.”

Discussion

It was clear from this research that participants struggled to negotiate the paradox of loving the idea of being a teacher, but not necessarily liking the work as teacher. Of utmost interest to this research, however, was the outcome that despite the uncertainties of their responses to the professional and emotional challenges of teaching, beginning teachers exercised dimensions of leadership. Their impetus was to impact positively upon the students entrusted to their care.

More specifically, the capacities that emanated from the beginning teachers’ struggle to negotiate the paradox were identified as a process of *leadershiping*. Beginning teachers, at various times and under varied circumstances, described how they exercised their influence in the classroom and school community in informal roles as a *lead* teacher, as a *leader* of initiatives, and as serving in a *leadership* capacity (representing the leadershiping concept as noun, verb, and adjective). Participants often took the *lead* to express their perspectives in discussions with their mentors. They were willing to take the *lead* by inviting students to celebrate their cultural differences. Participants perceived themselves as valuable *lead* persons in facilitating networking opportunities with other new teachers to share their approaches to differentiated instruction and long-term planning. Indicative of others, these participants adamantly suggested, “We do know what we are doing,” and “It’s not about just taking ideas and not giving back.” Last, participants reported a heightened awareness as the school year progressed of students’ unique learning styles and, as a result, assumed *lead* roles by collaborating to design specifically adapted lessons with other faculty.

The beginning teachers in this study suggested that genuine dialogue with their colleagues enriched their professional development. Having an awareness of their influence on students’ development and self-esteem, these participants intended to build professional capacity. They appreciated how dialogue with peers, other educators, parents, and support staff was most beneficial for understanding not only the complexities of their own anxiety, but that of their students’. They capitalized on opportunities to be *leaders* by exerting their positive influence upon their colleagues. Participants’ influence as *leaders* was founded upon a genuine respect of students’ differences as individuals and learners. One teacher wrote, “I understand the diversity in school from my own experiences growing up and I’m glad to voice my perspectives during division team meetings and I’m glad to be heard.” This is reminiscent of Rippon and Martin (2003) who suggest that new teachers want to be recognized in the school community for their valuable contributions (see also, Spindler & Biott, 2000). Participants reported having some appreciation of their role as *leader* in the classroom, and when asked to reflect upon the extent of their influence to guide students, admitted to an even greater awareness of their critical role in shaping students’ development. They believed that they exerted their influence by accounting for students’ previous experiences both in and out of school. As this person shared, “It’s sometimes scary to think that you are it as the teacher in front of the class. But then I think, wow, what an opportunity I have to turn this kid around or make them feel like they belong.” This underpins the research that suggests teachers’ emotional commitment to students, whether positive or negative, is a determining factor of their behavior (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Clement & Vanderberghe, 2001).

Further, beginning teacher participants were willing to become actively involved in the school community. They acknowledged that despite their hurried and stressful schedule, it was important to assume *leading* positions on school council, sports teams, or extracurricular activities. They said that serving in these roles created opportunities to engage in relationships throughout the school community that furthered their professional development. Participants said that their involvement resulted in their “feeling connected with others.” Through their various *leading* roles, genuine connections established with others were discussed by participants in view of benefiting students. Embedded in their responses was a sense of unwavering commitment to those students in particular who had unfavorable experiences with formal schooling. As this teacher reflected, “It is hard to believe the kind of problems some of my students bring to school. I drive home wondering if I have done enough as a role model to make them want to come back tomorrow.”

This new teacher, representative of others, was acutely aware of her privileged position with students (O’Loughlin, 1995). These were opportunities, according to participants, to foster positive self-images in those students who struggled with the academic rigor of traditional schooling. Serving in these *leading* roles allowed participants to arrive at a more complete understanding of students.

An interesting outcome driven by this analysis was that the new teachers who participated in this study were unable to see themselves as recognized leaders in the school community. Though they exercised leadership capacities they did not necessarily have a conscious awareness of doing so. This is reminiscent of Elmore (2003a) who suggests that the association between concepts of leadership and new teachers is often perceived as a countercultural reality. Figure 2 (p. 32) presents a model of this grounded theory research. The dotted lines that encapsulate the *leadership* dimensions symbolize the critical leadership influence that the beginning teachers manifested, but did not consciously recognize as dimensions of school and teacher leadership. The reason for this illustrates the paradox that while they perceive themselves as teachers and they know the tasks they perform are leadership-type activities, the word *leader* itself is embedded in the culture of education in such a manner that only those with administrative duties are considered leaders.

The fact that the beginning teachers in this study enacted dimensions of leadership but did not perceive themselves as leaders would attest to a view of leadership as a social construction determined by others’ perceptions of an individual’s relative sphere of influence (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997; 2000; Reitzug & Reeves, 1992). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggest that teachers be empowered to develop their leadership capacity as professional educators. Katzenmeyer and Moller’s (2001) developmental model of teacher leadership is founded upon the premise that leadership skills need to be nurtured:

If some teachers are reluctant to admit they are leaders, then it is equally difficult for them to ask for help in developing as leaders. We have a responsibility to acknowledge the complexity of leading and provide teachers with specific professional development in these skills. (p. 38)

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) recommended that novice professionals, too, deserve recognition for their potential to assume “limited leadership roles”, but only when preservice programs stress a teacher’s responsibility “toward school improvement” (p. 62).

The research on teacher leadership already discussed clearly articulates that teachers are leaders. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) concluded that the literature “presents evidence that teacher leaders enhance teacher self-efficacy as well as morale and retention in the profession” (p. 105). The theory presented in this study implies that beginning teachers are deserving of being considered to have leadership capacity in their class, schools, and communities. The study described new teachers who accepted personal responsibility for their own professional growth and the learning environments of their students in the process of negotiating the paradox. By assuming a level of proactive personal responsibility, it was also implied that participants may have had a lesser need for the extrinsic affirmation identified as the basic social psychological process. For these teachers, their potential to exercise positive outcomes in their schools and school communities can be described as “self-driven, flexibly developed [and] connected to

teaching and learning” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 167). This level of proactivity, combined with the *leadershiping* behaviors presented, is an important dimension of leadership for beginning teachers.

While it is true that entry-year teachers do not exercise leadership capacities like some of their experienced colleagues in more recognized forms of organizational leadership, their legitimate attempts to constructively participate in learning opportunities within professional relationships should not be neglected. This is to recognize that teachers’ decisions (regardless of their years of experience) to enact leadership capacity is a matter of individual choice (Reynold, Ross, & Rakow, 2002). Beginning teachers, in particular, demonstrate rather fluctuating levels of support, dependency, and autonomy in their initial year of practice (Achinstein & Villar, 2002; Strong & Baron, 2004). The beginning teacher participants demonstrated a professional responsibility and heightened sensitivity to students’ moral and social development reminiscent of the notions espoused by Hargreaves (2003) in lieu of a mechanistic paradigm of teaching and learning dictated predominantly by externally-imposed standards. In *Teaching in the Knowledge Society*, Hargreaves (2003) suggests that teachers need to “work and learn in collegial teams” (p. 24) and capitalize on their “collective intelligence” by engaging in trusting and collaborative relationships (p. 29). These beginning teachers expressed a willingness to network with their mentors and other colleagues, strove to understand their clientele’s differing stages of skill and task development, were committed to those practices that created optimal learning conditions for students, implemented a wide array of activities into their teaching repertoire to motivate all learners, and acknowledged their profound role in improving student learning.

Implications for Teacher Induction Programs

Tewel (1994) cited the positive impact of *raising the professional consciousness* of teachers. The theory emerging from this research suggests that induction programs account for the contributions and influences that beginning teachers bring to the profession. Beginning teachers “ought to emerge from their first few years of teaching feeling empowered” (Renard, 2003, p. 63). Induction, therefore, may be better understood “as an enculturation process” that respects the unique needs of beginning teachers while recognizing their diverse abilities (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 28). Induction programs may better serve novice teachers by assisting them to develop proficiency to “cope in a changing world [and] learn to live and function in community” (Grace, 2000, p. 143). Further, the interdependence between the novice, induction providers, and school colleagues is instrumental to beginning teachers’ sense of professional identity as it is perceived in the social reality of their school (Rippon & Martin, 2006).

It may not be sufficient that induction and school improvement programs “simply extend the concerns of a managerial elite in a hierarchal system to everyone else” (Limerick, Cunnington, & Crowther, 1998, p. 242). Instead, these programs may opt to raise the consciousness of beginning teachers’ sense of “individualism” by fostering their self-affirmation (Limerick et al., 1998). Based on the data that emerged from the study and was grounded in theory, participants perceived their induction into the profession as insufficient in assisting them to meet the challenges of the first year of teaching and in furthering their professional development. While I support the proposals to offer a wealth of services to entry-year teachers during induction over a three-year period, including curriculum planning groups, networks, mentors, cluster meetings, and video and on-line conferences (see, for example, Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, 2002), it is suggested that these services be presented as the means for entry-year teachers to exercise their *leadershiping* potential and, thus, self-affirm the valuable influences they exercise in their first years of teaching.

Through their participation as mature, proactive, and collegial individuals, beginning teachers can self-affirm their *leadershiping* potential (Cherubini, 2006; 2007). Induction practices could be presented to include opportunities to, first, self-recognize their *leadershiping* capacities and, second, to meaningfully exert them. They may be designed to foster beginning teachers’ critical thinking and consciousness regarding teaching and learning in a rhetoric that “sustains” what it means to be a teacher leader at the onset of their professional development (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). It would illuminate the process of becoming a leading teacher professional while simultaneously raising consciousness to what

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) referred to as the complexity of leading. In Figure 2, the property distinguished as “Implications for Teacher Induction Programs” is ultimately receptive of each consideration as they filter from the basic social process but is also accountable to the complexities of *leadership* capacities. Facilitators of induction programs may be inspired to not only offer beginning teachers a means to more effectively negotiate the paradox, but in doing so, may challenge the mystique of “leadership” as belonging exclusively to a chosen few experienced and distinguished educators.

Limitations and Future Research

The study was based on a grounded theory analysis and thus emergent properties, codes, and categories are limited to the context in which the research was conducted and the data examined. Also, the research participants were selected from one Canadian province located in a central geographical region in Canada; the results may not be generalizable beyond this population.

Qualitative research is critical to theory development, particularly in its infant stages. Given the categories and properties grounded in the data of interviews and focus groups, a Likert-scale instrument could be developed to better establish beginning teachers’ perceptions. More research needs to be done in terms of establishing and then strengthening these understandings as they relate to beginning teachers (and possibly existing school and board administrators for that matter) to change the notion that leadership and the charge to improve schools are not the exclusive rights of a chosen few individuals at the top of the educational hierarchy. This re-shifting of the language of leadership has profound implications for the entire educational hierarchy of schools, since it strikes at the heart of what Giroux (1981) labels as the notion of power and the means by which relations are contested and determined. It would appear that the concept of beginning teacher leadership is a mere distant shadow of the research conducted in the broader light of teacher leadership.

Figure 1. The phases of grounded theory research (Cherubini, 2006).

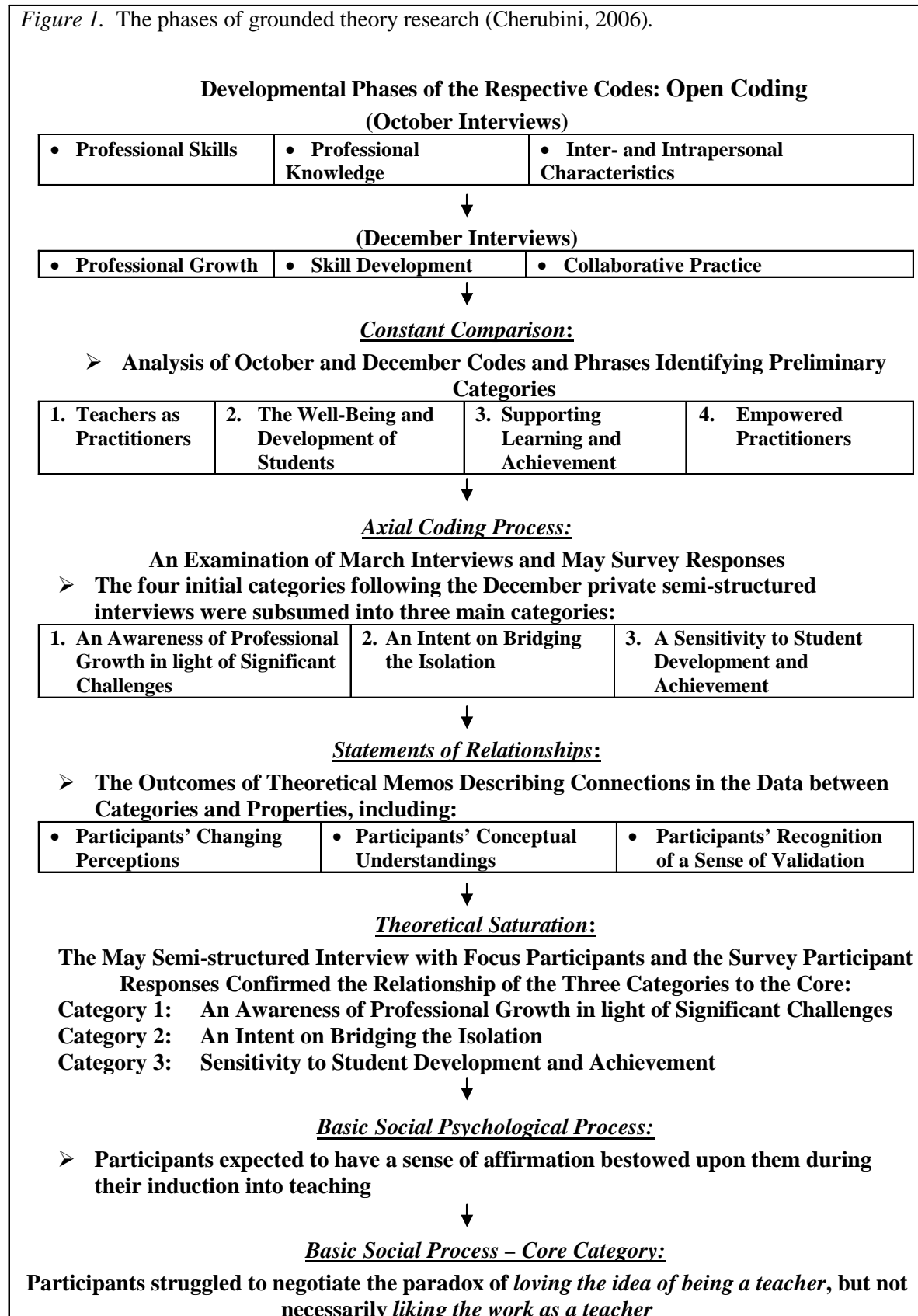
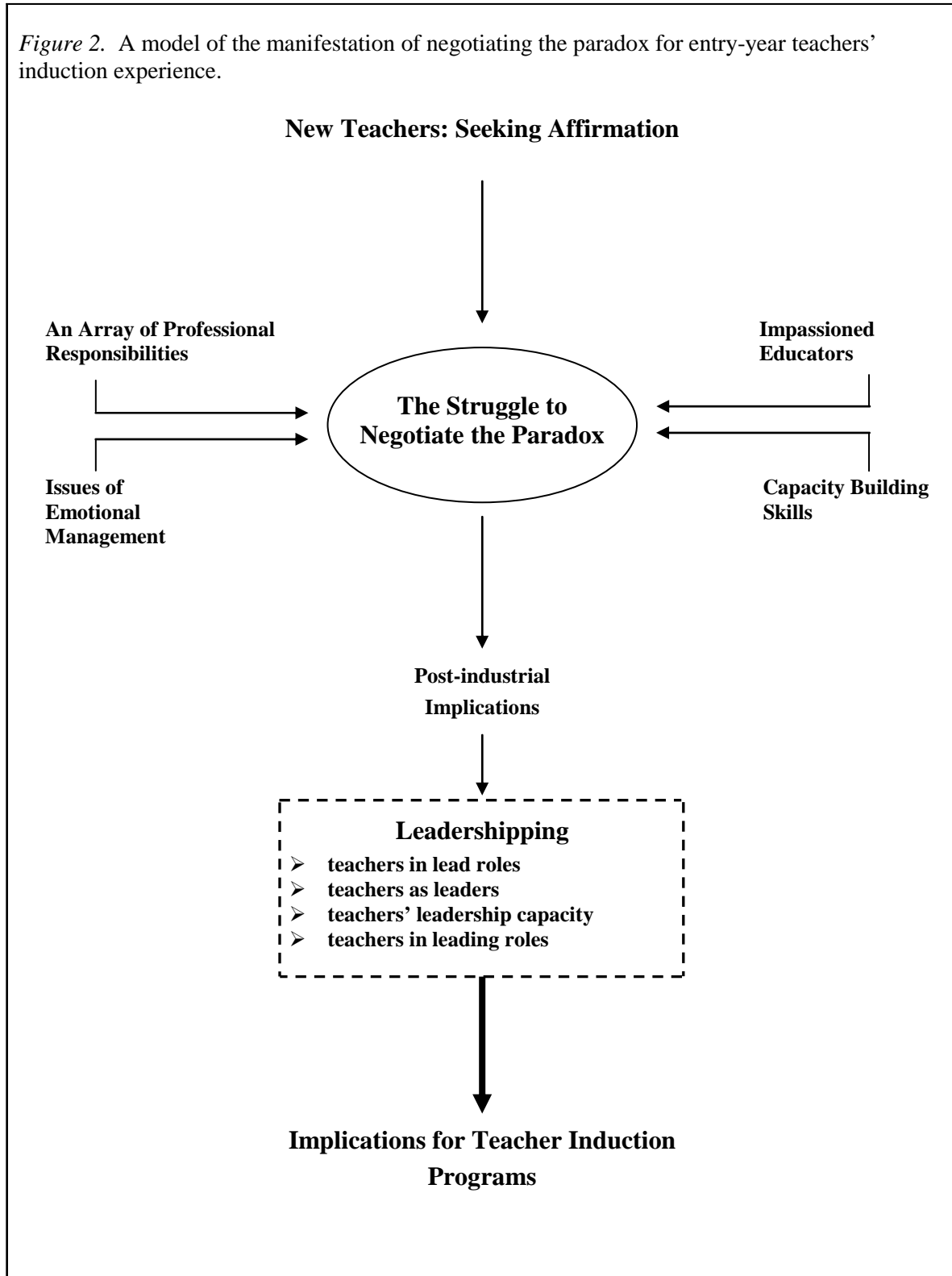


Figure 2. A model of the manifestation of negotiating the paradox for entry-year teachers' induction experience.



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