

An opportunity or a threat? Looking for solutions to migration.

# Immigrant teachers' needs, challenges and success in Canada

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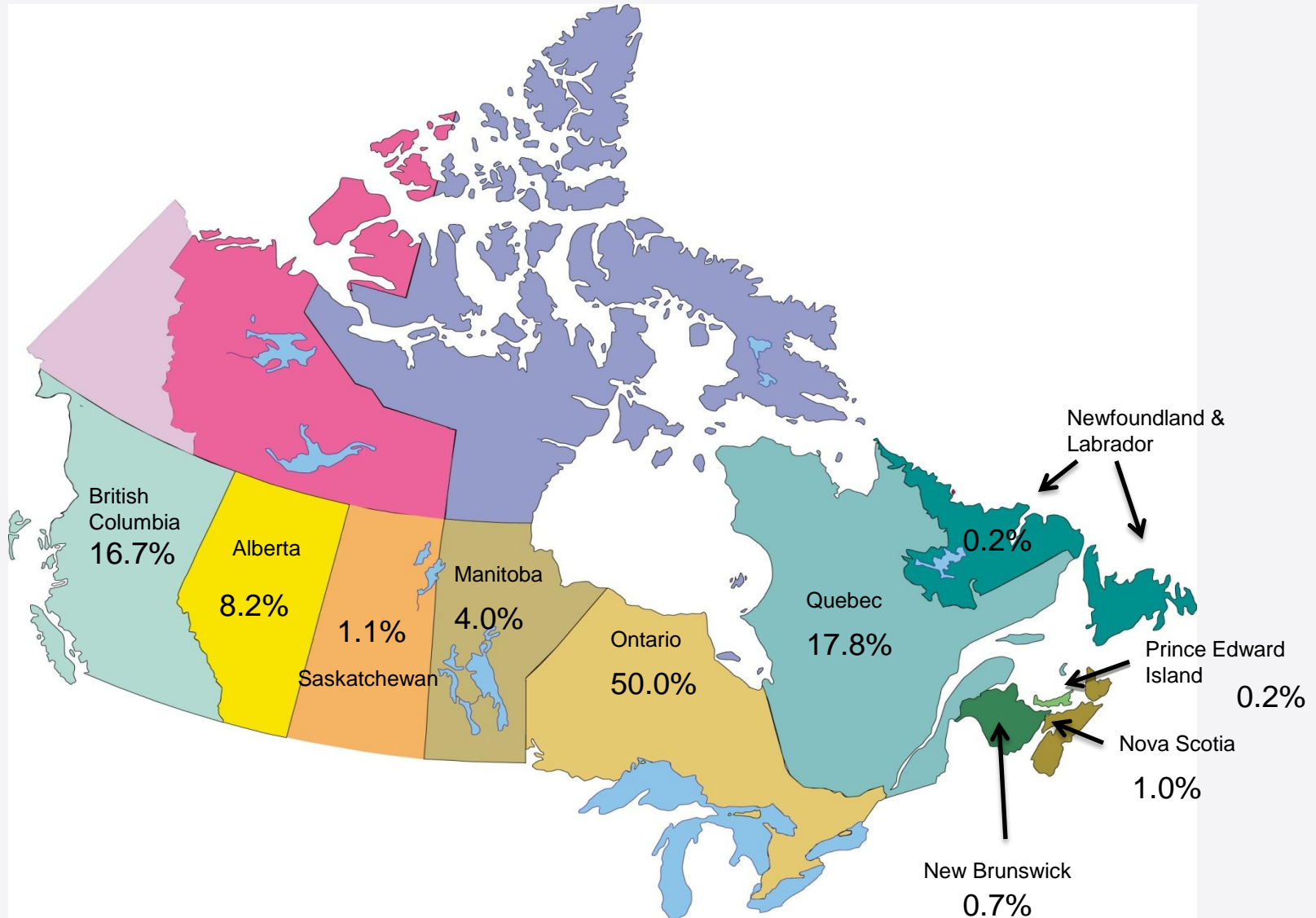
# Presentation Overview

- Background
- Research
- Support Programs
- Implications

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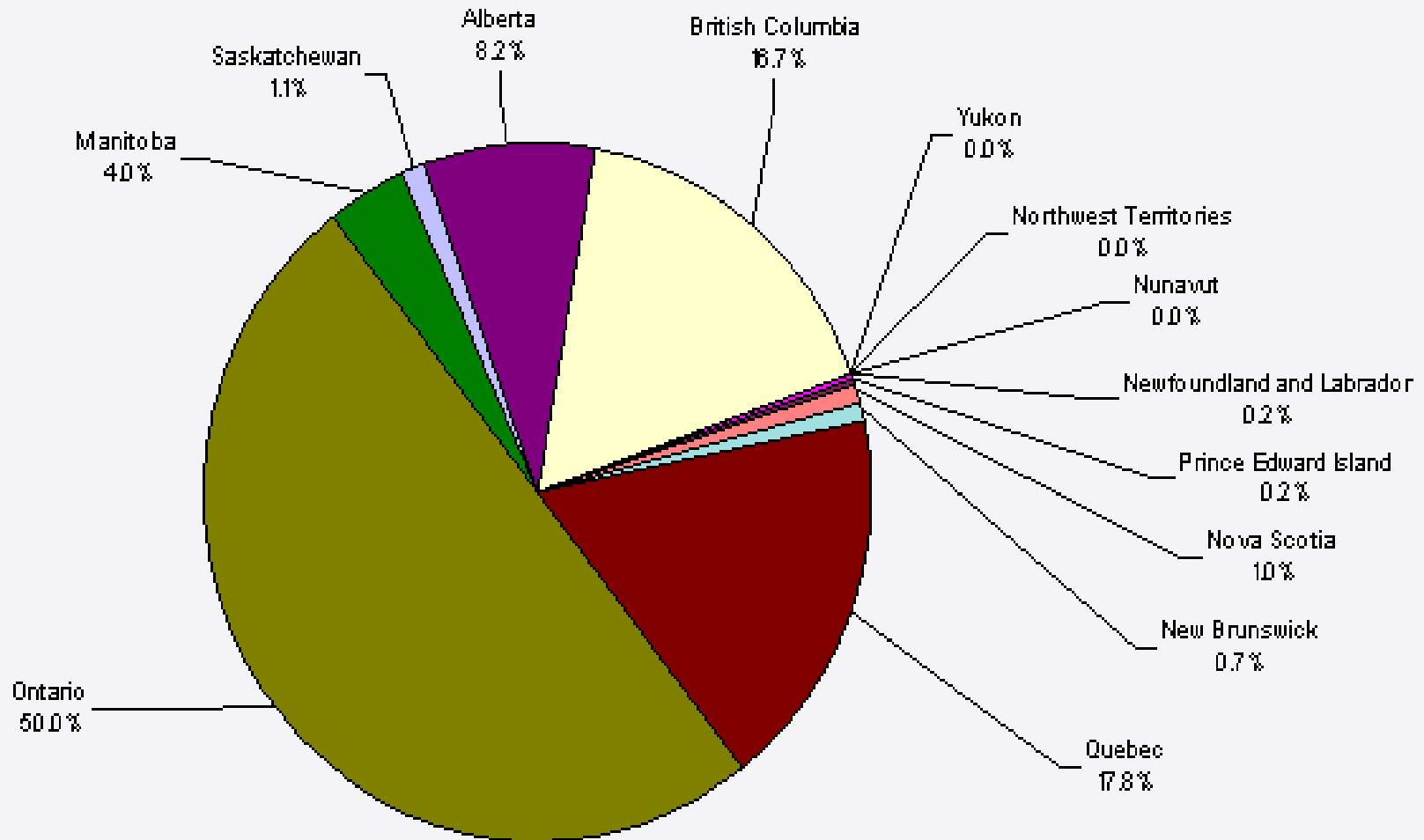
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# Demographic Trends-Canada



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# Canada – Permanent Residents by Province or Territory, 2006 (Showing Percentage Distribution)



<http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/resources/statistics/facts2006/permanent/17.asp>

# Demographic Trends-Canada

- A quarter million immigrants settle in Canada annually
- In 2007:
  1. Family Class 66,230 - 28% of total
  2. Economic Immigrants (Skilled workers, entrepreneurs, investors, self-employed, etc.) 131,248 – 55.4% of total
  3. Refugees 27,956 – 11.8%
  4. Other 11,323 – 4.8%

# Demographic Trends-Canada

## **Skilled workers and professionals**

- Skilled workers have education, work experience, knowledge of English or French, and other abilities that will help them to establish themselves successfully as permanent residents in Canada.

## **Investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed persons**

- The Business Immigration Program seeks to attract experienced business people to Canada who will support the development of a strong and prosperous Canadian economy. Business immigrants are expected to make a C\$400,000 investment or to own and manage businesses in Canada.

# Demographic Trends-Canada

- Foreign born population is at its highest level in 70 years
- Visible minority population has tripled since 1981
- The Conference Board of Canada (2003) projected that by 2005, immigration will account for all population growth in Canada

# Demographic Trends-Canada

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2017</b>
Immigrants	18.5%	21.1% – 25.6%
Visible minorities	13.4%	19% - 23%
Non-official mother tongue	17.2%	20.8% - 24.8%

Statistics Canada (2008)

# Demographic Trends-Canada

- Immigrants expect to account for 100% of net labor force growth by 2011 (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities 2004).
- Teacher shortage due to aging population: 56,000 teachers expected to retire by 2010 (MCTU, 2004).

# Diversity in Teaching

- Stakeholders in education call for a teaching force to reflect increasing diversity in student population
  - Role model
  - Understanding of linguistic & cultural diversity
  - Student achievement
  - Issues of equity and social justice

# Internationally Educated Teachers in Ontario

- Immigrant teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers are generally highly experienced educators
- More than 80% have taught for more than two years
- More than 70% have five or more years experience

# Challenges in Accessing Jobs

- Immigrant teachers face multiple obstacles when attempting to fund full time teaching positions in Ontario
- Internationally educated teachers are disproportionately overrepresented in the occasional/supply teaching force than any other newly certified Ontario teacher

# Challenges in Accessing Jobs

- 48% of IETs certified in Ontario are daily occasional/supply teachers, compared with:
- 18% of Ontario graduates
- 23% teachers educated in other provinces
- 24% teachers who graduated from teacher-education colleges in the US

Ontario College of Teachers (2004)

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# IET Candidates in K-12 Teacher Education Programs

- Little documentation on IET experiences in K-12 teacher preparation programs.
- Candidates are adjusting to language, culture, as well as a new system of education (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Medgyes 1994; Tang, 1997).
- Some issues identified in the research include: one's legitimacy in the new context, lack of/low confidence in one's language abilities, and the challenge of creating both a personal and a professional identity in the new context (Arva and Medgyes, 2000; Amin, 1997; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999).
- Candidates are immersed in a fast-paced highly structured program and often do not receive/seek support for their needs. IET candidates need access to support programs that are flexible and available throughout the academic year.

# Research context

- A large research-based university in Toronto
- One-year bachelor of education (B.Ed.) program that leads to Ontario Teacher's Certificate of Qualification
- A group of 5 Internationally Educated Teachers within the initial teacher education program

# Instruments and Sources of Data

- A background profile questionnaire
- Two rounds of one-hour semi-structured interviews with each teacher candidate
- Four rounds of formal observation sessions of their foundation classes
- Four follow-up questionnaires for teacher candidates (one for each observation)
- Four semi-structured follow-up interviews with the instructors

# Challenges

- Common challenges for all TCs:
  - time constraints
  - workload
    - readings
    - assignments
    - presentations
  - amount of information in an intensive program
  - understanding practical applications of theoretical concepts
  - meeting deadlines

# Challenges

- IET Candidates required additional support in developing their oral and written communication skills and cultural knowledge as well as knowledge of the Canadian educational system.
- While level of language proficiency was an important factor in determining the level of challenge in completing certain tasks and assignments, it was one of the many factors in contributing to their negative or positive experiences in the program.

# Challenges Faced by IET Candidates - Language

- I think my biggest challenge is English because with the other educations I have, I don't think, like to understand the subject is complicated or challenging, I feel ..., it's all my language skills, like you try to communicate your ideas, you know, you try to have a discussion with other people but you can't really put it in a clear way, you know, to try to pass your ideas so that's kind of like you feel so frustrated (IET candidate).[\[1\]](#)
- [\[1\]](#) All quotes are verbatim; thus they may include errors.

# Challenges Faced by IET Candidates - Language

- You know that –It is impossible for me at this age to ever achieve a native speaker's level in terms of oral skills (IET candidate)
- I found the presentations challenging, even to present something to my professor I found it's OK but when I need to present something to the whole class and because you have so many colleagues right, well because English is not my first language, I am very aware of my accent and my grammar, like when I present something will I do, I make many grammatical mistakes, will the people make fun of me, like I always think about that and that really really bothers me and that's why I found that it is really challenging, when I need to present something (IET candidate)

# Challenges Faced by IET Candidates - Culture

- Here, I find that people always say something very nice. For example, they will say, "Oh, how are you?" Everything is just so positive. But in Hong Kong we will say, "how are you?" But if we don't have a good day, we will say it. But here, if you say something bad, it just seems that Canadians, they say "Oh, that's OK." That's why I find that it is really different. At the beginning, it was kind of like weird. Because why you guys are so superficial? I mean, if you don't have a good day, just say it, right? Just be honest. But I guess, it's just the culture that is very different.

# Challenges Faced by IET Candidates - Culture

- Coming from a very academic environment, from back home, I was used to the Socratic teaching; teacher in front of the class lecturing. When I came to [this institution] and saw tables clustered in groups, I found it very hard. I am used to the teacher at the front and me as a student taking notes.

# Challenges Faced by IET Candidates The Canadian Education System

- I think it was a challenge. Because a lot of people expected me to know certain things that other people coming from a Canadian system of education would know. And I think it was harder. Because I had to absorb more than others where other classmates knew things because they were in a Canadian high school; whereas I entered a Canadian high school the first time when I went on my first practicum.

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# Teach in Ontario

- Bridging program for internationally trained teachers
  - offers services to help with job search and transition to teaching in Ontario
  - for internationally trained teachers who are not yet certified in Ontario
  - services include individual consultations and a six-week preparation course

# Bachelor of Education Programs

- There is a need to increase IETs in B.Ed programs across the country to reflect the diversity in the school system
- Programs vary in the level of support provided to IETs

# Suggestions for Support Programs

- An elective credit course
  - Extra curricular support programs
1. Workshops to help improve oral and written communication skills
  2. Informal discussion groups
  3. One-on-one counseling services to help improve language proficiency, knowledge of culture and teacher specific communication skills

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# Pedagogical Implications for IET Candidates

- IET candidates need to realize that their level of language proficiency plays a significant role in the classroom
- IETs are models of language in the classroom and it is important to expose students to correct forms of language
- IETCs need to enhance their teaching-specific language skills
- IETs need to recognize that developing strong language skills is a long and complex process

# Pedagogical Implications for Teacher Educators

- TEs need to recognize that IETs might struggle with issues related to their language and cultural knowledge
- TEs need to modify their practices to better support IETs in the program
  1. Providing background or cultural information on topics
  2. Ensuring that local and idiomatic expressions and acronyms are known to IETs
  3. Providing time and opportunity for IETs to express their thoughts and ideas

# Implications for Educational Institutions

- A strong institutional commitment to initiatives that support IETs in Teacher Education programs is needed
- Additional extra-curricular support
- Advocacy
- Ensure diversity in the program but at the same time better screening system is required to support TCs entry to the teaching profession