Chapter 2
Policy Turns in Teacher Education: The Case of Ontario, Canada, During the Twenty-First Century

Carol Campbell

Abstract This chapter traces the "policy turn" in teacher education in Ontario during the twenty-first century. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) was reformed to become a two-year programme, including aspects of international trends: considering the role of universities, an emphasis on practicum and clinical practice, and increasing government regulation of ITE curricula. In 2018, the newly elected government introduced a Math Proficiency Test (MPT) which all teacher candidates were to pass. The Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council won a legal case against the government which resulted in the ruling that the MPT contravened the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A further argument against teacher testing was that ITE and continuing professional development (CPD) were best placed to support teachers' capacity. For in-service teachers, the chapter examines the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) for beginning teachers and the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) for experienced teachers. Both programmes have been beneficial; however, there is a need to ensure all beginning teachers can access NTIP with quality mentorship and, following the ending of the TLLP, there is a need for a provincial strategy to support teacher leadership. Finally, the chapter considers the importance of partnership working and collaborative policy-making with teachers in teacher education.

Keywords Initial teacher education · Continuing professional development · Continuing professional learning and development · Teacher education policy · Ontario

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2.1 Introduction: Teacher and Teaching Quality, and Teacher Education

Attention to initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD) has taken a "policy turn" (Cochran-Smith, 2016, p. 97) since the late twentieth century. Cochran-Smith (2004) explains the concept of "teacher education as a policy problem":

> In many of the major debates since the mid-to-late 1990s, teacher education has been defined as a policy problem. Here the goal is to identify which of the broad parameters of teacher education policy that can be controlled by institutional, state, or federal policy makers is most likely to have a positive effect. The point is to use empirical evidence to guide policymakers in their investment in finite human and fiscal resources in various aspects of the preparation and professional development of K-12 teachers. (p. 297)

This shift to a policy focus on the quest for effective ITE and CPD is associated with wider neoliberal shifts globally (Menter & Flores, 2021a) and an increased government focus on teacher quality. In 2007, Barber and Mourshed (2007, p.13) coined the adage, "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers". This emphasis on individual teachers as responsible for education quality, primarily defined in terms of student achievement outcomes, is problematic. Therefore, further adaptations and nuances to the understanding of the relationships between teachers and education quality are required (Campbell et al., 2022). First, it is necessary to recognize that: "Both teacher quality—the professional—and teaching quality – teachers' day-to-day practices in specific contexts—matter" (Campbell et al., 2022, p. 5). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) explain "*Teacher quality* might be thought of as the bundle of personal traits, skills, and understanding an individual brings to teaching" (p. 17), whereas:

> *Teaching quality* refers to strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn. Such instruction meets the demands of the discipline, the goals of instruction, and the needs of students in a particular context. *Teaching quality* is in part a function of *teacher quality*—teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions—but it is also strongly influenced by the context of instruction, including factors external to what the teacher brings. (p. 18)

The quality of an education system is not simply about the quality of individual teachers, but rather a more complex understanding of teachers' professional knowledge, skills and practices, the needs of their particular students, and the influence and priorities of their local contexts of practice, including relationships and work with professional colleagues, parents/guardians and community members. Hence, a further adaptation of the adage is: "Teaching quality is influenced by teachers' working contexts and conditions within their education system, school, and classroom" (Campbell et al., 2022, p. 7). Furthermore, the policy context which teachers work in can be more or less supportive of teachers' professionalism, development, working conditions and practices. Hence, Thompson (2021 p.114) proposed it "is time to recalculate" the adage about education quality to become: "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the extent to which it supports, sustains, and invests in the status of its teachers".

This chapter concerns this focus on how an education system "supports, sustains, and invests" in teachers through analyses of policies concerning ITE and CPD in the province of Ontario, Canada. As Menter and Flores (2021a p. 1) explained:

> Teacher education continues to be a key focus of education policy concerns around the world as the influences of neoliberalism and globalization continue to have significant effects. But as we have noted before (e.g. Menter 2019) the national cultures and histories of each country still retain a strong shaping influence on them reinforcing the now popular thesis of 'vernacular globalisation'.

Therefore, while connecting to wider international trends and debates concerning teacher education across the career trajectory, this chapter aims to provide what Livingston and Flores (2017, p. 557) have described as a "contribution as an historical account of teacher education at a particular moment in the reform and development process in that country".

2.2 Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development in Ontario, Canada

There is not a national school education system in Canada; rather, as established by the *Constitution Act* of 1867, K-12 education is the responsibility of ten provinces and three territories. Unlike many countries, the federal government does not have a direct role in policy-making for school education in Canada (with the exception of First Nations schools on reserves). While provinces and territories must comply with relevant federal legislation and regulations, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom stipulating that all school-age children have access to publicly funded education in either English or French language, each province and territory has the responsibility for the governance, design, funding, implementation and monitoring of their local education systems (Campbell et al., 2017a). There are some commonalities across Canada, including the importance of education and a teaching profession that is a university-trained graduate profession and unionized. However, there are variations in policies and practices, and this is considered to be a strength for recognizing the diversity of local contexts, communities and needs. There is currently no advocacy for school education to be transferred to federal government responsibility. It is not possible, therefore, to talk of a Canadian school education system or national school and/or teacher education policies—they do not exist; rather, Canada is a mosaic of provincial and territorial education systems with the respective governments overseeing various "policy turns" over times.

This chapter focuses on developments in teacher education in the province of Ontario during the early twenty-first century. I have selected Ontario because it is the largest province with approximately 40% of the Canadian population as residents and it is a province that has gained international attention for its education reforms, including for teacher education and professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). At the start of the 2000s, a Conservative government, elected

in 1995, was implementing substantial cuts in education programmes, services and staffing. The government's education policies included implementing a standards-based core curriculum, the creation of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) for provincial testing, and an "Ontario Teacher Testing Program" to test teachers for certification, recertification and performance evaluation (Anderson & Ben Jaffar, 2006). These policy shifts are consistent with the approaches Cochran-Smith (2004) warned against as a political response to a focus on education quality defined primarily by measurable outcomes: "Increasingly, then, the focus is on training and testing to ensure that all teachers have basic subject matter knowledge and the technical skills to bring pupils' test scores to minimum thresholds" (p. 298). Such approaches ignore the complexity of teaching and learning, and the broader purposes of education for democratic societies. In the case of Ontario, this combination of financial cuts and education policies was unpopular with the education profession and resulted in strikes and significant professional and public disquiet about the changes to the education system.

The new Liberal government (elected in 2003) committed to prioritizing Ontario's publicly funded public education system. This included a policy focus on educational quality measured through raised student achievement results and reduced gaps in performance, and an emphasis on "capacity building with a focus on results" (Osmond-Johnson & Campbell, 2018). These foci remain consistent with Cochran-Smith's (2004) conceptualization of teacher education as a "policy problem" with a political assumption "that the right policies can simultaneously solve the problems of teacher retention, teacher quality, and pupil achievement" (p. 298). Therefore, the Ontario policy shifts can be seen as part of a wider international focus on education quality defined in terms of teachers' teaching and students' achievements.

However, what was different in Ontario was the way these policies were to be co-developed *with* the education profession through a commitment to partnership working, trust and respect (Campbell, 2021). Symbolic of this policy shift was one of the first actions of the new government to cancel the previously reviled "Ontario Teacher Testing Program". The funding ($25 million CDN) saved by ending the test was re-allocated to the teacher federations to work in partnership with the Ministry to provide a range of professional learning opportunities for teachers.

A Partnership Table was established "bringing together groups and associations representing students, parents, trustees, directors of education, supervisory officers, teachers, early childhood educators, support workers, principals, and relevant provincial organizations to meet with the Minister of Education and senior government officials" to provide insights early in new policy developments (Campbell et al., 2017a, p. 105). Representatives of the education profession involved in these shifts to partnership working spoke favourably about being included in policy discussions and development; for example, a teacher federation staff member explained:

> The fact that we are at the table with the Ministry regularly and with all the stakeholders, I think really says that we are valued for the work that we do. We may not always agree, but we can usually come up with some form of consensus or an agreement around how things might roll out. So, I think that we are regarded as professionals…that makes a big difference.

> We are trusted with our professional development of our teachers…We are trusted to make those professional judgments. (Quoted in Campbell et al., 2017a, p. 106)

This approach to partnership working for policy development was also applied for teacher education, through the establishment, in 2005, of a Working Table on Teacher Development. Over the next decade, major transformations of initial teacher education and continuing professional development were introduced, as outlined in Fig. 2.1. A government official involved throughout these developments explained:

> It's worth mentioning that it wasn't just a change in policy, but it was also change in how we do policy. This suite of programs was developed over a ten-year period and each program grew out of the work that we did collaboratively with our stakeholders. This work was done through a working table, which included the Teacher Federations, the Ontario College of Teachers, parent groups, student groups, and school boards all around the table working out these programs. (Quoted in Campbell et al., 2017a, p. 120)

Therefore, when considering policy shifts in teacher education, it is important to consider the approaches to policy initiation, co-design and co-development, as well as the substantive content and outcomes of specific policies.

Unfortunately, after the decade of partnership working outlined above, relationships between the government and education sector deteriorated with education stakeholder organizations feeling they were increasingly "consulted" on policies already decided and developed, rather than from the outset of policy considerations. Consequently, a new process bringing together all education stakeholder groups and the government was initiated, which resulted in the development of a specific

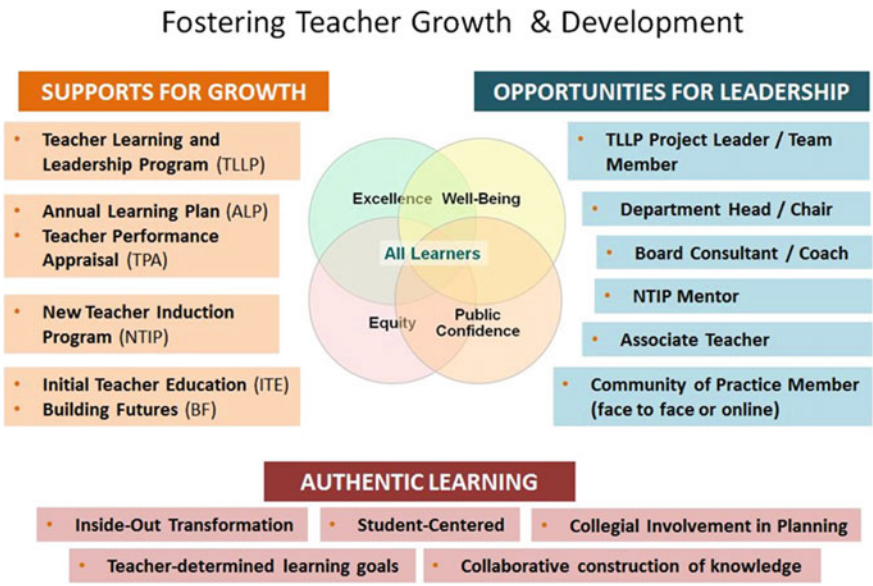

Fig. 2.1 Teacher development policies in Ontario. *Source Ontario Ministry of Education, Teaching Policy and Standards Branch (2017)*

Policy and Program Memorandum detailing an approach to Collaborative Professionalism for partnership working going forward (Campbell, 2021). With a change of government in 2018, there has been a further erosion of partnership working with the education sector and mechanisms such as the Partnership Table are no longer operational and no equivalent mechanism has been created.

2.2.1 Initial Teacher Education

In contrast to political interpretations of simplistic notions of teacher quality and linked shifts in teacher education policy, teaching is a highly complex professional practice. As Grossman, Hammerness and MacDonald (2009) commented: "One of the challenges faced by efforts to gain professional status for teachers is that teaching is complex work that looks deceptively simple" (p. 273). Relatedly, the question of "how best to educate teachers" (Livingston & Flores, 2017 p. 555) is complex and highly contested. In this section, I discuss shifts in ITE policy in Ontario and connections to persisting debates about the role of universities and schools in teacher education, the content of teacher education curricula, and the balance between theory and practices with increasing attention to clinical practice.

Teaching has generally been considered an attractive career in Canada, including Ontario (Campbell et al., 2017a), although this has shifted more recently with the combination of the impact of the pandemic and of the current Conservative government's approaches to education having negative consequences for teachers' professional lives (Bocking, 2022). As is in the case in other high-performing education systems such as Finland and Singapore, Ontario faculties of education are selective about entry into ITE. Selection is based on a combination of high academic achievements, plus evidence of personal and professional attributes suitable to becoming a teacher, and equity statements and policies intended to diversify recruitment to teacher education (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Holden & Kitchen, 2016).

While ITE was part of the continua of training and professional development considered by the Working Table on Teacher Education, it was actually one of the last parts of the system to be reformed. The established model of ITE involved a one-year B.Ed. programme following completion of an undergraduate degree or a concurrent B.Ed. taken alongside a subject-specific undergraduate degree (totalling three years). However, following an election commitment and a period of consultation, the provincial government announced significant changes to teacher education, with the introduction of a four-semester (two-year) programme to begin in September 2015. These ITE policy shifts included a combination of educational and fiscal arguments.

There was a renewed emphasis on ensuring teachers were effectively trained to become high-quality teachers; although the approach taken combined notions of teacher education both as training and as a professional learning experience (Cochran-Smith, 2004). In particular, the decision was taken to lengthen the ITE programme to increase time for practical training in schools and to include further attention on areas identified as particular needs in their professional learning and

practice. The previous B.Ed. involved 40 days of practicum experience, which was the shortest required practicum period in Canada (Gambhir et al., 2008). In the words of one of the teachers interviewed for our *Empowered Educators in Canada* study, the previous B.Ed. programme was not sufficient preparation for the "real life" of a classroom teacher (Campbell et al., 2017a, p. 124).

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)—a professional regulatory body—sets out the specific requirements for provision of current ITE in Ontario:

> An acceptable programme of teacher education must be at least four semesters of postsecondary study. Please note that in the Canadian postsecondary system, an academic year is usually comprised of two semesters.

The four-semester teacher education programme generally consists of the following:

- 10% focused on education foundations (i.e. the history, philosophy and psychology of education);
- 20% focused on teaching methods suitable for two teaching qualifications in Ontario (i.e. how to teach students in particular grades or subjects);
- 20% in practice teaching—a minimum of 80 days of practice teaching supervised by the programme provider;
- 50% in any other areas of education to support methodology coursework, such as classroom management, how to use research data and new technology, supporting students with special learning needs and those from diverse communities.

> Your teacher education programme must be academic, not employment-based and completed at the postsecondary level. It must also lead to certification or authorization to teach in the jurisdiction where you completed the programme. (OCT n.d. p. 1)

The above allocation of topics and time clearly prioritizes a focus on teaching practice, versus education foundations and more theoretical orientations. Yet, a clear message from the consultation prior to the new teacher education programme being launched was also that ITE should be the purview of university faculties of education, as this was perceived as appropriate for the professional status and work of teachers. There was not support for alternative teacher education pathways. Reviewing developments across Europe, Livingston and Flores (2017) note a wider shift to the importance of universities being responsible for ITE; however, this contrasts with the policy shift to alternative, and often faster, pathways into teaching in countries such as the USA and England.

The linked consultation on the reform of ITE resulted in identification of a wide range of topics to be included in future programmes:

Regulation 347/02, *Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs* (Ontario College of Teachers, 2014) also lists the following new core content requirements that Ontario programmes must contain:

- Ontario curriculum;
- Use of educational research and data analysis;
- Inquiry-based research, data and assessment to address student learning;
- Use of technology as a teaching and learning tool;
- Theories of learning and teaching and differentiated instruction;
- Classroom management and organization;
- Child and adolescent development and student transitions;
- Student observation, assessment and evaluation;
- Supporting English language learners;
- Supporting French language learners;
- Pedagogy, assessment and evaluation for specific curriculum areas;
- Special education;
- Mental health, addictions and well-being;
- Education law and Standards of Practice;
- Professional relationships with colleagues;
- Knowledge of the Ontario context;
- First Nation, Metis and Inuit perspectives, cultures, histories and ways of knowing;
- Politique d'amenagement linguistique (PAL) de l'Ontario;
- Safe and accepting schools / creation of a positive school climate; and
- Parent engagement and communication (Petrarca & Kitchen, 2017 p. 10).

Although generated through consultation, the codification of an extensive core content for teacher education into regulation could be an example of shifts towards "the tightening grip" of government's over teacher education identified by Childs and Menter (2013) in England; and a troubling wider move to government intervention in what is considered appropriate teacher knowledge, practice and professionalism (Menter & Flores, 2021b). As Cochran-Smith (2004 p.298) elaborated, teacher education is not a neutral "policy problem", it "is a political problem" with "values and ideology" and "systems of power and privilege" influencing the intended purpose, content and outcomes of ITE. Universities in Ontario also had concerns about the details of extensive content to be covered and that this could lead to provincial standardization of ITE (Petrarca & Kitchen, 2017). Faculties of education have sought to retain some diversity and differentiation in their ITE programmes. However, the combination of the new ITE requirements, and reduced funding linked to reduced ITE students per year (discussed further below), has resulted in some specialist teacher education programmes closing, for example, to support Indigenous teacher education.

Consistent with international trends, the Ontario changes have been part of a wider "practicum turn" (Mattson et al. 2011), with a belief that expanding practicum

to a minimum of 80 days would support improved teacher education and, therefore, teacher and teaching quality. The extended practicum is intended to utilize clinical practice approaches. However, as Burn and Mutton (2015) have explained research-informed clinical practice is not simply about extended practicum time or new university-school partnerships; it involves:

> … the intention of ITE programmes:
>
> (a) To facilitate and deepen the *interplay* between the different kinds of knowledge generated and validated within the different contexts of school and university and
> (b) To provide scope for beginning teachers to interrogate each in the light of the other, bringing both to bear on the interpreting and responding to their classroom experiences (p. 219).

While this is the intent of ITE in Ontario, there are challenges in finding school placements and experienced Associate Teachers to support teacher candidates. In particular, there is an absence of—and need for—support, development and mentoring of Associate Teachers to, in turn, be able to support, develop and mentor teacher candidates. Furthermore, like many education systems (e.g. Moorhouse, 2020), ensuring high-quality practicum experiences, based on a model of placements in-person in schools, became problematic during the COVID-19 pandemic. The OCT temporarily revoked the need for teacher candidates to complete 80 days of practicum to graduate and be certified as an Ontario teacher. While teacher candidates appreciated this flexibility, some expressed concern about the loss of valuable practical experience and working collaboratively with their Associate Teacher (Van Nuland et al., 2020). Alternative approaches to experiential learning and clinical practice were sought, for example in online learning environments and through wider educational opportunities in organizations and communities. Going forward, attention to a range of ways to learn and demonstrate practical experience—in person and online—will be needed.

Alongside professional development arguments for reformed ITE, the government also used labour market and budgetary rationales. The government subsidizes the cost of ITE by providing per student funding to universities. In the early twenty-first century, the government was funding 9000 ITE places per year. However, while the labour market fluctuated, a considerable oversupply of trained teachers versus available positions had resulted by the 2010s (with some exceptions for French language teachers, specific subject specialisms, and rural or remote locations). For example, in 2011, the OCT reported: "Almost one in three of the teacher education graduates of 2010 who sought teaching jobs during the 2010–11 school year were unemployed" (OCT, 2011, p. 3). According to the OCTs' annual *Transitions to Teaching* survey, a balance between supply of newly qualified teachers and demand from teacher retirements had been reached by 2021. In the 2020–2021 school year, there was a 4% unemployment rate for newly qualified teachers in their first year of teaching and an average of 1% unemployment rate for teachers in their two to five years' post-graduation (OCT, 2021).

The revised ITE programme clearly had an intended impact on reducing oversupply of newly qualified teachers. However, there are now shortages for teachers working in the French language systems. Furthermore, teachers trained outside of Canada have to go through an evaluation of their existing qualifications, may be required to retrain, and need to meet requirements for certification by the OCT. This group of teachers currently has the highest unemployment rate at 37% in 2021 (OCT, 2021). In addition, now in the third year of responses to schooling during the pandemic, increasing numbers of teachers are retiring, taking a period of leave or resigning from the profession (Campbell et al., 2022). The OCT is now warning of a teacher shortage.

Achieving qualified teaching status and the supply of teachers has also been affected by the current Conservative government introducing a new Math Proficiency Test (MPT) which all teacher candidates were to successfully pass before being able to achieve Ontario Certified Teacher Status. The MPT was administered by the provincial assessment agency as an online test beginning in 2020. The government's rationale was that the overall provincial Grade 6 math test results had declined in recent years—with 47% of students achieving the provincial standard in 2018–2019 (EQAO, 2019). In many ways, this heralds a return to the previous Conservative government's unpopular policy shifts to an emphasis on testing teachers and students. While the political and media rhetoric was that the majority of Ontario students were "failing math", this was a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the provincial assessment system. For example, provincial results are calculated based on all students in a Grade not just the students who sit the test (so there will never be a 100% result) and the provincial standard had originally been established at a high level of 70% or B to achieve the standard (Level 3 and above); however, students at Level 2 (below standard) still have general levels of proficiency. Furthermore, provincial math results in other assessed grades (three and nine) were not declining and Ontario continued to perform relatively highly in national (O'Grady et al., 2021) and international (OECD, 2019) mathematics tests.

The government used one data point, the EQAO Grade 6 Math results, as reason for significant reforms of teacher certification and they laid the responsibility of "failure in math" with teacher education. Reid et al., (2018 p. 1) had conducted a study of "the math content knowledge (MCK) and math anxiety (MA) levels of 99 elementary teacher candidates (TCs) before and 97 TCs after a math methods course". Their study indicated that teacher candidates experienced math anxiety and concerns about math content knowledge, but these were improved through participating in math courses during their ITE. The government latched on to the findings about teacher candidates struggling with math, rather than the conclusion that ITE had a positive impact, and decided that all future teacher candidates would require passing a provincial math test. There was considerable controversy about this move, EQAO released their own research paper indicating that online math tests of the type proposed were not effective for developing math pedagogical expertise. Issues were confounded by implementation issues where teacher candidates could not register for the test or find a testing location near them. The Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council took legal action against the government and won a ruling by the Ontario Superior Court

of Justice that the MPT contravened the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on grounds of the potentially inequitable impact of standardized testing, especially for racialized teacher candidates, and that B.Ed. programmes were better placed to support mathematics proficiency. The MPT is no longer required.

2.2.2 Continuing Professional Development

Thompson's (2021, p. 114) recalculation of the adage about quality education and teachers to "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the extent to which it supports, sustains, and invests in the status of its teachers", includes a priority focus on continuing professional development and professional learning opportunities for teachers. Cordingley et al. (2019 p. 20) clarify the distinction between:

Continuous Professional Development (CPD): The sustained support offered to teachers to develop their skills, knowledge and experience, beyond their initial teacher training.

Continuous Professional Learning and Development (CPLD): The processes and activities teachers undertake as they participate in and respond to CPD.

Both the formal CPD opportunities available for teachers and teachers continuing learning through their professional work are vitally important. Indeed, the necessity of CPD is recognized in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) and specifically in the Framework for Action for Sustainable Development Goal 4: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (UNESCO, 2016). Education systems that tend to be higher performing, in terms of student achievement and equity outcomes, also tend to invest in and support teachers' development throughout their careers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Therefore, there has been considerable attention to the features of effective CPD that can support improvements in teachers' knowledge, understanding and practices, with benefits for supporting students' learning also (e.g. Garrett et al., 2021; Sims et al., 2021).

There has been considerable policy and professional attention to CPD and CPLD in Ontario. As indicated in Fig. 2.2, Ontario educators actively participate in a range of CPD and CPLD activities. Under the Ontario *Education Act,* the Minister of Education may "establish policies and guidelines respecting criteria and topics for the professional activity days that are required by regulation and require boards to comply with the policies and guidelines" (subsection 8(1), paragraph 28). There is currently a requirement for three mandatory professional activity days during the school year on priority topics identified by the government. In addition, school districts and schools may identify priority CPD needs linked to their improvement plans and priorities. Teachers can also select to complete Advanced Qualifications (AQ) linked to their professional needs and career development. As well as formal CPD, Ontario educators are active in a range of self-directed and collaborative CPLD. There is

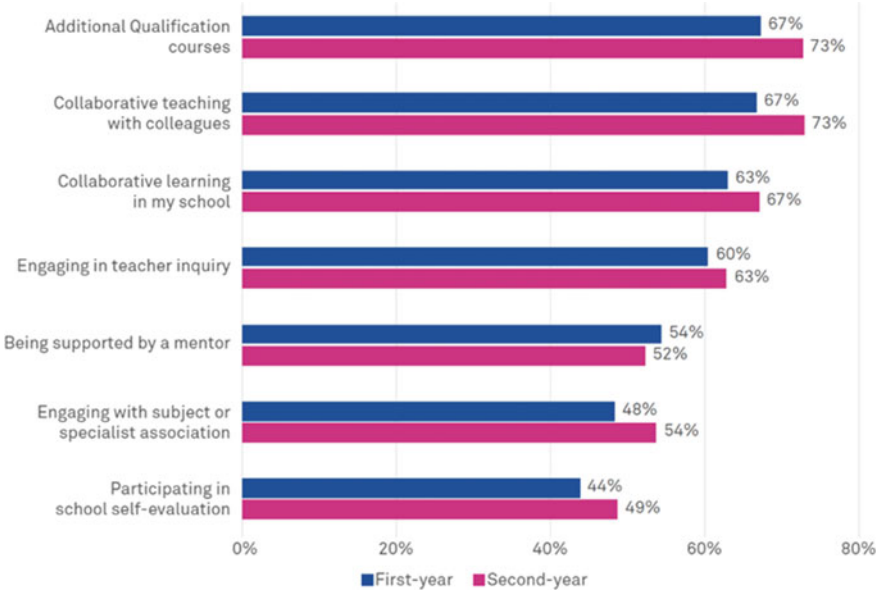

Fig. 2.2 Professional development engagement: first- and second-year Ontario teachers (*Source* OCT, 2020, p. 62)

particular support for teacher-led CPLD with, by, and for teachers (Campbell et al., 2017b).

Nevertheless, despite active support for, and engagement with, CPD and CPLD, in a 2018 survey, only 44% of teachers reported being able to do as much continuing professional learning as they would like to (Cordingley et al., 2019). A major issue identified was workload with teachers reporting they worked an average 50 h per week (Cordingley et al., 2019). Previous research also identified issues of workload and insufficient time for CPD activities in the regular school day (Campbell et al., 2017b). Issues of workload, work intensification and insufficient time for professional learning have all been exacerbated since the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (CTF, 2020). Below, I highlight two provincial initiatives to support teachers at different stages of their career that include allocation of time and resources for effective CPD.

2.2.2.1 Beginning Teachers: The New Teacher Induction Program

The transition from ITE to a newly qualified teachers' first in-service teaching experiences can be challenging. The need for mentoring and induction for beginning teachers is frequently identified (Gordon, 2020). As part of the suite of teacher

development reforms, the Ontario Ministry of Education introduced the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) in 2006. The teachers eligible for NTIP have evolved over the years from first-year newly hired teachers on permanent contracts, to expand to newly hired long-term occasional teachers, and now to include other teachers who may not meet the previous criteria but would benefit from NTIP. There are three core elements to NTIP:

- Orientation for all new teachers to the school and school board;
- Mentoring for new teachers by experienced teachers;
- Professional learning relevant to the individual needs of new teachers (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2022).

Initially, NTIP was a one-year programme, but an option for a second-year was added. The Ministry funds NTIP, school boards and schools are expected to identify experienced teachers to be mentors, and school leaders are expected to support, oversee and evaluate the NTIP within their schools.

Crucial to the effectiveness of NTIP is the quality of mentorship provided and the appropriateness of relationships developed with the mentee. Mentors can receive a range of training from the Ministry of Education's NTIP team in collaboration with their school board NTIP lead/team. Examples of topics for mentorship development include: creating a mentoring web; building relational trust; facilitating learning focused conversations; providing meaningful feedback; and utilizing powerful mentoring designs. In our research on NTIP (Campbell et al., 2017a, b), mentors spoke positively about the importance of CPD to support their role and mentorship practices, as well as the powerful co-learning of collaborating with mentees. Both mentors and mentees particularly valued collaborative professional learning in classrooms, such as observations, co-planning and co-teaching lessons, and opportunities to debrief and improve on practices. Mentees appreciated mentors' educational experience and expertise and the practical and emotional supports mentors could provide, for example sitting together at the start of the school day to go over plans for the day ahead. However, an issue was that not all newly hired teachers had access to an individual mentor; for example, particular challenges were identified for French language teachers in remote locations.

Over time the concept of a mentoring web has become part of NTIP, where newly hired teachers draw on a range of mentors and colleagues for different supports. The NTIP lead in the Ministry of Education explained to us:

> We think of building a mentoring web. It can be one to one, but it could also be online, it could be a group, it could be a community of practice, it could be informal. Mentorship can be customized based on a person's individual needs. To me it's the ultimate personalization of learning. When the mentor and the new teacher meet, the agenda for the learning are the needs of the new teacher. And that's really powerful. (Participant interview)

More recently, further research has indicated the power of mentoring webs:

> In their longitudinal research of the NTIP, Christine Frank & Associates found that high growth new teachers accessed 5 to 7 different mentorship supports. In other words, they built a mentoring web of personalized growth opportunities with the support of multiple

> mentors. Each web is unique, constructed by the learner based on their authentic learning needs. The more strands in the web, the stronger and more resilient it is. One of the most helpful things mentors can do is help a new teacher build their web by fostering connections with colleagues, administrators and other mentors. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2021, p. 10)

The expectation is that the specific work within NTIP will be individualized and personalized as appropriate to each mentee. Mentors and mentees select activities based on the professional learning plan they co-create.

While the pandemic placed additional challenges and strains on newly qualified teachers and experienced teachers, according to a survey of newly qualified teachers by the OCT, NTIP participants in 2020–21 continued to highly value the support of their mentor(s). However, there were concerningly variable experiences in terms of having access to a mentor and opportunities to engage and learn with a mentor—in 2020–2021, 20% of first-year NTIP respondents indicated that they did not have a specific assigned mentor and only 17% of NTIP respondents reported meeting with their mentor(s) for three or more hours per month (OCT, 2021). Furthermore, in 2020–21, 70% of first-year NTIP participants reported that their teaching had not been observed during that school year and 76% responded that they had not had the opportunity to observe another teacher's classroom practices (OCT, 2021). While this may have been exacerbated by shifts to remote learning during the pandemic, there have been longer-standing issues of ensuring time and access to observe teaching practices (Campbell et al., 2017a, b; OCT, 2020). These findings are concerning because the most powerful elements of NTIP include effective and appropriate mentoring and opportunities for peer observation and feedback. Furthermore, in 2020–21, 9% of first-year teachers on a permanent contract and 64% of first-year long-term occasional teachers did not participate in NTIP at all (OCT, 2021). Long-term occasional teachers are a significant part of the Ontario education workforce and have been on high demand during the pandemic; it is concerning and inequitable if they do not have access to induction and CPD opportunities. It is important to ensure all newly qualified teachers have access to, and support for, induction and mentoring.

2.2.2.2 Experienced Teachers: Ontario's Teacher Learning and Leadership Program

Having established NTIP, the *Working Table on Teacher Development* turned their attention to the needs of experienced teachers. The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) was formed through a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Teachers' Federation (and affiliates) in 2007. Three shared goals underpinned the TLLP:

- Support experienced teachers to undertake self-directed advanced professional development;
- Develop teachers' leadership skills for sharing their professional learning and exemplary practices; and

- Facilitate knowledge exchange for spread and sustainability of effective and innovative practices.

In response to an annual call for TLLP proposals from the Ministry, during 2007–2017, teachers could submit a TLLP proposal. The process was highly competitive—over the nine cohorts of the TLLP, a total of 788 projects were selected for funding (Campbell et al., 2017c).

Teacher leaders from the successful projects received training before beginning their TLLP:

> The *Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers* training includes project development and management, managing a TLLP project budget, using the TLLP online platform and social media, gathering evidence from the TLLP and preparing for their Final Report, and an overview of the *Sharing the Learning Summit* which is the culmination of the TLLP project. (Campbell et al., 2018, p. 8)

A key finding from our evaluation of the TLLP is that teachers learn leadership by doing leadership! In the TLLP, teacher leaders implemented their projects over a full school year and shared their learning during this process. They then came together again as a TLLP community the following school year for the *Sharing the Learning Summit* to showcase their learning and to further spread their practices.

Our longitudinal evaluation of the TLLP (2012–2018) identified considerable benefits and positive impacts of the TLLP. For the teacher leaders who were directly involved:

> By providing the conditions (funding, training, and ongoing support) for a self-selected and self-directed professional development effort, the TLLP facilitates active, collaborative learning that is embedded in teachers' work, informed by evidence, and provides opportunities for authentic leadership experiences. Vitally, TLLP supports and values teacher voice and choice in their professional learning. The TLLP professional learning and leadership experiences, our research demonstrates, have significant benefits for TLLP participants' professional growth as learners, educators, and leaders. The vast majority of TLLP participants experience improvements in their knowledge and teaching practices. The majority of TLLP teacher leaders also report growth in their leadership confidence and improvements in their leadership skills… As their projects progress, TLLP participants become more confident in implementing new practices, sharing knowledge and practices, leading own and others' professional learning, leading a team, and being a teacher leader. (Campbell et al., 2018, p. 44)

In addition to benefiting the teachers directly involved in the TLLP teams; the majority of TLLP projects' final reports indicated benefits for engaging other educators and sharing learning with improvements for this wider group's knowledge, skills and practices. While the majority of TLLP projects primarily shared their learning within their own school(s) and/or school boards, some projects shared more widely across school boards, Canadian provinces, nationally, and internationally. The main mechanisms for shared professional learning were in person activities and online resources and interactions. Students were also reported to benefit; for example, TLLP final reports noted gains in students' learning experiences, skills, engagement, and attitude. Of particular note: "The vast majority of TLLP teacher

leaders report sustaining implementation of practices, professional learning, collaboration, and sharing of resources beyond the initial funding of their TLLP project" (Campbell et al., 2018, p. 45). While TLLP participants encountered challenges in developing and implementing their projects and in collaborating with peers and superiors to innovate change, the infrastructure of the TLLP providing training and supports from the Ministry and from teacher unions, plus a project extending over 18 months with funding, especially for release time, and a TLLP design based on professional learning with, by, and for teachers all contributed to the success of the TLLP (Lieberman et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, the current government has not continued implementation of the TLLP. Soon after the 2018 election, the newly elected government put TLLP on pause. In response to advocacy from the education profession and, notably, individual teachers speaking out on social media, the government reversed course and decided to re-instate the TLLP. However, a period of labour action in 2019–2020, followed by the impact of the pandemic from 2020 onwards, has resulted in the TLLP not being implemented since 2018. This is a concern, as international research has demonstrated the importance of developing and supporting teacher leadership:

> It is notable that it is in the very high performing jurisdictions that teacher leadership has most prominence and where the development of teachers' leadership skills is supported extensively and substantively… focussing on teacher leadership and explicitly developing teachers' leadership skills can pay dividends in increasing education capacity and enhancing system vitality and that both unions and policy makers would be well advised to consider ways of promoting teacher leadership. (Cordingley et al., 2019, p. 107)

There continues to be professional interest and support for TLLP-like professional learning activities and teacher leadership development in Ontario.

2.3 Conclusions

This chapter seeks to provide "an historical account of teacher education at a particular moment in the reform and development process" (Livingston & Flores2017, p. 557) through the case of Ontario during the early twenty-first century. During this period, the "policy turn" in teacher education identified by Cochran-Smith (2004, 2016) is very evident in Ontario. Through shifts from a Conservative government to a Liberal government in 2003 (re-elected three times) and a return to a Conservative government in 2018 (re-elected in 2022), it is clear that teacher education has been treated as a "policy problem" and a "political problem" with different governments being active and interventionist in reforms intended to raise the quality of education, measured primarily by test score outcomes.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the Conservative government had introduced the controversial Ontario Teacher Testing Program, which required teachers to successfully complete this test throughout their career in order to retain official Ontario Certified Teacher Status. The current Conservative government returned to

the concept of teacher testing with a new Math Proficiency Test (MPT), administered through the provincial testing agency, which all teacher candidates were to pass before becoming newly qualified teachers. Of note, the Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council successfully won a legal case against the government which resulted in the ruling that the MPT contravened the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A main argument was that standardized teacher testing was inequitable and could be discriminatory, for example, for racialized teacher candidates. This opens up larger questions about the intended purpose, implementation, and outcomes of teacher testing, and also linkages to student testing. A further argument against teacher testing was that ITE (and CPD) were best placed to support teachers' development and capacity.

The Liberal government (2003–2018) placed a priority focus on capacity building for all educators. Through a Working Table on Teacher Development, initiated by the government and involving all relevant education stakeholders, a decade of reforms to teacher education was co-developed and implemented. During this period, Ontario became recognized internationally for its work to support teachers' professional development (Cordingley et al., 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2010). Ontario also drew on international evidence in designing their reforms, for example, Finland's approaches to ITE and Singapore's approaches to CPD.

The reform of ITE from a one-year to a two-year programme resonates with many aspects of international trends. Differing from the USA and England, but more consistent with the European trends (Livingston & Flores, 2017), ITE is university based in Ontario. An educational argument for the extended ITE programme with more practicum time was consistent with the "practicum turn" (Mattson et al., 2011) and an emphasis on "research-informed clinical practice" (Burn & Mutton, 2015) that has been identified in other teacher education research and reforms. Generally, teacher candidates appreciate this extended practicum time (although this has become challenging during the pandemic). Of more concern, however, were regulations specifying an extensive and detailed list of topics to be covered in teacher education. Menter and colleagues (Childs & Menter, 2013; Menter & Flores, 2021b) have brought attention to how government intervention in ITE content can seek to control and shape what teachers know and do. In Ontario, ITE providers were concerned about a perceived shift to standardization of programmes, although there have been deliberate attempts by individual faculties of education to provide distinctive emphases and approaches within the ITE regulatory framework. Unfortunately, however, the shift in the requirements of the new ITE programme combined with the government funding half the number of previous ITE students resulting in reduced revenue has meant that smaller faculties of education and specialist programming have been negatively affected. This is worrying when programmes, such as those supporting Indigenous ITE, have been cut at a time when there is an urgent need to attend to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015).

It is recognized that teachers require CPD and CPLD throughout their career. Ontario educators are active in ongoing professional learning and development, including government-, district-, school- and self-directed opportunities. The NTIP

provides needed support for beginning teachers. Participating teachers and mentors are positive about their learning and experiences through NTIP. However, not all beginning teachers are actively receiving the opportunity to participate. Finding and supporting available mentors has also been a challenge. These issues have been further exacerbated during the pandemic and require addressing. For experienced teachers, the TLLP provided a beneficial opportunity for teachers to lead their own and their colleagues' professional learning, and to share the knowledge and practices developed more widely. Unfortunately, the TLLP has not been implemented since the election of the Conservative government in 2018. There is a need for some form of provincial strategy to support teacher leadership. As international research on teachers' professional lives and education system performance has demonstrated, support for teachers' CPD and CPLD throughout their career trajectory must be paramount (Cordingley et al., 2019).

Finally, a lesson from the Ontario case is that considering teacher education requires not only researching the substance of reforms, but also the policy-making processes used for those reforms. The Liberal government explicitly and actively sought to work in partnership with the education profession to co-develop teacher education policies. This was welcomed and resulted in policies that generally garnered support from teachers. However, the introduction of Bill 115 in 2012 placed restrictions on teacher federations' collective bargaining rights. Deteriorating relations with the government occurred. In the next round of collective bargaining, it was agreed that the government in partnership with education stakeholders would co-develop a new way of working together with mutual respect. This resulted in the co-development of Policy and Program Memorandum 159 on Collaborative Professionalism (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016), which set out the expectations for working relationships between the educators, employers and government. Consistent with Thompson's (2021 p. 5) call for "intelligent professionalism", involving a shift *from* professional autonomy being conceived as the downloading of government mandates to a shift *to* teachers having professional agency to develop and apply their professional knowledge and judgement, teachers must be engaged in policy-making and decision-taking concerning appropriate teacher education.

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