

**Teachers Emotional Labour, Care Work, and Perceptions of Wellness: A Literature
Review**

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Chapter 2 Literature Review: Emotional Labour, Care Work, Role Theory, Burnout and

Attrition

Introduction

In the staffroom there is a list of feature articles on the cover of the fall 2018, *Canadian Teacher Magazine*. One of these is titled, “Normalizing Mental Health” (Mumford, 2018). This article reminds me of a monthly book study I am attending in my district on teacher wellness, and the school-based workshop I attended last year on compassion fatigue. While these concepts have distinctions, they indicate a contemporary interest in mental health and wellness. I wonder, as I take the magazine and put it in my bag, have I been following these discourses, or have they been following me? Becoming a teacher amidst a 15-year labour dispute over working and learning conditions in British Columbia focused my attention to how teaching discourses intersect with policy. Recently my attention has turned to the intersections of teachers’ care work with health and wellness discourses. What do these discourses do? What impressions do they create? A year after I began exploring the sense that teaching is often misrepresented with the exclusion of care work, I am neck deep in related theories and research.

I used an explore-and-discover approach in this literature review, because much of the present research is rooted in disciplines shaped by gendered lenses. Inspired by Sara Ahmed’s (2017) work, I aim to disrupt their leading directions. I began by looking for research on teachers and emotions, I explored numerous individual studies, I noticed patterns, I added emotional labour OR labor to my search terms and later, burnout, attrition, care ethics, care work, role conflict and overload. I also looked at meta-analytic studies and moved between macro and micro approaches.

As a feminist who seeks to privilege subjective experiences over objective research (Hartsock, 2004; Haraway 2004; Hill Collins, 2004; Smith, 2005), I am organizing this literature review to reflect my lived experience as a teacher. I begin with emotional labour, care work, role theory and wellness because these resonate with my experiences and observations. I follow with burnout, and attrition because these reflect the predominant relevant research and discourses. I then review role theory and relate it to teachers' multiple roles. I suggest that burnout and attrition research are incomplete without consideration of care work and role theories. Education policy specific to British Columbia and care work are also contextualized. The following research questions were refined over time with input from my supervisors, Dr. Mairi McDermott and Dr. Catherine Burwell.

Research Questions:

1. How do teachers describe the ways they care for and about students?
2. How do teachers perceive the relationship between this care work and their own wellness?
- ~~3. How is this care work made visible and invisible to students, parents and administrators, and within policy documents and public discourse?~~

Literature Review

Reflecting on my research journey I recall feeling troubled by wellness discourses and specifically the calls for stress management, and work-life balance. Was it the implication of deficits that troubled me (teachers are not managing their stress), or the implication that my emotions are commodities to be used and regulated for institutional gains, or the implication that I had total control over work-life balance? At some point it became all. In my third term of doctoral research while I was exploring literature on teachers' emotions, I discovered the concept

of emotional labour which eventually led me to care work. In the following section I share my journey to the topics of emotional labour, care work specifically, and how they came into my research.

Emotional Labour and Care Work

Arlie Hochschild (2003), writing from a critical sociological perspective, articulated the term emotional labour in 1983, to describe the commercialization of human feelings. Emotional labour involves emotional management and performance according to organizational rules.

There are many daily examples of my emotional labour I considered sharing here. Inevitably, my thoughts return to the labour dispute. Advocating against legislation, BC teachers launched several job actions. As an early career teacher in a precarious job context, I had to navigate multiple role expectations. Public perceptions, media representations and contextual realities, required that I perform organizational expectations (Teacher Regulation Branch, n.d., para 3), yet I was picketing against newly imposed expectations. There is a picture of me picketing during one of our strike / job actions. I am performing gratitude for support of teachers' advocacy. My feelings of despair of not being in a classroom and wondering when and if I will secure continuing employment are not evident. The smile I wear in this picture does not reflect all that I am suppressing.



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The first time I came across Hochschild's articulation, it resonated. We do a lot of performing and suppressing emotions, yet emotional labour does not feel like a complete description of my work as an elementary teacher. In my early wanderings, I discovered that emotional labour research tends to focus on the suppression of unpleasant emotions, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. While teaching is at times exhausting and demoralizing, it is also exhilarating and rewarding - simultaneously. My supervisor Dr. Mairi McDermott, directed me to additional theoretical works and by doing this, she nudged me to keep looking.

Spending time with alternative emotions theories helped me find clarity (Ahmed, 2015; Noddings, 1984; 2012; Probyn, 2004). For example, Elspeth Probyn (2004) amplified my awareness of the link between physiological and psychological affective experiences in teaching (p.27). I welcomed the provocation to move beyond intellectual or psychological articulations of emotions and consider my lived experience. I was reminded how gender theorists have sought to

privilege subjectivity often focusing on ethical, caring, relational, experiences (Beauvoir, 1976; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; 2012).

Similarly, Sara Ahmed's contribution to my thinking has been immense. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (2015) she shows that emotion discourses are embedded in socialization processes, and thus are gendered and racialized. In *The Promise of Happiness* (2010) she demonstrates that, like theories of governance and subjectivity, emotion discourses are power structures. She begs the question, when happiness norms are present whose happiness is privileged and who or what becomes marginalized or deviant? In the context of my research, her work begs similar questions. What do wellness norms do to teachers? What representations of wellness are privileged? What emotional experiences are marginalized and deviant?

Still, aroused to new orientations, I struggled with what exactly my research question should be. How to harness insights gained from Probyn (2004) and Ahmed (2015), to generate research into teachers' emotional labour and how it relates to wellness? What to do about the feeling that emotional labour was not completely adequate?

In a summer meeting while talking about possible research questions, Dr. Catherine Burwell, another graduate supervisor, suggested I revisit feminist theories of care. Returning to feminist care ethics theory eventually led me to the substantial body of care research. In the following section I introduce care research across multiple disciplines, that is largely overlooked in the predominant burnout and attrition research. I also continue with my narrative of how care work fits with my experiences as a teacher in British Columbia.

Care Work

Care work is a distinctive form of emotional labour (Duffy, 2011; Smith, 2013; Tronto, 2013; Warton, 2009). At its core, care work is relational (Bartky, 1990, Gilligan, 1982,

Noddings, 1984, Tronto, 2013). It involves caring for and about individuals in longer term relationships, increasingly within formal institutions (Acker, 1995; Duffy, 2011; Smith, 2013; Tronto, 2013; Warton, 2009). Although teaching is included in care articulations, it is not featured as much as social and health care work. Reflecting on these institutional differences, I suspect this has to do with their historical origins. Health and social work were intended to be caring social institutions whereas education was intended to be a political and economic one. It seems that care work in teaching may be more invisible than in other caring occupations.

Care work has been considered in moral philosophical analyses (Gilligan, 1982; Held, 2006; Noddings, 1984). These include considerations of the necessity of care for human functioning and the implications of good and bad care. Nancy Folbre (2001) a leading economist and care work theorist has studied the market expansion of care work, its' growing economic importance and continued under valuing. She has contributed greatly to articulations of economic penalties resulting from unpaid domestic care demands that draw away from economic work (2001). Folbre's conception of care penalties sparked reflection on possible wellness penalties care workers may experience as they often feel compelled to gendered demands of sacrifice when role conflicts and overloads arise.

Political theorists Pateman (1988) and Tronto (2013) focus on the importance of care in socio-political functioning and the absence of carer perspectives in Enlightenment philosophical discussions that are the foundation of modern Western societies. Tronto (2013) describes how non-carers enjoy privileged irresponsibility in its provision and thus freedom from care penalties (akin to blissful ignorance). Tronto's articulation of privileged irresponsibility prompted me to think about the invisibility of teachers' care work in policy and research discourses. Institutional authorities, those who define knowledge discourses, and those who shape policy, lack complete

understandings of the demands of care work in teaching because of positions of privileged irresponsibility. They also may experience wellness privilege. People in non-caring roles have more time for personal wellness because others are doing social / familial caring.

Sociologists (e.g. Cancian & Oliker, 2000; Duffy, Armenia & Stacey 2015), focus on the particularities of care work as a gendered, classed and racialized sector. The consideration of gender and race prompted me to think about the internalization of gendered role expectations and self-sacrifice (explored in more detail below).

Though not exhaustive, this review demonstrates that a substantial body of care work research exists. While there are definitional and disciplinary differences, there are commonalities throughout this literature, such as, the necessity of care, inequities in the division of work, invisibility of role demands and conflicts, and penalties experienced by carers (Duffy, Armenia & Stacey 2015; Folbre, 2001; Tronto, 2013).

When I began to engage with care work theory, I felt that I had finally discovered something missing from media and research representations of teaching. Working with students involves more than temporary, situational, emotional performances and suppressions. It involves caring for and about in ways that are often invisible. Yet while care work helped animate a textual description of teaching something still seemed missing. I learned about role theory later in my review of the literature, but it is pivotal to understanding the intersections of multiple demands and overloads and I turn to it in the next section.

Role Theory

In role theory, a role is “the pattern of behaviors expected and demanded of a person in a given social position by others within the social system” (Duxbury & Higgins, 2008, p.128). People experience role conflict when there are conflicting demands within their multiple roles.

For example, when family role demands compete with time spent on work role demands (Coverman, 1989). In one study Coverman (1989) found that conflicting family-work demands decreased women's psychological health. Teachers may experience similar responses when their caring role demands conflict with other demands (i.e. instructional, familial, social, and personal). For example, when teachers feel pulled between developing caring classroom community relationships and curricula content expectations. Role conflict occurs because of competing demands, role *overload* is the experience "of having too much to do and not enough time" (Duxbury and Higgins 2008 p. 125). This is why the invisibility of care work demands are important to consider with teacher wellness. For example, in the context of the B.C. labour dispute having larger and more complex classrooms adds to care workloads *and* instructional workloads. With intensified workloads, teachers may experience having too much to do with too little time to accomplish all that is expected.

In addition to Folbre's (2001) economic penalties, others have demonstrated that care workers are vulnerable to time poverty (Williams, Masuda, & Tallis, 2016). Often those in privileged economic positions can outsource some of their work (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Vogtman, 2017). If role overload is "too much to do and not enough time," (Duxbury and Higgins 2008 p. 125), economically disadvantaged carers are even more vulnerable to role overload. Thinking with Folbre's (2001) articulation of care penalties and subsequent articulations of time poverty (Williams, Masuda, & Tallis, 2016), I suggest that the possibility of role overload makes teachers vulnerable to wellness penalties (e.g. exhaustion and burnout). These embodied realities are missing from historical representations of teaching and their enduring legacies. Teaching as a gendered role has been explored in research and I unpack some of those conversations below.

Teaching and Care Work as Gendered Roles.

We all have needs, and we all need care. From this perspective care is not gendered (Duffy, Armenia & Stacey 2015; Folbre, 2001; Tronto, 2013). However, care work has increasingly been gendered in its provision. While nurturing care has historically been associated with the domestic sphere, it has become commercialized within industries, and politicized within public institutions, such as hospitals and schools (Duffy, Armenia & Stacey 2015; Folbre, 2011; Tronto, 2013). Care work has been historically characterized as women's work; work that women do altruistically in service. Because of its association with the unpaid domestic sphere it is not valued in the same way paid economic work is (Duffy, Armenia & Stacey 2015; Folbre, 2001; Tronto, 2013).

Some feminists have argued that rather than outright rejecting conceptions of nurturance in education, care in schools ought to be acknowledged as having value. Nel Noddings is an influential scholar who sought to highlight care in education. Noddings developed a philosophy of education that centres on an ethic of care (Noddings, 1984 / 2012). Noddings' early work has been criticized for essentializing nurturance (Hoagland, 1990), and indeed feminists have debated the impacts of essentializing care. Generally, the trend has been to move away from essentializing care as a gender attribute toward essentializing care as a human necessity.

While not reflective of individual realities, teacher stereotypes are rooted in gendered conceptions of maternal care (Grumet, 1988). These characterizations include patience, self-sacrifice and hard work (Acker, 1995; Britzman, 2003; Childers, 2011; Coulter & Greig, 2008; Hunter, 1996). Intersections of role conflict and overload with wellness are particularly implicated in self-sacrifice and time for self-care. This led me to search for studies that address the invisibility of teachers' care work and role related conflicts. With a few recent exceptions I

did not find many studies that considered teaching as care work (e.g. Acker, 1995; Reid, 2016; Restler, 2017), or role conflict (Guinn, 2018; Mullholland, McKinley & Sproule, 2013, Moss, 2015). I was unable to find studies that considered both teaching as care work and possible teaching (and cultural) role conflicts. However, studies of gender roles in education provide additional insight into cultural norms of self-sacrifice.

Gender researchers have problematized the construction of teachers' nurturing roles. For example, in a study with 18 pre-service teachers, J. Camille Cammack and Donna Phillips (2002) found participants adopted the discourse of teaching as 'women's work.' That is, participants internalized nurturance as a teaching characteristic and value. In this study there is also secondary evidence of a double shift between work and home. One participant shared, "I'm not even saying it is bad to want to do the dishes and serve your husband because I do that, too. It's just understanding why I am doing it, because I love him, and not because it's my tradition in life" (p. 129). The words of this participant reflect gendered cultural expectations that nurturing care is women's work that involves self-sacrifice.

Acker's (1995b) study in an English elementary school found similar implications of self-sacrifice. This was one of the few studies in my review of literature that spoke of teachers as care workers specifically. In reviewing the literature Acker (1995b) concludes:

Teachers' caring activities, then, have from one perspective been seen as derived from their teacher identities; from another, as part of 'women's ways'; and from a third, as a consequence of the social expectations that women's caring work should blur the distinction between labour and love. (p. 24)

Acker argues that teachers are influenced by such characterizations as well as their professional commitment to education, and this results in heavy workloads. The participants in her study revealed the complexities of trying to provide care in cramped conditions, without adequate resources, while at the same time trying to teach the curricula. Acker writes, "There

was a chronic shortage of pencils. I have many examples in my field notes of teachers exchanging tips on where to purchase items cheaply or how to conserve the materials they had” (p. 27). Folbre’s penalty concept allows us to see time and financial penalties in this study. Teachers sourced out and purchased resources in order to fulfill their instructional roles, but this takes time and energy that might otherwise be devoted to personal wellness.

Teacher participants worked evenings and weekends sewing costumes for performances, or purchasing resources, and this workload remained invisible to the students and their parents. The invisibility of their work is highlighted in Acker’s analysis, “What often bothered the teachers was the sense that the children, and sometimes the parents, failed to appreciate—or even notice—what efforts they made” (p. 28). This failure to notice, is an example of privileged irresponsibility.

Teachers’ caring roles are defined within the Teacher Regulation Branch’s standards. In British Columbia, the first standard of the Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) addresses care in schools, “Educators value and *care* for all students and act in their best interests” (Teacher Regulation Branch, n.d., para 3, emphasis added) In this regard:

educators are responsible for fostering the emotional, esthetic, intellectual, physical, social and vocational development of students. They are responsible for the emotional and physical safety of students. Educators treat students with respect and dignity. Educators respect the diversity in their classrooms, schools and communities. Educators have a privileged position of power and trust. They respect confidentiality unless disclosure is required by law. Educators do not abuse or exploit students or minors for personal, sexual, ideological, material or other advantage (Teacher Regulation Branch, n.d., para 3)

These enormous responsibilities compel further elaboration. How *do* educators’ value and care for all students and act in their best interests? It is complex, layered and demanding. It requires knowing students which takes time. In classrooms caring for numerous students occurs in ongoing simultaneous exchanges and over time. The remaining standards address instructional

and professional expectations relating to ethics and skill development. Here three layers intersect, caring, instructional, and professional into the one role of teacher. The demands of implementation and possibilities of role conflict and overload remain unaddressed. If role conflict occurs, do gendered expectations of self-sacrifice contribute to teacher wellness penalties?

Role Conflicts

Role conflict is also implicit in research that seeks to disrupt the emphasis on teachers' instructional duties and instead explore the lived realities of teaching. While these authors do not apply role conflict and overload directly, the participant voices illustrate multiple demands in care work. Santoro (2017; 2013; 2011) has conducted numerous studies in the United States that explore perceived conflicts between mandated instructional practices and what teachers believe to be good teaching. Experienced teacher participants believed such mandates harmed learners (2017; 2013; 2011). One participant explained,

“I felt like I was being asked to betray myself, to produce those grades in a way that I couldn't stand behind. Um, and I did it, but I didn't like doing it. And it just felt symptomatic of everything else, or more and more of what I was being asked to do. (p. 575).

In a Canadian study a participant shared similar conflicts with the pressures to achieve curricula demands and beliefs and values about good teaching (Janzen, 2015). From a role theory perspective, this can be interpreted as a conflict between institutional and professional interpretations of curricula roles. In another Canadian study, a 30-year teaching veteran explained, “there have been lots of times when I've been overwhelmed Sometimes, trying to develop a community in the classroom felt impossible, and trying to meet so many needs...” (Janzen & Phelan, 2019, p. 16). This participant felt conflicted between a moral responsibility to respond to children and their needs, while simultaneously being overwhelmed. Thus, while these

studies do not directly apply role theory, there is evidence of conflict and overload in participant data. These studies also focus on tensions within curricula roles in teaching, what remains unaddressed is teachers' care work specifically.

My care is visible in my instructional design and the learning materials I choose to meet individual students where they are, though most non-educators might miss this work. Or when I awake in the night and become preoccupied with thoughts about students. It is less visible in moments throughout the day when I notice who seems different, not as social; who is quick to tears; who is not eating or overly tired; who wants to be close to me, and who is distant; who wears tattered shoes, or does not wear a coat in the winter. Or, more favorably, who is delighted and joyful. In my busy days of trying to facilitate learning, these moments compel my care work to action. Is it time for a break outside, and an attempt to connect? What is the right approach in a conflict situation? Can humour help; is it time for a story? Can we afford to take a break from learning to work on our relationships? Is a teacher provided meal required instead? Can I ethically source and offer provisions for families in need? These questions lead me back to neoliberalism and cause me to question the individualizing of responsibilities.

How much of teachers' care work is an individual responsibility, and, how much of it is a social responsibility? In the labour dispute, class size and composition were largely about costs for the government, but for teachers this represented very real possibilities of role overload. Caring demands take time, and they sometimes compete with instructional goals, additional cultural roles, and time for personal wellness. To people in non-caring roles, multiple role demands are invisible because of their privileged irresponsibility. They can also overlook wellness penalties that arise from having too much to do with not enough time, as my neighbour did when commenting on my physical appearance in my early teaching career.

Wellness

Throughout my research journey I have received feedback from multiple generous sources. A recurring comment was lack of clarity in conceptualizing wellness. Dr. Catherine Burwell returned to Dr. Mairi McDermott's feedback on this, "In a way, wellness is a lot more central to your research than ideas of burnout and attrition, which don't play any direct role in either your research questions or your list of theoretical and interview questions" (personal communication). My hesitancy has multiple sources. One of these is a troubling history of definitions and treatments of women's wellness and teaching as a feminized profession.

Women's emotions have been pathologized and misrepresented in patronizing and dangerous ways. For example, in a historical review of 19th Century prescriptions of laudanum (opium), Kandall (1999) found middle class women who were dissatisfied with exclusion from political participation were often diagnosed and treated for 'hysteria.' Similarly, Herzberg (2009) has written about the rapid increase in mid-20th Century prescriptions of valium. He situates this in the return of men from war, and the pressure on women to return to unpaid domestic work. Many women who found this unfulfilling and unsatisfactory, were diagnosed and treated with valium for mental disorders (Herzberg, 2009). Is this history of medicine and gender implicated in teacher wellness discourses? If gendered caring roles carry the possibility of conflict and overload, do rigid definitions of wellness and medicalizing stress responses contribute to gender oppression? Another difficulty is that wellness is ill-defined generally.

In a special issue on organizational wellness Jack and Brewis (2005), caution against polarizing wellness and work roles, "That is to say, it is important not to fall into the trap of assuming that the organizational context is necessarily, inevitably or automatically a problematic, unhealthy and damaging place to be "(p.66). Yet they also support a connection

with working roles and wellness. They write “The presence of the ‘well’ in organizational wellness is made possible by the deferral/absence of its ‘sick’ counterpart, a trace on whose existence the well always depends” (p.65). Thus, the existence of teacher wellness and organizational concerns about it, only arise in a context of concerns over the impacts of teacher un-wellness.

Wellness discourses are circulating the British Columbia education context in workshops and employer communications. It is the individualizing direction of wellness discourses such as work/life balance, stress management, self-regulation, mindfulness and curricula trends in social-emotional learning (SEL) that I find troubling.

In these discourses, stress is normalized and appeals to science are used to individualize stress responses. The basic assumption is that ‘fight or flight’ is a natural biological response to stress and we should use strategies to ‘regulate’ our responses. It remains questionable however, that our ancestors lived with the stress of caring (mostly alone) for the well-being and learning of 20 to 30+ young people. Teacher stress is not natural. It is work related. Teacher wellness / un-wellness is also work related.

Wellness is also to a great extent subjective and interior. People may not display signs of un-wellness (having a physical ailment, cold or flu), and still be unwell (have aches, stress, and anxiety). Wellness is often represented as eating right, getting enough sleep, exercising and socializing, enjoying pleasures but not over-indulging (Haunschild, 2013). Having time, energy and capabilities to do these things is overlooked in normative discourses. When schools are under-resourced, teachers often sacrifice personal time (and money) which makes them vulnerable to multiple role demands and overload. Participants will be invited to define wellness themselves in this study. This is an intentional resistance at the bio-political tendencies inherent

in wellness discourses. I now turn to a review of the themes in research on teacher un-wellness. Indeed, it seems that un-wellness in care workers is well documented.

Burnout

In this section I review themes that are prevalent in burnout research. I included research from fields such as health care, victim and child protection services as there are common themes across these disciplines. In my research journey I find burnout research useful, but I also find it incomplete without consideration of both care work and role theories. A lot of burnout research is quantitative and uses various surveys as measures (Maslach & Leiter, 2017; Warton, 2009), thus it also lacks subjective descriptions and explanations and social contextualization.

Psychological Perspectives of Burnout and Individual Interventions.

Burnout involves psychological, physical, and behavioral reactions to work (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Preedy & Watson, 2010). Initial efforts to articulate an operational definition of burnout emerged from caregiving occupations. The three variables in burnout include emotional exhaustion, detachment (also described as depersonalization and cynicism), and reduced productivity (Cherniss, 1980; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach, & Zimbardo, 1982; Schaufeli, Maslach, & Marek, 2017).

Burnout measures (surveys) have been changed and modified over the years (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Burnout is often studied in conjunction with occupational emotional labour, secondary traumatic stress, and compassion fatigue (e.g. Brady, 2017; Beck, 2011; Kulkarni, Bell, Hartman, & Herman-Smith, 2013; Van Bergeijk, & Sarmiento, 2006). Emotional exhaustion is the core variable that may result from the burnout behaviors of detachment and reduced productivity.

Studies of burnout are often done from a clinical lens (Maslach & Leiter, 2017; Zhilla, 2014). Santoro (2011) explains, “Burnout is studied most frequently by psychologists who examine an individual’s personality, physical and mental health, and coping strategies that help to manage stress” (p.10). For example, Keller, Chang, Becker, Goetz, & Frenzel (2014), studied suppressed emotions and exhaustion. Often within this literature individual interventions are suggested remedies (Mérida-López, & Extremera, 2017; Motta, 2012).

For example, Wróbel (2013), concludes that teachers should be trained to decode emotions and use mood regulation techniques to reduce exhaustion (p. 589). Montgomery and Rupp (2005) concluded that teachers’ coping mechanisms, personality mediators, and emotional intelligence were factors in burnout. In a review, Mérida-López and Extremera (2017) call for training in “emotional intelligence skills as an additional intervention strategy to reduce burnout” (p. 128). In a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of burnout interventions, Maricuțoiu, Sava, and Butta (2014) found cognitive-behavioural, and relaxation techniques reduced emotional exhaustion. Similar results were found by Iancu, Rusu, Măroiu, Păcurar, Maricuțoiu (2017) on the effectiveness of burnout interventions.

One significant limitation of these studies is that they are not longitudinal. It is not possible to conclude if individual interventions sustained resilience and resistance to burnout, or if they were temporary, and burnout later returned. Nor is it possible to isolate psychological variables from contextual ones. In British Columbia, many teachers choose to work part time in order to manage their various roles. For example, I have applied to work share my classroom while I complete my doctoral work in order to have time for my various roles and personal wellness.

It is not clear if participants in the above burnout research used psychological interventions *and* made similar decisions that may have compromised their economic potential but secured more time for their other roles. Most of the psychological perspectives on burnout is done by psychologists and published in psychology journals. This outsider led research exemplifies a lack of nuanced understanding about the research population. From this perspective individual interventions should be contextualized with social structures to more clearly isolate effective responses to burnout.

While I think this literature is useful, and important, I also find it problematic. Psychological approaches often invoke neoliberal individualizing tendencies and overlook social and structural factors that create the conditions for burnout. Indeed, writing a review of burnout research 30 years after her initial research, Maslach (2017) comments on the division of burnout research approaches:

A basic question has been whether burnout reflects something fundamental about a person or whether a focus on the job environment in which the person operates is a better model for understanding burnout. Research provides more support for the latter approach, as the factors that disrupt peoples' relationship with their work are largely situated in the work environment (pp. 50-51).

While most burnout literature discovered and reviewed for this study emphasized individual remedies, I later discovered research including role demands and overload, once I began looking for it specifically (Conley & You, 2009; Moss, 2015; Schwab & Iwanicki, 1981).

Role Theory Perspectives on Burnout.

Studies have considered the impact of overload on teachers with multiple roles such as coaching, support, collaboration and subject teaching (Guinn, 2018; Mullholland, McKinley & Sproule, 2013, Moss, 2015). Santavirta, Solovieva and Theorell (2007) found that high role demands combined with low autonomy synergistically increased exhaustion and risk of burnout.

Using a combination of burnout survey measures, a study of 246 Australian teachers found a strong correlation between role conflict, overload, and burnout (Dorman, 2003). A study of Maylay teachers found that work-family conflict contributed to exhaustion in female teachers (Noor & Zainuddin, 2011). Similarly, a study with 2929 Chinese teachers found that female teachers had poorer health and higher role conflict than male teachers (Yang, Ge, Hu, Chi, & Wang, 2009). Collectively, this research has considered role demands, gender, and emotional exhaustion, however, teachers' caring roles specifically and the competing demands of other roles (social, personal, familial etc.) remain under-considered.

Care work, role conflict and overload provide a more comprehensive understanding of teacher exhaustion than burnout alone. Instead of asking how teachers can manage stress better, the question could be, is there too much of it? Do the demands of caring for 20-30+ young people, caring within a family, and caring for oneself create overload?

In contrast to studies that individualize burnout, additional research suggests that organizational factors are causes of emotional exhaustion and burnout (Aronsson, Theorell, Grape, Hammarström, Hogstedt, Marteinsdottir, & Hall, 2017; Brady, 2017; Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Attrition studies consider factors that drive professionals to leave workplaces and thus problematize an individualized focus in burnout research.

Attrition

In this section I review the themes and concepts found within teacher attrition research. Specifically, I consider workload intensification, autonomy and agency.

Although, sometimes used interchangeably, attrition is distinct from burnout. Whereas burnout is often studied from a psychological perspective, attrition is often studied from economic, organizational, and sociological perspectives with emphases on a loss of human

resources and expertise (Macdonald, 1999). While it has been argued that attrition literature lacks conceptual clarity, working conditions are a central theme in teachers leaving (e.g. Karsenti, & Collin, 2013; Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels, 2007; Lindqvist, Nordänger, & Carlsson, 2014; Macdonald 1999).

Michael Apple (2004) articulated the term intensification to unpack ever-increasing workload demands in education. Intensification reflects a lack of teacher autonomy over role demands and workloads. Intense workloads and lack of autonomy are associated with decreased teacher workplace satisfaction (e.g. Aronsson, Theorell, Grape, Hammarström, Hogstedt, Marteinsdottir, & Hall, 2017; Ballet, Katrijn, Kelchtermans, Geert, & Loughran, John. 2006; Pink, 2009). From another perspective intensification represents increasing role demands and corresponding likelihoods of overload.

In the current British Columbia context, this is evident in curricula reforms that include the addition of new curricular strands, and the added Core Competency dimensions. However, intensification has also occurred in response to an era of provincial financial policies (2002-2016). As local districts struggled to minimize staff reductions, funding for resources decreased. School districts cut back on resource spending (often in order to retain staffing), and teachers are now expected to develop or source out their own, while adhering to copyright laws. With few resources to support classroom and individualized education plans, teachers' workload demands suddenly included finding or making resources. Thus, care work was intensified through larger class sizes and complex compositions, while curricular work was intensified in a resource scarce context and this has enduring impacts.

For example, the new Applied Design Skills and Technology (ADST) curricular strand requires that grade 6 students learn about metalwork, robotics, and textiles, but it does not

provide the resources to teach with, nor suggested unit or lesson designs. How can robotics be taught without robotic resources? In order to meet mandated curricula expectations teachers must find a way. The impact of education policies on students during the labour dispute became increasingly central in public and social media discourses with images of classrooms without books or basic supplies. What was not widely publicized was the increase of teachers' working demands.

In her literature review on teacher attrition Macdonald (1999) notes that there are definitional and methodological problems which interfere with developing a comprehensive understanding of attrition (p. 836). For example, distinctions are not usually made between retirement, death, and out of district movement, while on-call teachers, and teachers returning are also overlooked (p. 836). However, although clear definitions and further data would provide more insights, studies consistently find that workload demands are a key factor in teacher attrition (Karsenti, & Collin, 2013; Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels, 2007; Lindqvist, Nordänger, & Carlsson, 2014; Macdonald 1999).

In a study on experienced teachers, Tye and O'Brien (2002) found that intensification and high stakes testing in the United States, influenced teachers leaving. In a Canada-wide survey, Karsenti and Collin (2013) found that workload and time demands were the most cited reasons for early career teachers leaving. A 2009, study based in Ontario Canada concluded that increased workload demands, paperwork, administrative tasks, and complex classroom compositions were primary reasons for teachers retiring early (Clark & Antonelli, 2009). In this research stress and health concerns demonstrate that teachers experience role overload, wellness penalties and other care penalties such as economic losses from early retirement. Naylor and

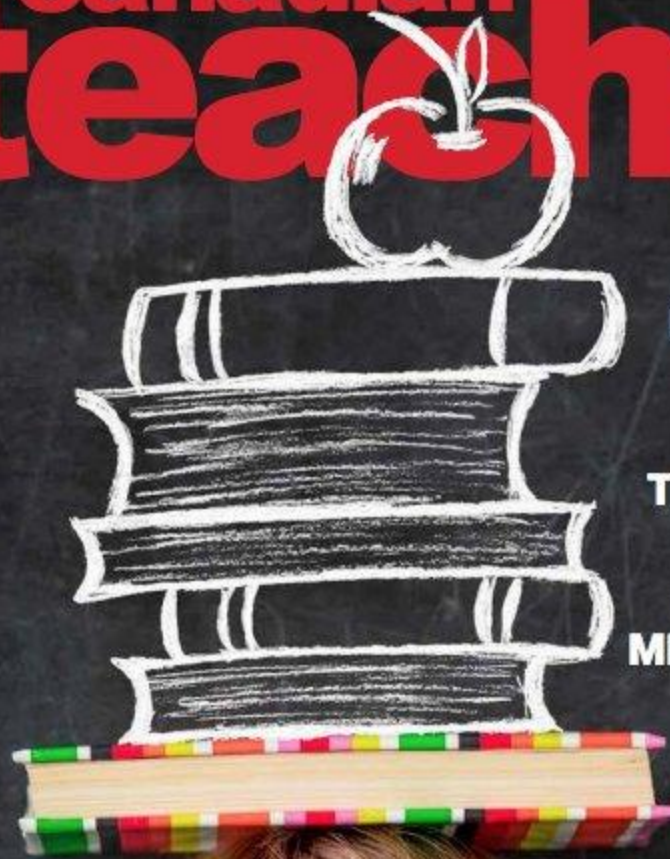
White's (2011) British Columbia study published 10 years after the labour dispute began, found that those likely to consider leaving most often cited workload and stress.

While it is significant that intensification, autonomy, and agency are common themes, attrition research is also incomplete without consideration of care work or role theories. Both burnout research, and attrition research generally lack gender analyses (with some exceptions e.g. Apple, 2004 Ballet, Kelchtermans, Loughran, 2006), or insider perspectives (e.g. the voices of teachers themselves). Because of this, the spectrum of teachers' roles, competing demands and overload remain invisible.

My eyes return to the cover of the fall issue of Canadian Teacher Magazine (2018). There is a young girl on the cover. On her head a stack of books. Five unremarkable thick books atop a colourful one. The girl is looking up through over-sized glasses, with ambivalent eyes, she wears a half-frown. I have become attached to her and keep this magazine visible to remind myself why I care about wellness discourses. What to make of that half-frown? Next to the books on her head is title of the article that initially caught my eye in the staffroom, "Normalizing Mental Health."

canadian teacher

FALL 2018



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What *do* these discourses do? What does ‘normalizing’ mental health mean? Is it really normalizing stress and unwellness? In the following chapter I outline and rationalize the methodology I have chosen to study teachers’ experiences of their care work and their perceptions of wellness. I describe and justify my selected methods followed by a review of ethical considerations. I close Chapter 3: Methodology with limitations and delimitations.

*** Note the references here are part of my dissertation. I have not had time to go through and include those specific to the Literature Review.

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