Chapter 5 Vignette: Teachers’ satisfaction with their work

1. Teachers want to engage students in learning, and gain satisfaction when it occurs

   “I still get tremendous satisfaction working with the kids. I love when I get to experience their ‘ah-ha’ moments.”

2. Teachers gain satisfaction when they feel that they are a positive influence on students’ lives

   “I love working with my students and can’t imagine doing anything else, even though it is a very challenging job. I love knowing that I have made a difference in my students’ lives and helped them to view themselves as capable and successful individuals.”

3. Teachers gain satisfaction when they have positive and productive relations with colleagues and parents

   “I find the atmosphere of working and collaborating with colleagues to be an intense source of satisfaction. I take pride in being a member of a profession where members are strong in their convictions, vocal and self-assured. The dedication I see on a daily basis is very rewarding and inspirational.”

4. For many teachers, satisfaction comes from having autonomy

   “I have freedom to teach…with a great deal of autonomy in regard to subject and curriculum focus, lots of freedom in how to deliver, what to deliver within the curriculum, how to support students in need.”

5. Teaching, for many respondents, was more about passion for teaching than about satisfaction with work

   “I love it every day, collaborating with my colleagues, knowing that what I do every day is important; constantly learning.”

- How do you view the work that you do in terms of both supporting learning and the wider development of students? Is one more important than the other?

- In the BCTF study, working with students was the main cause of satisfaction. Second was working with peers/parents, and autonomy third. Consider each of these areas and share your thoughts on what’s important to you in terms of job satisfaction.

The Worklife of BC teachers in 2009

The ‘vignettes’ are one-page snapshots of themes from different chapters in the BCTF Research study on teachers’ work in BC’s public schools. They may contain report text, charts, tables, or quotes from teachers who completed surveys.

Each vignette is intended to encourage reflection and discussion. Such discussions might take place at a local teacher union executive meeting, in a PSA, or at a professional development session, while a health and safety or bargaining committee might use them to focus on a current issue of concern.

The central idea is to make the research more accessible by offering a way to quickly access and share some of the major themes in the study. The vignettes can be read in minutes and might be used as a focus for a 10–30 minute discussion.

The Worklife of BC Teachers in 2009 study can be found on the BCTF website, and each chapter or the whole report can be read or downloaded. The worklife web page can be found online at: http://www.bctf.ca/TeacherWorklife.aspx.

It includes other Canadian and international worklife studies, sections on work/life balance, articles and videos on stress in modern society, as well as BCTF programs to address work/life balance and stress.

We welcome any feedback or suggestions on either these vignettes or any aspect of the study and can be reached at: researchteam@bctf.ca.

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