Wayfaring:
A Phenomenology of International Teacher Education

by
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Abstract

Becoming human is at the heart of education worth the while. In an age of accountability, tensions arise between teachers, parents, and policy makers, each of whom express markedly different ideas of what is most educationally worthwhile. It is in teacher education programs, however, where I suggest that becoming human can be cultivated with a variety of ends in mind and where the overriding aim can be to enliven a more socially just world. I propose that international placements provide unique opportunities for fostering the kind of teacher identity formation that puts pedagogical relationality at the forefront of our personal, interpersonal, and social commitments.

I seek to understand how international practica are experienced by student teachers. What unique characteristics, formative of pedagogical practices, does an international teacher education placement for pre-service teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico, offer? Participant responses and my own stories reveal the phenomenon of discomfort as pedagogically transformative. Weaving these stories together as an account of teacher ‘wayfaring,’ I show how the discomfort experienced internationally can be very different from the way it is experienced in local and familiar teaching contexts. Discomfort in international teacher education ‘wayfaring’ offers the very possibilities for pedagogical growth that are in keeping with the fuller human becoming of students whose lives these novice teachers will touch.

This phenomenological study contributes to the conversation about the importance of international placements in teacher education and the understandings gained have implications for programs locally and internationally. It addresses the tension expressed by those who describe their international placement as “the hardest” and “the best thing I’ve ever done.” I transpose dispositional leanings and learnings from time spent with a cohort of student teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico to the local settings in which I, as a school principal, am working in British Columbia.

My commitment to phenomenological inquiry and a lean into discomfort have rejuvenated my liveliness and life practices as a traveller, educator, and researcher. Beginning teachers who embrace discomfort also learn that disruptions may well indicate something worth the while is happening that is worth leaning into. Their wayfaring can be pedagogically transformative.
Keywords: phenomenology; teacher education; international placements; wayfaring; discomfort; becoming; pedagogy
Dedication

Jillian – who wayfares this meshwork alongside me.

Joe and Susan – who opened the door to the world.

Chloe and Keili – who ground me in the present.

Teachers and students everywhere – who lean in.
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Thank you to all my fellow travellers who inspire, provoke and hold my hand on my journey to becoming more at home in the world.

I can't express enough gratitude for the love and support of my family – those with me, those who came before me, and those who have left for other worldly journeys. You have paved my way, blocked my way, and dared me to keep going. I am me because I belong to you.

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I could not have completed this study without the support of the International Teacher Education Module – Mexico. Thank you to their Faculty Associate Omar Núñez-Méndez who introduced me to his Oaxacan community and to the teachers and children who welcomed me into their classrooms and neighbourhoods. To the student teachers in the 2015 module – thank you for openly sharing your experiences and feelings. This is your story too.

To nerd-a-palooza: Dave, Jacky, Jade, Lee, Maureen, Poh, and Tamara – thank you for sharing your strengths and vulnerabilities so intensely, for the best potluck dinners ever, and for the unconditional love. Namaste. And, to the Think Tank – Jillian, Jennifer, Judith and Randy for untangling and entangling with curiosity, enthusiasm, and joy.

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>Faculty Associate</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>International Teacher Education Module</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITEMites</td>
<td>Participants in the International Teacher Education Module</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>Professional Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFU</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>School Associate</td>
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Preface

Photograph:

Riding the Rails
Photo: Jillian Lewis, Riding the Rails, 2011. Reproduced with permission.

Observation: Train tracks widen at the nose of glasses hinting at what is coming (future), and narrow toward the back showing what has gone (past), tracks are framed in lenses (perspective of the wearer) holding a host of moments. Image of greenery alongside rail line ahead is blurry…a suggestion of an unknown future folding into a just known past. Greenery at back of glasses is clearer (hindsight). Brightly lit face and background tell of a sunny day. Wrinkles around eyes suggest some experience in life! The wearer appears to be looking forward but eyes are hidden behind glasses. An observer can’t know thoughts, experiences, or a life lived, can only imagine what the wearer is thinking, where she has been, where she is going, why she is moving. Without conversation she remains unknown. What is missing from the photo? Where has she
been? Where is she going? What moves her to travel? What caused the photographer to take this photo? What wonder swept her away?

**Reflection:** The woman in the photograph is me, train travelling in the Netherlands eight years ago. I only know that because my photo software stores such information. What does this photo reveal about me? I am able to afford travel far from my home suggesting the privilege of wealth and time. That I am travelling might indicate a curiosity about the world, a desire to see outside of my everyday reality. In the photo, with a limited view of my face, I can assume a relaxed demeanour, my brow is not furrowed, worry or discomfort is not visibly present. I am leaning in, leaning into the window to see all that I can see. This photo captures a moment that represents my moving along. Living, learning, meeting up with fellow travellers, I cannot remain who I was before having had these experiences. I make my way, find a way; sometimes my way is made for me. Always I am in progress, in motion, becoming.

And then it hits me and I giggle. I happen upon this photograph while train travelling between Utrecht and Amsterdam. How serendipitous that I am reflecting on a picture of train travel in the Netherlands while on a train in the Netherlands while working on a dissertation about wayfaring (Ingold, 2000)! How do past travel experiences inform current travel experiences? How do they contribute to my daily living at home, to my becoming? Trains travel from one destination to the next, transporting passengers and goods. But what if this travel is considered in the context of histories and relationships? Our thinking shifts from point to point transport to a movement along Ingold’s (2000) meshwork where entanglements of lives are lived. Consider a student who travels from one teacher to the next from subject to subject or year to year. What if we think about that student, beyond the walls of the classroom, as a child with a history and a future whose ancestral knots landed her here at the same time as the teacher? With this perspective I am now in relationship with this student. She is not a job to do but a thread, a knot of her own, entangled with mine, on the meshwork where we happen to find ourselves, in the same place just now. Might I see her with a past, with entanglements of her own, imagine her in a future, and relate to her in the present within a vast horizon as the backdrop for my contact with her? What kind of teacher might I be for this student with pedagogical con-tact such as this? What if this perspective taking were introduced to beginning teachers? How might the philosophy and language of wayfaring provide an informative lens for those who are setting out to teach?
In the public schools in which I teach, educators tend to see within the confines of our physical spaces and within the perceived confines of the curriculum and what we think a teacher should be. Deleuze’s (1987) overcoded striations are at play as we *perform teacher* in expected ways. This keeps us safely within the parameters of public expectation, perhaps contributing to the very slow evolution of formal schooling.

Looking at this photograph, memories of previous sojourns are quickly recalled, seemingly all at once. I am eleven years old watching my cousin cook dinner over a pit fire in my Nonna’s backyard while wondering how her life in Italy can be so different from mine in Canada. I am a visiting teacher listening to Michael explain the water cycle in his mud alley classroom in Ngombe Compound in Lusaka and wondering what this education will mean for his life chances. I see Maria empowering women and girls in Ecuador in ways that show me the possibility ignited by education. Listening to Najia, an exchange student from Iran graduating from a Burnaby secondary school, describe her dreams of becoming both a doctor and a mother of ten, my perceptions of freedom and success are troubled. These living memories flash like the scenery through the train window and I want to slow them down, to consider each one singly as well as their entanglements with one other. In my sunglasses of nine years ago, I anticipate journeys to come as flowing from journeys past. *What if this notion of wayfaring became a model for beginning teachers to discover themselves in relation with others? What if wayfaring became a way to talk about evolving pedagogies?*

The closed line of the lenses frames what at first appears as a moment, but really it is all of time – past, present, and future entangled. *Kairos* offers his fleeting presence and I feel the rush of an instant ripe with possibility. It is a beautiful rhizomatic, wayfaring duration of time – in a moment of insight. My travels, my teaching and learning intermingle in a flash of becoming and I take a breath fuelling a joyful sigh of relief. I really am never finished, I am always becoming and it is in this in-between space I thrive, even when a little bit scared. Perhaps that is where learners thrive, in the place between, a little out of place. It takes a courageous educator to live in the entanglements and I strive to be that educator. (Personal journal, March 2018)
Framing the Study

I’d like to begin with a strong, though hardly contested, statement: education is a relational endeavour (Freire, 1972; Noddings, 1992; Lingis, 2005; Jardine, 2012; van Manen, 2015). For all the stakeholders and participants: students, parents, teachers, policy makers, curriculum writers, and philosophers, there is no way to consider education as non-relational, as to educate, or to “bring up” (Educate, n.d.), must occur with or between someone and/or something. In formal settings, like the elementary schools in which I spend my professional life, one finds students, teachers, books, computers, tables and chairs, rock samples, fish, plants, and the like, each and all in relation, effecting each other visibly or invisibly. This broad brushstroke comment on relationality in education is just to suggest to the reader that at a very basic, empirical level, my statement can be held true. However, the relational endeavour to which I ascribe and aspire is much more complex and entangled than this.

This may be the only claim I make so confidently and directly for this is a phenomenological inquiry, a wondering and questioning, about the relational qualities that make International Teacher Education Programs unique in comparison to those where novice teachers remain in their home communities to meet requirements for certification in British Columbian schools. The rationale for the associated methodology of this inquiry and the format of the study itself will be presented in Chapter Two. Here I will share some of the wonders that swept me up (van Manen, 2014), shedding light on how questions arose along my way and invited a phenomenological attitude.

In my current relational understandings about education there are three main concepts guiding my explorations: wayfaring (Ingold, 2000), becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), and the potentially formative experience of discomfort. For clarity, I will present each of these ideas separately even though they are always intertwined. The first two, wayfaring and becoming, will respond to education as an ongoing journey and the third, discomfort, will speak to the pedagogically formative experiences available in an International Teacher Education Program. Personal narratives will be offered to tie all three ideas together to shape this dissertation.

Chapter One addresses how this study came to be and further explains wayfaring, becoming and discomfort using relevant academic literature and four
personal experiences as exemplars. Further, I show how wayfaring with discomfort can be in service to teacher becoming.

Chapter Two addresses the methodology that chose me. A review of the tradition of phenomenology is presented along with the structure of the study using a curation of photographs as a metaphor. Details of the study’s purpose and research design are also included in this chapter along with some possible limitations.

Chapter Three offers insight into the popular discourse about discomfort as well as an in-depth look at pedagogies of discomfort found in academic literature. With a well-rounded picture of discomfort, its formative potential in teacher education is considered.

In Chapters Four through Six, I show how discomfort arises along the journey of becoming teacher in an international setting. When responding to interview questions about significant, potentially transformative experiences in international education, participant recollections included discomfort as the change agent for their personal and professional identities and practices. Close reading of the interviews revealed three main areas of discomfort, namely: language, community, and learning about and practicing teaching. Most beginning teachers experience some discomfort when learning about and practicing teaching but, as I will explore in what follows, discomforts associated with language and community are experienced more urgently and deeply when engaged in an international program. I maintain that these discomforts, especially as they arise with a limited ability to communicate with words and through experiences lived in unfamiliar settings, facilitate teacher becoming in a way that a local practicum might not be able to. An international setting for teacher education would appear to offer a unique landscape within which to become culturally sensitive, globally aware, and interculturally competent. These are outcomes desired by international engagement projects (ACDE, 2013). More importantly, an international setting offers a landscape for becoming human and becoming teacher.

Of course, the discomforts arising with respect to language, community and the processes of learning to teach occur simultaneously, even rhizomatically, but they will be parcelled out in order to dwell thoughtfully in the background and foreground of each consideration. In a foreign country language presents a diminished understanding; a
visceral and immediate barrier to being with another, and an unfamiliar community inspires questions about one’s own culture, beliefs, and practices at home. Learning to teach is always a challenge and is made even more uncomfortable in the context of a language barrier and conflicting cultural practices, for example the ways in which students and teachers “should” conduct themselves in a classroom. Conversations reveal that discomfort, typically experienced as an obstacle to be avoided, came to be seen as a generative and worthwhile feeling. Further, a discussion linking discomfort to wayfaring and becoming will thread throughout using Ingold’s (2013) wayfaring as a conceptual frame.

Chapter Seven takes a short detour to consider who typically chooses to participate in an international teaching module. Questions posed in the literature about participants being pre-disposed to the goals of the program are addressed here.

Chapter Eight brings us back to the curation of experiences over time and study participants illuminate the importance of remembering where they have been when moving and dwelling in new territories. This notion of movement is further taken up in Chapter Nine as a way of learning, teaching, and living.

Finally, Chapter Ten outlines implications for continued wayfaring and Chapter Eleven provides a whimsical closing. For now, let’s jump into the middle of things, the entanglement of disruptions and wonders that captured my attention and brought me here.
Chapter 1.

Swept Away

1.1. Wonders

Disruptions somehow give us the persistent pleasure of trying to sort out what was calling for our attention. (Saevi, 2013, p. 6)

Is all learning a stepping away from home, that is, a tentative exploration away from what is familiar, to a place, an understanding, or way of being, that is at first unfamiliar even uncomfortable, but then, as we come to know the route, the space, its materials and markings, the place is gradually familiar, then a home-stead, a home sweet home? This wonder has been ignited by travels taken and relationships forged, specifically with students and educators, in far off places. My travels and encounters with international education have offered opportunities to venture away from home, to face unfamiliarity, and with a mindful turn become increasingly at home in a world shared with other beings.

What can I sense away from home that helps me to be increasingly at home no matter where or with whom I find myself? What do I bring from my home, with me, to unfamiliar territories to help me to occupy, dwell in, the space between home and away, and that might offer something to the places and people I meet along the way? Perhaps my question is about how learning and becoming takes us away from and then back to ourselves, to what is at first unknown, then tentatively known and then, more confidently owned or understood. Perhaps there is potential for becoming whether feeling uncomfortable in my own skin at home or uncomfortable with places and people internationally, or both. Wherever or however I am situated with myself there is always an entangling with a real or perceived Other as I encounter the world. At any given time my relationship with discomfort is the fulcrum that determines a tip toward paralysis or growth.

My response to these wonderings is represented here as a pedagogical wayfaring (Ingold, 2013). There is movement in and out of experiences, unraveling understandings that knot themselves in pivotal moments and stories. Each story takes
me away from home, from my familiar body registers and geographic locales, away from my often blind, privileged view. Spending time with moments, holding them still so I might think about them and feel them can allow new thoughts, feelings and understandings to arise. Inside these encounters, at home and away, lies the potential for powerful pedagogical practices to emerge, and the lived experience of teaching and learning becomes, in the Deleuzian sense (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), a more attentive, attuned, and tact-full dwelling (Ingold, 2000). It is the cultivation of this particular pedagogy of practice (van Manen, 2014) that I wish to further explore in the context of International Teacher Education.

What do student teachers in International Teacher Education Programs claim to return home with that makes their initial practicum experience and presumably their future practice as educators different from those of their local counterparts? What is it that International Teacher Education programs claim to achieve and are these goals realized? I wonder about the ways discomforting or awkward experiences away from home, where usual assumptions and practices must be left behind, can be noticed and nurtured and, in turn, inform local praxis. These practical and programmatic questions, alongside personal experiences abroad, piqued my curiosity and led me to spend time with Simon Fraser University’s International Teacher Education Module (ITEM) when it was situated in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Given that teaching is indeed a practice, and classroom experience is a powerful teacher over time, it seems to me that time is needed to linger with such wonderings for they are worth the while (Jardine, 2012). What might observations and conversations about learning gained in an international program reveal over time? That is, how might novice teachers currently immersed in a practicum away from home describe the impact of their international experiences on their emerging teacher-ness? What impact might recent ITEM graduates, or those who have gained several years of experience since their international teacher education program, relay? It is in the stories of beginning and experienced teachers, in the way of stop-time photography, that my wonderings may be more fully explored. A collection of telling observations, interviews and narratives reveals the interplay between impressions and expressions of moments in time at various stages of teacher development showing the impact of international teacher education in teacher becoming. The ways in which these stories will be collected and curated is discussed in Chapter Two.
My own experiences have shown me that dwelling with decisive moments invites the reconfiguration of a past and a redirection of a future. Collections of experiences contribute to who we are becoming in any given moment, in any given place. Lessons learned early in a career, folded into those learned later on, inform present day decisions. Experiences today will fold into those of yesterday and, no doubt, inform praxis tomorrow and beyond. Upon reflection one can “become aware of many dimensions of an experience that were, in fact, manifested but somewhat not attuned to, or at least not foregrounded in awareness” (Willis, 2001, p. 6). I wonder about the ways decisive moments in international experiences might inform a wayfaring notion of teacher development.

1.2. **Wayfaring**

The growth and development of the person...is to be understood relationally as a movement along a way of life, conceived not as the enactment of a corpus of rules and principles (or a culture) received from predecessors, but as the negotiation of a path through the world. (Ingold, 2011, p. 146)

I was introduced to Tim Ingold’s work early in my doctoral program and was excited by the applicability of his thinking about *making* (Ingold, 2013) to my own conversations about educational practice. His references to Deleuze’s and Guattari’s (1987) *lines of flight* and Kandinsky’s *lines* (Railing, 1998) resonated with the ways in which I am learning to move along as an educator, freeing myself from some of the rigid structures of schooling. When I read “where the reach of the imagination meets the friction of materials” (Ingold, 2013, p. 73) I knew his thinking had a place in my evolving philosophy of education and pedagogical practice as this is the meeting place in which I most often find myself.

Ingold defines making as “the process of correspondence: not the imposition of preconceived form on raw material substance but, the drawing out or bringing forth of potentials immanent in a world of becoming” (Ingold, 2013, p. 31). This is the art of teaching – drawing out, bringing forth potential. This correspondence, this mutual responsiveness between teacher and student takes time. I am reminded of dancing, in time, during a moment in time, with time to spare, and with a desired partner, over time. Dancing is a correspondence between partners and between the music and the dancers. Teaching is a correspondence between the teacher and student, students and students,
teachers and students with curriculum and materials. The pedagogical relationship, like the steps in dance, is a correspondence that becomes something more than its technical elements as it leads to a shared knowing that makes the next move visible. Ingold speaks of making this way:

The process of making is not so much an assembly as a procession, not a building up from discrete parts into a hierarchically organized totality but a carrying on — a passage along a path in which every step grows from the one before into the one following, on an itinerary that always overshoots its destinations (Ingold, 2013, p. 45).

Is this not what learning is — a carrying on of what came before along a path of what might be?

Continued reading revealed words that sing to me: dwelling, inhabiting, corresponding, kinship, and wayfaring. These are active, living words that inspire a particular mindset and movement as an educator. They fly in the face of policy, procedure, outcome, measurement and expectation. Those are flat words lacking inspiration and deadening imagination. They are nouns, things set in place, fixed. These educational and curricular words contrast with the verbal, moving, living words of pedagogical relationality. Ingold’s words offer a way of living a life, a way of engaging in schooling, that one can “plunge into, become an active part of, and experience its pulsation with all our senses” (Kandinsky, 1982, p. 532). I am reminded of Smith’s (2014) vital contact where moments are rippling with “bursts of energy, rushes of excitement, surges of feeling, swellings and risings of joy” (p. 234), animating encounters. These are the kinds of moments that in-spire, breathing life into educational settings, honouring and revitalizing our potentials. These are moments to be found while wayfaring along the path of life, in pedagogical relationships, where sparkling eyes meet and bodies thrill with the intangible connection of shared knowing and deep understanding, and when our human experience is affirmed, no matter where we find ourselves.

Ingold’s wayfaring can be briefly encapsulated as “the fundamental mode by which living beings inhabit the earth” (Ingold, 2011, p. 12). A wayfarer makes her way through the world leaving traces, generating and regenerating a map along the way. Such a map is “open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 12). She moves
not from point to point, as in lateral transportation, but along and through the world, creating herself and the path as she moves. It is the *movement* that blazes the trail and “along such paths, lives are lived, skills developed, observations made and understandings grown” (Ingold, 2011, p. 12). This movement is a (re)making of the self as one keenly attends to the world.

Ingold (2011) discusses wayfaring along a meshwork of knots. As people and things engage with the world and cross each other’s paths, knots are created in a meshwork of becoming, entangling and untangling. Ingold distinguishes clearly between a *meshwork* and what is commonly known as a *network* and this clarification is necessary when considering wayfaring as formative of teacher development. While a network emphasizes departure and destination points to be travelled between and arrived at, a meshwork emphasizes the journey between and through the points, or as Ingold calls them, knots. Unlike network points, meshwork knots are never destinations predetermined and to be reached, but rather entanglements of lives. “The ‘web of life’ is precisely that: not a network of connected points, but a meshwork of interwoven lines” (Ingold, 2011, p. 62). We are always moving (corporeally) through and beyond our current time and place in relation with the world. In wayfaring we “enter the grain of the world’s becoming” (Ingold, 2013, p. 25).

Ingold drew from phenomenologists like Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and took up commonalities between them. For example, “life…is not the revelation of pre-existent form but the very process wherein form is generated” and “it is through being inhabited…that the world becomes a meaningful environment for people” (Ingold, 2000, p. 173). What then might wayfaring mean in an educational context, as a form of teacher development or teacher becoming? In wayfaring, “it is the movement itself that counts, not the destinations it connects” (Ingold, 2013, p. 162). Beginning teachers are regularly asked to plan a lesson, debrief with an experienced mentor, and then make changes to improve future practice. They are expected to reflect and respond in ways that continually improve their ability to provide instruction and assess student progress. Their own experiences as students, their new experiences as teachers, readings on curriculum and methodology, and the current events of the world collide with the tone and expectations of the classrooms in which they are tested. A beginning teacher is understandably stuck in transport, trying to get from here to there, from student teacher
to certified teacher. But the real learning, the rich becoming, is in the wayfaring, in finding a:

way through: not to reach a specific destination or terminus but to keep on going. Though he may pause to rest, even returning repeatedly and circuitously to the same place to do so, every period of rest punctuates an ongoing movement. For wherever he is, and so long as life goes on, there is somewhere further he can go. Along the way, events take place, observations are made, and life unfolds (Ingold, 2010, p. S126).

It is among and between the relationships offering themselves, as they are being created, along the meshwork that one wayfares or negotiates a path through the world. Wayfarers, inhabitants, leave traces along the path for themselves and others to notice, follow, and return to. Turning and re-turning to captured moments, particularly those that catch our breath, allows wayfarers to see what they perhaps hadn’t before, to consider the richness of the entanglements and to bring new depth and meaning to events past and present. One can now imagine the formative potential in teacher education programs facilitating the wayfaring of beginning teachers.

To exemplify such movement, this wayfaring, I will present two personal narratives that reveal my becoming, making my way in the world, constructing knowledge, “trailing [a] history behind [me] as the past presses against the present” (Bergson, 1911, p. 135).

But first, an explanation of Deleuze’s and Guattari’s *becoming* is offered.

### 1.3. Becoming

I am reminded of Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) ‘becoming’ when considering wayfaring. Indeed, when presenting his relational model in *The Perception of the Environment*, Ingold (2000) drew from Deleuze and Guattari’s figure of the rhizome, “a dense and tangled cluster of interlaced threads or filaments, any point in which can be connected to any other” (p. 140). The rhizome and the meshwork have much in common. A rhizome does not follow a linear growth pattern but responds to its environment by creating and connecting roots and shoots to ensure the health of the plants it supports. It is re-generative and therefore could be said to have no beginning and no end. Grossberg (2013) defines becoming as the “space of the in-between” (p. 6). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe a rhizome as “always in the middle, between
things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (p. 26). The rhizome “implies a world that is dynamic, ever-changing and always becoming in a never-ending process” (MacNaughton, 2004, p. 93). Teachers and students are always in relationship and process with each other and the things around them, and in “this collection of forces … lives are full of potentials” (Mercieca, 2011, p. 45).

One must be careful not to use the rhizome as a template for curriculum planning or model of learning, for it is not a static structure but rather always in the process of becoming something else. “It is in the *and*, always *in between*. A rhizome connects any point to any other point. It has a relational ontology, not a substantive one” (Humphreys, 2013, p. 192). The importance of Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) rhizome for me is its turn toward non-linear ways of learning, teaching, and living. As an educator, I wish to inhabit the place of vital contact (Smith, 2014) and avoid the danger of being seen, and of seeing myself, as a product of the “performative discourses [that] take away the onus from the teacher and place their intellectual maturity, judgment and morality into the abstract, depersonalised language that forms such discourses” (Mercieca, 2011, p. 44).

As challenging as it is to understand the rhizomatic writings and philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, their work is one of potential and possibility, and its relational emphasis is hopeful for the educational endeavour. To become is to have an openness to and engagement with the world. It is to live in and through and around, wayfaring along the meshwork developing knowledge in relation with others, human and others of differently animated kinds. “Moving *is* knowing. The wayfarer knows as he goes along. Proceeding on his way, his life unfolds: he grows older and wiser” (Ingold, 2010, p. S134).

Paths, or lines of flight (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), entangle in knots in a generative process that encompasses one’s past as it propels one forward. Everyone and everything is moving. Inhabiting experiences, reflecting on their meaning, at the time of their occurrence and/or in the present, with careful consideration and a soft gaze, pausing time and opening space for “the becoming of our life” (Henry, 2009, p. 83), emerging pedagogies may be seen and considered as formative amidst the pressures of curriculum delivery and instructional efficacy. Considering such moments, as if in the
golden hour\(^1\), in international teaching experiences offers relational understandings that may not be available in one’s home setting.

It strikes me as I write that wayfaring and becoming have been presented in a soft light, with warmth and blanket-stitched edges. On the contrary, if one is to travel this world in the company of others, then there will be some challenging times. Some might say that such times are the most formative, when new experiences and relationships challenge past thinking and ways of being. Levinas (1987) might call this _being faced_ by the other. Lingis (2005) has said “for me to approach you is to trouble you” (p. 454). We are faced and troubled many times a day as teachers and students. Such is the nature of human relationships and indeed educational settings. We have, at our disposal, deadening policies, procedures and rules that give us an opportunity to engage from a distance, if at all. We could, and often do, keep our discomfort at bay. What then makes wayfaring and becoming worth the while in the face of discomfort?

### 1.4. Discomfort

To a certain extent, each homecomer has tasted the magic fruit of strangeness, be it sweet or bitter [and upon return home] we find that the old accustomed surroundings have received an added meaning derived from and based upon our experiences during our absence. (Schuetz, 1945, p. 375)

Boler (1997), Zembylas & McGlynn (2012), Cutri & Whiting (2015), Howard (2015) and Staley & Leonardi (2016) have examined the impact of vulnerability on participants in international service learning projects and on novice teachers and teacher educators in international education programs. They suggest that vulnerability has the potential to open or close our ability to interact with others. The experience of vulnerability may be, in certain places and times, too risky for one to see the promise of living through an uncomfortable experience. The research shows that, often times, participants and group leaders are unprepared for the feelings of discomfort and vulnerability that arise. There is something about unfamiliar places that causes us to question “those very things that are beyond question and taken for granted by those who have become complacently at home in their surroundings” (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 22). International teaching experiences are away from home. Our bodies are

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\(^1\) A term used by photographers to describe the light just before sunrise or just after sunset.
symptomatic of this geographical, cultural and familial distance. We may feel frustrated, anxious, and even afraid as we encounter new places and faces. We may become homesick.

A focus on wayfaring and becoming could be helpful in embracing the discomforting feelings associated with unfamiliarity and uncertainty. Knowing we are travelling along a collective meshwork, we can breathe in and out of our experiences remembering that “knowing is a process of active following, of going along” (Ingold, 2013, p. 1). We can acknowledge that discomfort is present and ask: what is it like to live with discomfort right now? What is it like for me? What might it be like for my students? How are these uncomfortable feelings paralyzing or propelling me? In the next section, examples of discomfort felt away from home will be shown as pedagogically formative at home. The stories exemplify the _active following_ described by Ingold.

### 1.5. Discomfort, Becoming and Wayfaring as Pedagogically Informative

The arrival of strangers can interrupt all those hard-to-utter familiarities that define one’s home, one’s place, one’s surroundings. (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 23)

To examine wayfaring and becoming through discomfort as pedagogically formative, two knots on the meshwork will be re-collected and reflected upon. I say knots on the meshwork, rather than on my meshwork, as I am never alone along the path of life. I am always already in the world. Without the entanglements of people, things, circumstances, and environments there wouldn’t be any knots to consider. Wayfaring and becoming are always relational. In wayfaring, “persons are conceived as passing along lines of movement and exchanging substance at the places where their respective paths cross or commingle” (Ingold, 2000, p. 145). Biehl & Locke (2010) interpret Deleuze’s becoming as “open to new relations – camaraderie – and trajectories” (p. 317).

The following knots are not meant to represent all educators with all children in all contexts. There is no attempt to generalize beyond the specifics of this situation with this educator and these children. The anecdote is meant to bracket an everyday lived experience in order to consider its significance as formative of practice. Bracketing,
fundamental to phenomenological inquiry, is “brushing away, or reducing what prevents us from making primitive or originary contact with the primal concreteness of lived reality” (van Manen, 2014, p. 41). As these are knots interpreted by me alone, I do not attempt to speak for the wayfaring and becoming of others, but only to offer an entry point for considering wayfaring, becoming, and discomfort as pedagogically informative.

Knot 1:

Cabeza, hombros, rodillas, pies, rodillas, pies, rodillas, pies.
Cabeza, hombros, rodillas, pies, ojos, orejas, boca, nariz.
Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes, knees and toes.
Head and shoulders, knees and toes, eyes, ears, mouth and nose.

Giggling, an Ecuadorian boy, Jorge (pseudonym), and Canadian woman, Maureen, sing together in a stilted imitation of each other’s languages. Pointing to body parts, simultaneously slowing down and speeding up to support each other’s learning, they stand shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee, toe to toe, face to face, rejoicing in their joint success. The rhythm and repetition of the song affords accessibility and invites participation. Warmed by the sun, bonded in song and co-movement, a relationship is forged in sparkling eyes and face-splitting smiles. Laughter weaves the space between them and draws others in to the circle. Children and adults of two countries play together. Que está pasando?

Knot 2:

It’s 8:55 on a rainy Burnaby morning and I’ve just been informed the Kindergarten teacher is stuck in traffic. Excusing myself from a meeting, I quickly scan my bookshelf, and recalling “cabeza, hombros,” pull a story full of rhyme and gesture. Entering the classroom, book clutched to my chest, I am greeted with: “Where is Ms. Tomás (pseudonym) and why are you here?” Feeling slightly uncomfortable with four and five year olds, I don my most confident smile, along with a superwoman pose, and reply: we are going to sing! Practicing the pattern together, buoyed by the rhythm, we help each other remember sounds to chant at just the right moment. We giggle when we stumble, and surprise and pride take turns lighting our faces as we bring the story to life. What is happening?
What is happening?

Eye-to-eye contact represents the most perfect reciprocity in the entire field of human relationships. (Simmel, 1969, p. 146)

Until the recognizable rhythm of “cabeza, hombros” rang out, the members of Bella Vista Baja, and those of us from B.C.’s Lower Mainland, looked at each other awkwardly, briefly making eye contact and then looking away, shielding our discomfort from each other. Even with a common purpose, to construct a community school, we were socially awkward in each other’s company. Knowing little about our ways of life and without a shared language, it was challenging to relate to and with one another. But, in a few moments of song, we became connected, related, and our downcast eyes lifted to one another as we returned to our communal work, labeling our environment, in Spanish and English, creating a corporeal and linguistic bridge. “Ordinary living persons contribute reciprocally to the conditions of each other’s growth as embodied beings” (Ingold, 2011, p. 144).

It is that joyful relatedness shared in Ecuador that I desired with the Kindergarten class. As an educator I know all too well the importance of capturing attention and forging a connection to ensure a smooth beginning to the day. Re-collecting my international experience provided clues for my unexpected moment with a group of four and five year olds at home. As an experienced teacher I can easily make a list of all the literacy and physical skills that were attended to in our activity together, but, really, none of those mattered at the time. What mattered was the connection between us, created in shared rhythm and gestures, to move through an unfamiliar situation. If learning is a continual moving into new knowing, new ways of being, moving from what we don’t know and cannot yet do, we might often find ourselves in a state of awkwardness, seeking comfort and companionship. In relationship we become one for the other (Levinas, 1987).

Could this have happened the other way around? That is, could I have selected a book of gesture and rhyme to work with a class of Kindergarten students at home and then responded in kind, with kinship, when faced with social discomfort in Ecuador? Possibly. But, I am not sure the discomfort would have been felt or recalled so viscerally. At home I rely on common language, familiar resources, and a clearly defined relationship between principal and student to make my way. I may not have considered
my home practice as transposable to an unfamiliar setting. I do not speak Spanish, and the children of Baja Bella Vista do not know me as a teacher but as a visitor, just another tourist. There is something about the starkness, the seeming unyielding of a strange situation that pounds the chest and bathes the skin in the sweat of social awkwardness. This bodily response turns my suddenly clumsy limbs and gawky face away when really I wish to move toward the Other. The relief of the song and its familiar gestures unwinds the tension and invites the body to step into the comfort of connection. We have broken through the perceived rigidity, the discomfort, one might say the feeling of being stark-naked, stripped of the social and cultural clothing worn to protect us, and moved through life, along a path to becoming more at home.

With the young boy in Ecuador, we moved along together, “companions draw[ing] each other’s attention, through speech and gesture” (Ingold, 2000, p. 146), knotting along the meshwork. In the Kindergarten classroom, I followed a path, remembering the way, and kept going. I did not precisely replicate what happened in Ecuador but kept going with a “good measure of creative improvisation” (Ingold, 2000, p. 147). Awkwardness allows for a stark contrast not felt at home and so this international experience was, for me, informative, even transformative.

1.6. Wayfaring continued…

What distinguishes the expert from the novice, then, is not that the mind of the former is more richly furnished with content … but a greater sensitivity to cues in the environment and a greater capacity to respond to these cues. The difference, if you will, is not how much you know but how well you know. (Ingold, 2010, p. S134)

As a seasoned teacher, principal and teacher educator, I am increasingly convinced that wayfaring and becoming in the company of others can be pedagogically formative. As a student of phenomenology – an observer, reader, and writer along a meshwork of life fully lived – I have chosen a path of inquiry, alongside others, allowing myself to be swept up by wonder. As I write this chapter, I am reminded of two knots recently experienced that reveal the disruption of the strange as formative in the familiar. Like sifting through photographs, images of the past come into focus when held next to images of the present day. “Experience has its proper fulfillment not in definitive knowledge but in the openness to experiences that is made possible by experience itself” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 355). I am, we are, never finished.
Knots 3: becoming teacher-educator

Thursday morning in an Oaxacan classroom sounds with “Maestra, Maestra!” as children enter the classroom and clamour for their teacher’s attention. Words and bodies bump into each other as the school day comes to life. Moving gracefully amongst her estudiantes the teacher acknowledges requests with gestures, expressions and brief conversation. With joyful communion, teachers and students tell stories, share laughter and exchange hugs. I am struck by the intimacy of their interactions. Que está pasando?

As a model for professionalism at home, I wonder what is being modeled for our novice teachers when I revel in what could be perceived as disrespect on the part of the children and a lack of control on the part of the teacher. I am aware that many practicum teachers (school associates) at home would not likely tolerate such familiarity, noise or movement. What might future conversations about “instructional control” sound like after having had this international experience together? Perhaps a pedagogical lean toward wayfaring and becoming can assist.

Knot 4: becoming-principal

At home, making my morning rounds greeting parents, teachers and children, I notice two classrooms where students are not settled into instructional activity. They are wandering, talking, eating, and speed stacking. Amidst the noise and seeming chaos, one teacher is engaged in conversation with Sarah (pseudonym), who is animatedly sharing what she learned in last night’s dance class. My shoulders jump to my earlobes as I register a late start to the day and wonder what parents must be thinking about the lack of control. What is happening?

It takes but a moment for my shoulders to return to their natural position and for my body to recall the communion of the Oaxacan classroom recently visited. There was an alegría de vivir in the room and a feeling of: we are in this together and isn’t it wonderful? We do not have an English expression for this phrase but French speakers call it joie de vivre. Directly translated, joy for life, was recalled, a joy in human connection, communion, and fellowship.

Again, discomfort embodied away from home informed a practice at home. Rather than collecting and directing children toward their seats in preparation for the
day’s first lesson, I engaged with them, moved among them, talking and speed stacking cups! Alongside them I asked: what is this playtime for? Shouldn’t you be working? To which I received, in a chorus of shouting voices, to be heard over my enthusiastic, if uncoordinated, stacking attempts: it’s for us, it’s for getting ready, it’s for building relationships and getting into learning mode, and finally – why are you here Ms. Driussi? Well…

**Revisiting the Knots**

Dwelling in the world, in short is tantamount to the ongoing, temporal interweaving of our lives with one another and with the manifold constituents of our environment. (Ingold, 2000, p. 348)

Why are you here? What a wonderful question. I am here because novice teachers in international settings are on to something and I’m keen to know more. There is something that occurs in the space between there and here that seems to get lost or hidden. For example, a group of beginning teachers, while in Oaxaca, spoke enthusiastically about how different things are compared to home. Among language and culture differences, they referenced noisy classrooms and physical closeness. They wondered about the richness of seemingly chaotic classrooms while observing joyfulness not remembered in their own school days. They claimed they had to be more resourceful and flexible than they imagined would be necessary. They spoke excitedly about opening the emotional space for children and increasing the playfulness of classrooms at home. They marvelled at the children’s excitement as they shared their communities, knowledgably and with a sense of importance.

And yet, settled into practicums at home, conversations take a distinctive turn toward more urgent matters at hand. Have their unit and lesson plans been completed with all the requisite elements demonstrating curriculum knowledge, engaging instructional activities and plans for assessment? What are they going to do about the children requiring Individual Education Plans? Which extra-curricular activity will be taken on and which professional development opportunities will be accessed? Understandably, they are caught in transport, moving across or over rather than along. The strict requirements for certification do not invite lingering in the living experience. In fact, some of their mentors will suggest that the time spent in Mexico was “not the real
thing” and that only here, at home, will they gain the skills they need to be qualified teachers.

What if teacher educators acknowledged the starkness, the unyielding unfamiliarity and discomfort, in international experiences and inspired a wayfaring notion of teacher development to bring into play the formativity of the knots? Knots offer fodder for becoming as we become. We are able to walk and re-walk a path, alone and with others, on a continual, generative journey when we linger with our stories. Thus, an emphasis on wayfaring along Deleuze’s never started and never finished line on Ingold’s meshwork reveals the potential of the knot revisited.

The reader may be wondering about reflective practice, a long-standing model for teacher improvement (Schön, 1987; Minott, 2011; Gutierez, 2015). Reflecting on lesson plans and their implementation, in the company of colleagues, teachers seek to understand student responses to their efforts and then make plans for improvement. I don’t mean to ignore this powerful practice but I am, like Akbari (2007), cautious about the mechanistic tone such reflection sometimes takes when imposed by teacher education programs and professional development committees. There can be an emphasis on the techno-rational aspects of teaching over the deep learning from lived experience (Riedel, 2016). Building on the best of reflective practice, I am suggesting that novice teachers may benefit from mentors who encourage them to remember and revisit the paths behind and around them in order to become-teacher in the best, most alive, ways possible.

Prominent in teacher education programs is Schön’s (1987) reflection-in and reflection-on-action, a direct response to the techno-rational emphasis in the helping professions. Indeed, my teacher education program in 1988 included Schön’s theory and we engaged with reflection in and on action regularly. Van Manen’s (1977) three levels of reflection: technical, practical, and critical were also prominent in the discourse. How might wayfaring be different? Without presenting a full critique of Schön’s work here\(^2\) I offer a possible point of departure.

\(^2\) For further treatment of Schön’s work, see Rico et al., 2012; MacKinnon, 2013; Comer, 2016; and Mintz, 2016.
Schön’s work refers to the reflective practitioner. His examples of reflection in and on action refer to practices, to improved doing. Teaching is, of course, a practice but wayfaring is about being. Wayfaring offers an attentive consideration of the ways we move through the world, not just in the classroom, creating knowledge as we go, rather than as a means to correct a problem or find a solution. When wayfaring I remember encounters and entanglements both in and out of the classroom and carefully consider their arterial relationships.

Ingold’s wayfaring offers a way of seeing professional journeys in a more deeply relational way. It is not so much about finding the perfect lesson or instructional strategy but more a recognition that learning is “a cumulative trace…generated in the course of pedestrian movement itself” (Ingold, 2010, p. S127). Teachers and students have the opportunity, through such movement to engage with beings, materials and all the wonder-full elements of the world, in a constant state of becoming as trails are laid and knotted, “as the life of each [inhabitant] becomes bound up with the other” (Ingold, 2011, p. 148).

Joining the conversation about reflective practices, I suggest that wayfaring invites novice teachers to remember and revisit the paths behind, in front and around them to continue becoming teacher. Like reminiscing with photographs we can recreate a past that moves us toward an imagined and uncertain horizon enticing us with possibility. In Schön’s work I detect a lean away from discomfort that “tends to give primacy to a move from uncertainty to expertise, and thus implicitly undervalues what can be gained from an ongoing state of uncertainty” (Mintz, 2016, p. 278). Lingering with deep impressions left by discomfort is necessary if our impressions, those feelings that come with experiences, are to become expressions, caring and responsive actions. Personally and professionally discomfort has provided the invitation to move and taught me that certainty is an illusion.

1.7. International Education Revisioned

The intense pressures of our future fantasies and longings erase the layers and layers of life that hold us up, distracting us from our ability to stay here now. (Seidel, 2014, p. 144)
Currently, international teacher education programs centre on goals designed to support intercultural competence and an increased ability to teach to diversity (Cushner, 2007; Maynes & Julien-Schultz, 2012; Miller & Gonzalez, 2016). These are important and worthwhile outcomes but, I think, fail to capture the rich, embodied inspirations that can be pedagogically formative if gently captured and considered over time. Current program goals suggest destinations, pre-determined points at which to arrive, rather than knots of entangled human experience upon which to reflect and through which to become. Student teachers who venture to Oaxaca as part of their certification program soon cast aside the understandings gleaned there as upon return home the more technical demands of the teacher education program take priority.

How might we get novice teachers to notice, and more importantly hang onto, the embodied relational understandings of international teaching experiences and use them at home when confronted with the schooling pressures of curriculum delivery and instructional efficacy? I have suggested that a wayfaring notion of teacher development might bring to our attention the visceral understandings available in international settings that could inform a relational pedagogy.

I have presented four knots exemplifying my wayfaring and becoming revealed in curating the traces. My return to the unsettling memories of distant people and places (knots 1 and 3) informed a more settled educator at home (knots 2 and 4). Ingold (2011) suggests that it “may not be until long after a story has been told that its meaning is revealed, when you find yourself retracing the very same path that the story relates. Then, and only then, does the story offer guidance on how to proceed” (p. 162). Wayfaring offers a visual metaphor for mindful contemplation of our travels, allowing us to re-trace our routes and knots in our minds’ eye. On my way to the bookshelf, I walked through the Ecuadorian experience (where I had been) as it might unfold in the waiting Kindergarten classroom (where I was going). On my way through the hallways, I returned to an Oaxacan experience as it might unfold in the speed-stacking contest. My experiences and wonderings thus far reveal the power of discomfort that rises within us in unfamiliar settings to act as pedagogically formative.

Moving Along
This most pedagogical of tasks – becoming someone – is linked somehow to places that are traversed, territories that are journeyed through. (Jardine, 2012, p. 161)

Gillis (2015) says:

One broad aim of education, I believe, ought to be to feel ourselves part of the long, larger flow of human evolution, the rise and fall and rise and fall, like the tides, of tribes, groups, empires, cultures, civilizations. Do we live with a feeling of being an active participant, contributing to our vast ocean of human wayfinding (p. 20)?

Jardine (2012) suggests that in learning we are asked to become something more than we had been before. Smith (2014) values pedagogical moments for the sake of becoming. Ingold (2013) suggests, “we grow into knowledge” (p. 13). Each of these philosophers recognizes the beautiful risk (Bieta, 2015) in education that speaks to entering discomfort, risking vital contact, and stepping into the uncertainty of becoming in relation with others. It is about becoming human and understanding “what it means to exist in a human way” (Bieta, 2015, p. 420). It is an evolutionary, rhizomatic process that is never complete. Becoming is dynamic, it is alive, as education ought to be.

Conversations with beginning teachers in Oaxaca suggest that they are willing to take the risk of spending time in awkwardness and discomfort. Like their local counterparts, they experience the usual discomforts of delivering a carefully planned, but likely flawed, lesson to a group of students who may or may not be receptive under the watchful eye of a mentor teacher. But, in addition to this, they face a whole other contextual layer of discomfort with an unfamiliar language and culture. Some students report feelings of isolation and alienation and yet they demonstrate a keen desire to face and overcome their feelings. What previous life experiences, what decisive moments might these teachers, who have chosen an international program, bring that allow them to face and embrace discomfort? What knots might they be teasing out to support their learning and their becoming with discomfort over time?

Wayfaring, I am continually becoming-teacher, becoming international-teacher educator and while moving along I am increasingly dwelling with questions. These questions inform my dissertation as I inhabit the entanglements and seek to better understand the experiences of novice teachers and the ways those experiences inform
their teacher-becoming. To gain a deeper understanding from a wayfaring stance, I have adopted a phenomenological approach to the research.
Chapter 2.

Methodology: Wayfaring and Phenomenology

We communicate to one another the light our eyes know, the ground that sustains our postures and the air and the warmth with which we speak. (Lingis, 1994, p. 122)

If wayfaring is “the fundamental mode by which living beings inhabit the earth” (Ingold, 2011, p. 12), then the study of the lived and living experiences of earthly inhabitation is appropriate. Phenomenology asks, what is this or that experience or phenomenon like? It also asks more deeply, in what manner does this experience unfold? Wayfaring is a living experience that can be considered using a phenomenological method. It is a manner of relating to the world. Ingold’s meshwork (mesh – spaces between threads or cords; work – something that is in the process of becoming) and its knots (an intertwining) afford a language to consider life as we are living it, as we go along, as we wayfare. Both wayfaring and phenomenology suggest exploring and becoming in ways that facilitate an engaged and reflective life. In wayfaring and in the examination of phenomena, we are deeply engaged in the living and lived experience. As student teachers in international programs travel to distant places – wayfaring, encountering, and creating knots along the meshwork – we can ask: How does it feel to teach in foreign places? What are the qualities of significant international encounters that inform an evolving pedagogy?

2.1. Phenomenology – The Tradition

Readings in multiple sources (Gadamer, 1989; Willis, 2001; Saevi, 2013; Seidel & Jardine, 2014; van Manen, 2014) provide evolving definitions and explanations of phenomenology and what it means to conduct a phenomenological inquiry. “Phenomenology is radically dynamic because its methodology is ordered on a radical disorder” (van Manen, 2014, p. 72). Since Husserl first introduced the hermeneutic circle, the reciprocity between text and context, the parts and the whole, philosophers have been interpreting and re-interpreting phenomenology as a method. Considered the founding father of phenomenology, Husserl rejected “the objectification of so-called positivist science” (Willis, 2001, p. 2) in favour of “the essences of pure experiences”
(van Manen, 2014, p. 89). That is, “only knowledge derived from immediate experiential evidence can be accepted” (Husserl, 1999, p. 13).

It is from Husserl that we get the epoché and the reduction, two essential, if often confused and contested, features of phenomenological inquiry. Husserl proposed that it isn’t the what of an experience that matters but rather the experience of the what. “Phenomenology is the study of phenomena, and the phenomena are someone’s experiences – belonging to someone’s stream of consciousness” (van Manen, 2014, p. 91). Thinking is always thinking about something. To understand the experience of a phenomenon we must both open ourselves to the experience without any presupposition (epoché) and close in on the meaning of the phenomenon as it appears in our experience (reduction). The epoché is “the unreflective apprehension of the world as it is lived, precisely as it is encountered in everyday affairs” (Wertz, 2005, p. 168). “Taken-for-granted beliefs and the attitude of science are suspended” (van Manen, 2014, p. 215) so that the researcher might adopt “an unfettered stance” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). The reduction looks to understanding the phenomenon that has been apprehended as well as the relationship between the phenomenon and the self. “The task requires that I look and describe; look again and describe; look again and describe” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90) in an attempt to grasp the full nature of the phenomenon. “The reduction is an attentive turning to the world when in an open state of mind, effectuated by the epoché” (van Manen, 2014, p. 218). Achieving a perfect epoché and reduction is nearly impossible and can lead one down the proverbial rabbit hole. Of most importance is engaging in and reflecting upon lived experience, remaining as close to the experience as possible. Careful reflection, leading to changed knowledge and ways of being, may be as close to Husserl’s transcendence as we will ever get, with first an “unreflective apprehension of the world” and second, an opportunity to “recollect our own experiences and empathically enter and reflect on the lived world of other persons” (Wertz, 2005, p. 168).

I liken the space between opening to an experience (epoché) and closing in on meaning (reduction) to the photography term fogging (Fogging, n.d.). Fogging can happen intentionally, by altering chemical baths in the development process, or unintentionally, perhaps due to an error in the development process or even to a dirty camera lens. A photographer I know described the result of unintentional fogging as unexpected and often pleasing. Her experience is that the image somehow shifts from
ordinary to special as something not seen when taking the photograph becomes visible. Between engagement (epoché) and reflection (reduction) is a space where unintentional fogging can occur, a space where surprises live. Looking at my forgotten photo, discussed in the Preface, I saw myself with a renewed perspective. I saw the iteration of my life, my self, my doing, and my being. Lingering a while, I gathered arising meanings, I saw the receding horizons, I felt the heartbeats yet to pulse. These unexpected thoughts and feelings turned a regular occurrence – train travel – into something special.

The space between my experience and my reflection on the experience is a mystery until it is felt in a rush. There it is, suddenly and surprisingly wonderful. Leaning into this space has been a guiding force in this study. A procedural account of such wonder is not nearly as sensual, but must be mentioned and is offered below.

In this project, interviews, and observations were used to approach the questions: what is it like to be a teacher in an international setting and what are some ways international experiences (in)formed local practices? An attempt was made to “enter the experience of the phenomenon (epoché) and then to close in on the meaning of the phenomenon (reduction) as it appears in our experience or consciousness” (van Manen in Adams (2014). Interviews were transcribed verbatim and observational notes about participant tone of voice, body position, gesture, and facial expression were taken during the interviews. Transcripts were read several times in order to examine the described experiences from many angles to see what revealed itself and what might be hidden. “The twin methods of the epoché and reduction are the way to gain access to the meaning structures of a phenomenon” (van Manen, 2014, p. 217). Giorgi (2015) reminds us,

“there are two levels of description in phenomenological work. The descriptions provided by everyday persons are the raw data. We expect them to be very much like the way people talk in every day life. The results of phenomenological analyses are more careful and more nuanced but they are not so transformative that the original experience is no longer recognized” (p.148).

Beginning to immerse myself in the phenomenological tradition allows me as a researcher to remain true to its way, which is a wayfaring of sorts. While there are guideposts that signal various phenomenological traditions, there is also permission to allow the things themselves to suggest ways of reflecting upon them. It is the disordered order of phenomenology that appeals to me as this is the way lives are lived, the way we
come to understand our being in relation with other beings. As such, phenomenology is an appropriate approach to lift up that which international teaching experiences offer evolving pedagogies. This is an adventure, a tentative stepping into new (for me) ideas and ways of being. It is an attempt to capture the rich experiences of teacher educators in international settings and to contemplate ways to shepherd them in carrying those experiences home to benefit their students.

2.2. Phenomenological Inquiry

As a phenomenologist-becoming I will explain my choice of phenomenological inquiry and suggest how it might be appropriate for exploring wayfaring encounters in international settings that could be formative for local and global practice. It is an ever-evolving approach and research method (van Manen, 2014) that aligns with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) becoming and Ingold’s (2011) meshwork. Phenomenology is a “method of methods” intended to offer a “rich, always creative, often compelling, and powerful form of inquiry and thinking about the lived meaning of phenomena and events of human existence” (van Manen, 2014, p. 74). One might say it is a method-becoming as it is continually informed and reformed, “ordered and reordered” (p. 73). There are many orientations to phenomenology (e.g. transcendental, existential, historical, ethical, linguistic and hermeneutic) and while it is tempting to select a single orientation for my study, wayfaring and becoming along the meshwork I find tension in such a thought. There is too much to be revealed within and between the ongoing, living experiences themselves and yet I must acknowledge my leanings.

As an educational practitioner, Max van Manen’s (2014) phenomenology of practice is compelling. I am also strongly influenced by educational philosophers David Jardine and Jackie Seidel (2014) who lean toward hermeneutic (interpretive) inquiry. In van Manen’s work, I found a way to think about my practice that informs day-to-day interactions with children at the elementary schools in which I spend my professional time. His phenomenology of practice rests on the shoulders of members of the Utrecht School3 (e.g. Buytendijk, Langeveld, Linschoten, Bollnow and van den Berg), and is

3 The Utrecht School “consisted of an assortment of phenomenologically oriented academics in professional fields such as psychology, education, pedagogy, pediatrics, law, psychiatry, and general medicine” (van Manen, 2014, p. 197).
steeped in a rich tradition of phenomenological scholars, including but not limited to Lingis, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Husserl.

Also deeply influenced and guided by the phenomenological tradition are Seidel and Jardine (2014) who have offered gentle and creative ways to consider curriculum planning and implementation in their work on a “curriculum for miracles” (p. 13). Through Jardine and Seidel, I have been introduced to Gadamer’s “free spaces of possibility” (Jardine, 2012, p. 2) that encourage open curiosity and embracing “the wild troubles of life” (p. 5). Gadamer (1989) says, “understanding begins when something addresses us” (p. 122) and Jardine states that “hermeneutics is my own work of remembering” (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 129). When wayfaring we are addressed, or as Levinas (1987) might say, *faced* by the Other. We engage in the world, creating knots, becoming ourselves, in relation with others as we go. Remembering our experiences leads us to interpretation of the lived experience where “insights come to us in that mode of musing, reflective questioning, and being obsessed with sources and meanings of lived meaning (van Manen, 2014, p. 27). We call forth “wisdom built on experience” (Espinoza, 2004, p. 53). Phenomenologists, like wayfarers, are not seeking a particular theory or destination but rather make their way thoughtfully and reflectively in an attempt to live fully, with tact and care. So too is the purpose of examining pedagogy and the teacher education programs that launch their formation.

For the phenomenologist, the meaning of lived experiences reveals itself in and through writing. Phenomenological inquiry holds that the writing is the research, that “the hermeneutic attitude requires the writer to ‘dwell’ with the phenomenon, to be open and to stay open to the uniqueness of the experience and of the language that emerges to describe the experience” (Saevi, 2013, p. 5) and that “writing is a kind of self-making or forming” (van Manen, 2014, p. 364). It is through the writing that interpretation can occur as “writing creates a space that belongs to the unrepresentable” (van Manen, 2014, p. 369). I suggest that movement also creates a space for considering the unrepresentable as insights have come to me while running, riding my bike and creating art. Certainly in wayfaring with others, searching and re-searching have contributed to my self-forming. This echoes the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and the idea that everything and everyone is always *becoming* in rhizomatic relations in a continual connecting, forming, folding and unfolding. The words of Davey (2006) help to clarify and operationalize my understanding of philosophical hermeneutics: “philosophical hermeneutics concerns
itself with understanding as a transformative experiential process: it is the philosophy of learning and becoming” (p. 390). It is by reliving experiences while writing or moving or creating that meaning may be derived, not concepts or theories necessarily, but rather a way to see things “as if for the first time” (van Manen, 2014, p. 23). Phenomenology does not seek to create or generalize theories but rather to offer careful and gentle attention to people and their experiences. Such attention influences the kind of knowledge and narratives we produce and value.

2.3. Curating Stories

It is common for travellers to take photos, collect artifacts, and re-live the day’s events in animated post-trip storytelling. In doing so, memories are created to savour, to appreciate the flavour of, over time. We will return home and say things like: that was an amazing trip, I learned so much, I can’t believe we did that! As we reminisce with these artifacts, the importance of certain experiences is revealed. Over time we revisit and recreate our memories, capturing nuances that may not have been noticed previously. Sometimes our souvenirs, our memories, come to us in a rush, as in the Kindergarten story told in Chapter One. Lingering with our memories, we approach

“the very this-ness, or haecceity, of the remembered moment. Haecceity or this-ness, as Halsey analyzes it, is integral to what Deleuze calls smooth space – the space that escapes the over-coded striations of territorialized time and place, that often eludes us in the press of normative expectations, of habitual thoughts and practices, and of submission to the dominant, often clichéd codes that make up the existing order.” (Davies & Gannon, 2009, p. 9).

We know that “through critical reflection preservice teachers are able to examine their blind spots, dominant ideologies, and hegemonic frames of reference that guide their developing teaching and learning practices” (Dyce & Owusu-Ansah, 2016, p. 335). How might we hold on to and look to these memories to inform an evolving teacher-self? In the case of international student teachers, how might we bring back to life the moments of strangeness and risk-taking, and the many contributing elements (context, sensations, histories) to inform their teaching practices, not just in the first days and weeks in classrooms at home, but beyond?

One way is to curate, organize, and consider carefully significant encounters and so I open my shoebox of memories representing international education experiences.
While my shoebox contains a variety of items, I will refer to all artifacts as photographs, whether they appear as objects, images, or text, for photography affords a language to describe the ways moments can be expressed and reflected upon so as to develop layers of meaning over time. One can imagine the photographer as the phenomenologist – captured by wonder, seeing her world with fresh eyes. The photographer and the phenomenologist “must learn to relax [their] beliefs” and be “present with something in an open space” (Karr & Wood, 2011, p. 2).

To begin my curation, I order the photos chronologically and notice that those from the past portend moments more recently captured and at the same time it is the recent photographs that shed new light on those taken prior. These still moments of my life create a trace of my evolving self as a person and as an educator. Moments in time fold and unfold over one another layering a life assembled. Knots tighten and loosen, hold and let go of memories in a life enmeshed. A photo says, “remember this?” One can feel the breeze blow through the cobwebs of the body as smells, sights, sounds, tastes, and feelings return to re-ignite consciousness slowly, or at times in rushes, reminding us of who we are, where we’ve been, where we might go, and who we might become.

Certain photographs stir thought and heart provoking memories: teaching science in a mud alley in the Ngombe compound of Zambia, conversations with teacher-educators from Brazil, and observations of student teachers in Oaxacan private schools. As I linger with these memories, my body registers discomfort amidst the happy thoughts of people and places encountered. As I organize and hold time with my hands, “lending [each photo] a past and a future” (Berger & Mohr, 1982, p. 89), the phenomenon of discomfort calls my attention.

Looking closely at the photograph of the Ecuadorian boy, Jorge, and the Canadian woman, Maureen, singing together, I ask: What is happening here? What is in this photograph that has swept me up? Borrowing the language of photography, the thickness of the experience can begin to be articulated. Phenomenological writing is always a challenge as the minute one begins to write about an experience, one is already away from the experience. Language often fails us, as words do not and cannot communicate exactly what we felt during an encounter. It is challenging to be fully present within an experience and be deeply engaged in a reflective process at the same time. “Thus,
telling or writing a lived experience is to recall the lived in the shape of a memory” (Saevi, 2013, p. 6) and make an attempt at describing its essences. Like the developing photograph we can attempt to reveal layers of meaning over time.

Despite these linguistic limitations, I offer a hermeneutic – photographic and narrative – interpretation of the experiences of thirteen teachers who have participated in an International Teacher Education Module (ITEM) using the language of four features of photography: the golden hour, the decisive moment, perspective, and depth of field. Temporality, spatiality, materiality, corporeality and relationality will show themselves in the interpretation. It is my intention to step carefully with these ideas as they are new to me, but nonetheless resonate deeply.

### 2.4. Time in a Photograph

There is a magical light, just before sunrise or after sunset that photographers call the golden hour (“Golden Hour,” para. 3). The light falls in-between times, that are neither light nor dark, day or night, neither this nor that but both, and photographs taken in this light have a magical quality, a warmth and a softness, resembling a gentle gaze. The photograph of Jorge and Maureen was collected in this light, when light and dark, child and adult, vulnerability and risk were held in an expansive moment. Gentleness took hold and possibility opened the door for vital contact, a pedagogic moment in which a vibe is such that “it holds a moment, an event, an encounter, or more simply and profoundly, a contact that ripples through one’s being” (Smith, 2014, p. 241). The trappings of life fell to the perimeter and “beneath the surface, more viscerally, politeness, acceptance, tolerance understanding and appreciation gave way to intimate contact with another” (Smith, 2014, p. 236). Significant encounters in international teacher education settings can be held and reflected upon in the soft light of the golden hour, revealing the vulnerability of discomfort and the confident comfort of human connection that can be achieved in the face of the Other.

The decisive moment, a term coined by photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, is the instant the photographer chooses to trigger the shutter. In this moment is “the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give the event its proper expression” (“Decisive Moment,” para. 4.1). The decisive moment, and the resulting image, says
much about the situatedness of the photographer. “To see is always to see from somewhere” (Carman, 2012, p. xi). Her history, memories, experiences, preferences, and desires, are engaged with the environment, and will reveal themselves in the image. Both the photographer and the researcher must always be aware of her situatedness, especially when reflecting on and interpreting living and lived experiences. I must be mindful of my position as what is in the frame is always from my perspective. In each locale and interaction, I am always a privileged Canadian woman of European descent, who, intentionally or not, wields social and economic power. I am a colonizer by ancestry and by my very existence. I must ask: what does my interpretation reveal about me?

From a phenomenological perspective, the researcher is never neutral. Curating my own and other’s experiences will reveal phenomena as interpreted by biases I may not yet know I possess. This is a critical realization for beginning teachers as “questioning their knowledge and assumptions are as important as the mastery of techniques for instructional effectiveness” (Gay & Kirkland, 2000, p. 181). I suggest that understanding and acknowledging oneself as a human who happens to be a teacher is even more important than technical mastery. Unfolding layers of understanding from my encounter with Jorge and Maureen, my own discomfort in the face of the other was revealed as my Levinasian sense of response-ability was drawn to my attention causing me to enact this response-ability in my daily work in schools. This decisive moment along the meshwork was formative of my professional practice.

Photographers use perspective to influence the way a person or situation is perceived. For example, a photo taken from beneath a person may make them appear menacing while a photo taken from above may illicit innocence. Our perspective of others, our world, and ourselves is in a constant state of becoming and influences the angle or tack we take. From one perspective, the Ecuadorian children ducking behind trees and peeking from windows while adults worked to build their school could have been interpreted as lazy or mocking observers. Their pointing and whispering could have been perceived as rude. On the other hand, and as it happens, a different perspective was taken. Ducking and peeking, pointing and whispering were interpreted as curiosity and a desire to knot onto the meshwork. Educators must question their perspectives. Are we gazing at unfamiliar situations, behaviours, or people with hostility or curiousity, either of which might arise from discomfort? A new framing of my own discomfort and disorientation brings my otherness into sharp focus. By changing lenses the similarities
are revealed in a more expansive view. I am not so much dis-oriented as re-oriented. How often do learners experience this? What does the teacher need to steady herself and her students to meet this disorientation together?

Also at play in the interpreted meaning of photographs are background and foreground. Photographers use depth of field (“Depth of Field,” n.d.) to draw the viewer’s attention to a focal point. In the Ecuadorian Amazon, in a rural community called Bella Vista Baja, what revealed itself in the foreground were human connection and vital contact. In the background, among other things, one finds economic divide, cultural difference, and a language barrier. All the things that scream ‘Other’ yielded to a profound understanding and relationality for a few moments as the community, old ones and young ones, gathered to sing and move together. Of course the background may be forgotten for a while but it cannot be ignored. I will return to this momentarily.

Reflecting on this experience I can “penetrate deeper into things and learn to see the more profound ‘layers’ behind what [I] first thought to see” (Kockelmans, 1967, p. 30). Watching Jorge and Maureen sing with each other offered me a way into a situation I wanted to enter but didn’t yet know how. Seeing their careful beginning – the way Jorge watched Maureen first as she sang in English pointing to her head and shoulders, knees and toes – I was captured by their tentativeness and my breath caught, waiting hopefully for their success. In this decisive moment, my own discomfort was sensed and a way to move through it was given in the reciprocity of relational rhyme and movement. Later, on my way to the Kindergarten classroom, my breath caught in the same way (discomfort) and my body recalled the relief experienced when several adults and children joined in Jorge’s and Maureen’s bonding play (comfort). Recalling this bodily memory helped me find a new pedagogical way to be with children. The decisive moment is time captured, and available to the phenomenologist as full-filled time, which is “not available as a procedure to simply be obediently and mindlessly followed. It is available as a mindful practice” (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 83). Part of such mindful practice is in the careful collection and consideration of my own and others’ experiences and becomings, which this study includes.

In Chapter Three I offer a definition of discomfort as it relates to the experience of the beginning teachers in this study as well as a review of the literature surrounding
pedagogies of discomfort. But first, in the next section of this chapter I outline the study design.

2.5. Study Design: Wayfaring with Intention

To know one’s whereabouts is thus to be able to connect one’s latest movements to narratives of journeys previously made, by oneself and others. In wayfinding, people do not traverse the surface of the world whose layout is fixed in advance – as represented on a cartographic map. Rather, they feel their way through. (Ingold, 2000, p. 155)

This project is part of my wayfaring, my ongoing quest to continue becoming-human, becoming-educator. As previous experiences, personal and professional, in international settings entangle with those of the present, my growth and development “is understood relationally as a movement along a way of life [italics original]” (Ingold, 2000, p. 146).

As mentioned in Chapter Two, while it is tempting to outline and follow a clear research path, wayfaring doesn’t accommodate such a linear vision. That isn’t to say that wayfaring is aimless wandering but rather it is “a skilled performance in which the traveller, whose powers of perception and action have been fine-tuned through previous experience, feels his way towards his goal, continually adjusting his movements in response to an ongoing perceptual monitoring of his surroundings” (Ingold, 2000, p. 220). Consider the experienced teacher who prepares a detailed lesson plan, a map for learning, and when her students do not respond as expected, she carefully adjusts the plan to accommodate them. In contrast, a beginning or less confident teacher may not have the experience necessary to feel his way and will stick to the predetermined map, not knowing other directions to take. We build our knowledge with each other as we travel along via countless inter-actions in the worlds of teaching and learning.

"Knowledge, from a relational point of view, is not merely applied but generated in the course of lived experience, through a series of encounters in which the contribution of other persons is to orient one’s attention" (Ingold, 2000, p. 145). As a phenomenological researcher, my attention has been oriented toward the experience of a practicum placement in an international setting. The following sections will outline my study’s purpose and research design. Information about the study participants, data collection, and study limitations is also included.
**Study Purpose**

The purpose of my study is to examine the questions: How is an international practicum experienced by student teachers? What unique characteristics, formative of pedagogical practice, does an international teaching experience offer? To explore these questions I interviewed thirteen participants in the International Teacher Education Module at Simon Fraser University including current participants, graduates, and Faculty Associates. Many teacher education programs emphasize instructional methodology, classroom management skills, and reflective practices and there is much research to support the value of this content to novice teachers. There is little research, however, describing the lived experience of beginning teachers in International Placements beyond that which focuses on the attainment of intercultural competencies or global citizenship (Cushner, 2007; Maynes & Julien-Schultz, 2012; Miller & Gonzalez, 2016). I am interested in the uniqueness of an international placement in contributing to evolving pedagogies over time and I seek to understand this uniqueness through the stories of participants in such a program.

**Study Context**

The International Teacher Education Module (ITEM) is an option within Simon Fraser University’s Professional Development Program (PDP). At the time of this project, the PDP was a three-semester program leading toward teaching certification in British Columbian Schools. Pre-service teachers engage in Education 401/2 (a combination of theory and a short practicum), Education 404 (methodology courses), and Education 405 (long practicum). Students may apply to complete the Education 401/2 component in an International setting. At the time of this project placements were available in Oaxaca, Mexico and Dharamshala, India. The participants for this study spent their time in Oaxaca. One participant, Edith, a Faculty Associate and co-founder of ITEM, completed her Doctorate with comprehensive research on the impact of ITEM on its host communities in 2006.

In addition to the ten goals for all PDP students, “ITEM focuses on the internationalization of education and encourages student teachers to develop global perspectives” (https://www.sfu.ca/education/teachersed/programs/pdp/cohorts/item-module.html). The Office of International Education at SFU is also involved with ITEM
and provides pre- and post-trip preparation and debriefing. This Office also conducts a pre- and post-survey to ascertain the degree to which participants meet the goals of the program. Faculty Associates in international locations support students in meeting the program goals as well as emphasizing global citizenship and social justice. In the case of Oaxaca, a local Faculty Associate (FA) works with beginning teachers during their international practicum.

The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) is also invested in international education programs across disciplines and, led by SFU’s Dean of Education, Dr. Kris Magnusson, ACDE developed an Accord (2013) outlining benefits, risks and goals with respect to the internationalization of education. While not the scope of this project, it would be a worthwhile venture to hold ITEM up to the goals of the Accord, particularly those referring to reciprocity. As a traveller and educator I am interested in “the discussion of critical issues and institutional responsibilities in the internationalization of education, and [in giving] careful consideration to the representations of marginalized individuals, groups, and communities” (ACDE, 2013, p. 3).

**Researcher’s Subjectivity**

In the context of this study, I am a participant researcher in several related roles: a PhD student, an elementary school principal, and a former Faculty Associate with collegial ties to the Faculty members involved in the ITEM. While I have no formal influence on the progress or assessment of the pre-service teachers in this project, a power imbalance could be perceived with my role as principal in a district to which they may apply for a teaching position in the future. In addition, my relationship with Faculty members could be seen as a bias in favour of the program rather than a genuine curiosity about participant experiences. In conversations with pre-service teachers I have tried to be explicit about my participation and intentions regarding the study. Our shared experiences in schools (co-teaching) and on cultural excursions in Oaxaca fostered a trusting relationship and allowed me to have a feel for the situations they described. This is an asset to our understanding of each other and what it means to participate in an international experience. As such, my project offers an interpretation of experience rather than any causal explanations. I have been mindful of my “personal biases and perspectives [to] reduce the potential concerns associated with insider
membership” (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 59). I considered my interpretations of participant stories in relation to the scholarly literature and popular discourse about discomfort and with respect to research about international education more generally.

**Research Design**

Phenomenology was chosen as the methodology for this study. According to Carman (2012), as a research strategy, phenomenology attempts to “describe the basic structures of human experience and understanding from a first person point of view” (p. viii). Phenomenological research is invested in living experiences and how such experiences create knowledge that influences our everyday living. As such it is suitable for examining pedagogical practices and the encounters that inform them.

Phenomenology is more a way of being, a way of looking at the world, than a recipe for research. “Our research method needs to be responsive to the phenomenon, to be true to its integrity towards capturing something of its is-ness” (Finlay, 2014, p. 121). It can be viewed as a wayfaring methodology, responding to what is presented in an attempt to illuminate a particular experience. This study aims to describe the lived experience of beginning teachers engaged in an international practicum. Encounters are bracketed and held up for reflection to respond to the question: What are the qualities of significant international encounters that inform evolving pedagogies?

Data was collected from local pre-service and practicing teachers, and digitally recorded in person at a mutually agreed upon location. Questions were asked of each participant in an interactive, conversational style designed to put the participants at ease and to elicit detailed examples of particular international experiences considered significant to pedagogical formation. As the pre-service teachers knew the researcher, through shared experiences in Oaxaca and on the local campus, a relaxed and trusting atmosphere was achievable. Graduates of the ITEM, along with Faculty and School Associates, have a collegial relationship with the researcher and were keen to contribute to the project. Participation was voluntary and consent forms, approved by Simon Fraser University’s Office of Research Ethics, were required. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and were made aware that pseudonyms would be used in the dissertation.
Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseudonyms)</th>
<th>ITEM Participant Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luis (Spanish and English speaking)</td>
<td>Oaxacan Faculty Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith</td>
<td>Former Faculty Associate and Program Co-founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>Graduate 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla</td>
<td>Graduate 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie</td>
<td>Graduate 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Graduate 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita (English and Spanish speaking)</td>
<td>Participant 2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi</td>
<td>Participant 2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Participant 2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>Participant 2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>Participant 2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy (English and Spanish speaking)</td>
<td>Participant 2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin</td>
<td>Participant 2015-16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1  Study Participants

Study participants included students from the International Teacher Education Module (Oaxaca) at Simon Fraser University. Seven members of this module participated in recorded interviews with the researcher. To add to the robustness of the data, four graduates of the ITEM were interviewed, in person, to consider how their international experience has informed their evolving pedagogy over time. All graduates have been practicing teachers in local public schools for a minimum of ten years. In addition, the current Oaxacan Faculty Associate, who has been involved with the program for approximately seven years, was interviewed via Skype to gain his insights on teacher development in an International Program. Further, a founding member and former Faculty Associate of the program was interviewed.

Data Collection and Analysis

Digitally recorded interviews were transcribed and transcripts were read carefully and closely. Given Husserl’s epoché, discussed in section 2.1, “what captures us in any moment and has validity for us is simply what is there before us as a compelling thing, viewed in an entirely new way” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86). Careful reading allowed the implications of an international teaching program to emerge as I lingered with the stories. Through the reduction, “looking and noticing and looking again” (p. 93), attentive reflections on the experiences describing the phenomenon were generated to increase clarity. As discussed in Moustakas (1994), analysis included horizontalizing, treating each statement as having equal importance and emphasizing those that are relevant to
the question. Themes generated were clustered and a rich, textural description of the phenomenon of discomfort has been attempted. Such a "method offers a systematic way of accomplishing something orderly and disciplined, with care and rigor" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 104). Given the dis-orderliness of wayfaring and becoming, this has been a challenging yet worthwhile task.

Complementary to Moustakas, Finlay (2014) offers four key processes of a phenomenological sensibility: “seeing afresh, dwelling, explicating and languaging” (p. 121). Building on Husserl’s epoché and reduction, Finlay emphasizes the importance of pushing aside “theory, explanation, judgments, and the researcher’s previous experience and beliefs” in order “to probe the is-ness of the phenomenon” (p. 123). To see afresh, the researcher must remain open and sensitive, “empathic and genuinely curious while also being reflexively (i.e. critically self-aware) mindful of [her] own position and perspective given [her] particular personal, cultural, and historical location” (p. 123).

Researchers must slow down and make space “for the phenomenon to reveal itself” (Finlay, 2014, p. 125). We must dwell and linger, allowing “new understandings to emerge” (p. 125). In conversation with the study participants, I attempted to hospitably engage in an exploration of the accounts of lived experiences. Immersing myself in the stories, I listened to them as a whole for meaningful and telling content, focusing on the questions: What does this experience mean? How does this experience feel?

Finlay (2014) describes explicating as “a phase of synthesis and integration, of clarification and revelation” (p. 129). Here the researcher highlights “existential issues” (p. 130). Researchers may draw on their own experiences, along with those of others, to explore the phenomenon. Explication is not a clean-cut process and rarely resembles the neatly packaged accounts that end up in final papers or dissertations. Like wayfaring, explicating is non-linear movement of living and reflecting on lived experience. It is sometimes messy and unclear but always worth the while.

Finally, languaging is presented. Our writing must “achieve some degree of scientific credibility, express the phenomenon evocatively, and integrate phenomenological concepts” (Finlay, 2014, p. 133). Findings may be presented in a myriad of ways but must always be mindful of describing “the lifeworld as faithfully as possible, to convey the particular experience of living through a situation” (p. 135).
Communication of developing understandings must always be tentative and incomplete, always emerging and along the way, always becoming. "We write, in some small way, in order to become experienced" (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 22). To be experienced is not to have "definitive knowledge but [to have] openness to experience that is made possible by experience itself" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 355).

Moustakas and Finlay guided my initial explorations with participant stories. I found Finlay's structure particularly helpful as an entry point into reading the transcripts. This speaks to my empirical leanings, my tendency toward a linear path and a desire to do the research right. But teaching, travelling and living have shown me that the path is anything but linear and certainly my forays into the works of Ingold, Deleuze and Guattari, van Manen and Jardine have influenced my approach to moving with and through this dissertation. As impressions called for expressions and those expressions in turn made new impressions, I found myself re-reading the transcripts differently with little attention to steps and processes. Instead, I lingered with words, wandered through stories, visualized the tone and gesture of conversations and faced my own discomfort with uncertainty leaning into the pedagogical possibilities of wayfaring.

**Limitations of the Study**

There are two main limitations to this study. The first is researcher inexperience. My interview questions (see Appendix B) may have elicited more *interpreted* experiential accounts than *concrete* experiential accounts therefore not providing the descriptions of lived experience necessary for "proper phenomenological reflection and analysis" (van Manen, 2014, p 297). Also, while reading the transcripts, I found instances where a follow up question may have led to a richer description and deeper understanding of the participant's lived experience. I hope that I have provided enough correlation between the participant stories and the supporting research for the reader to trust the data and my interpretation of it.

Secondly, as mentioned previously, researcher subjectivity could be considered an impediment to collecting fully honest participant responses. Participants knew of my positive feelings toward the program and this may have influenced the tone of their responses. In addition, having been inspired by my own travels over the years and their impact on my teaching practices, I am biased toward the notion that international
experience is a good thing. It is likely that I was listening for confirmation of this during our conversations. To this I can say that there are scores of studies about international education and service learning projects that share my generalized notion that international education is a good thing and I draw the reader’s attention to the many references found within this dissertation. Further, it is the “good thing” that captured my interest and inspired this study.

As this is a phenomenological inquiry of a living experience I have attempted to mitigate the limitations by entering a conversation with the text, in this case the interview transcripts and recordings. Several readings of each transcript resulted in colour-coded lists of phrases as common themes began to surface, for example experiences of the unfamiliar like: language, location, and community. Also noted were references to the Oaxacan culture as warm, welcoming, and physically demonstrative. Further readings brought particular word categories to my attention. For example words of remembering like: thinking back, recalling that time, and looking at it again. Curating the stories I noticed words of vibrancy – passionate, intense, and fresh along with words of emotion – fear, excitement, and love. Each reading swept me up and reminded me that there is something exciting happening here, something worth the while.

In addition, I listened to the interviews shortly after they were conducted to come as close as possible to an accurate interpretation of the stories told. While listening, I imagined myself sitting with the participant and added to my existing notes additional details about tone of voice, facial expression and body language. This was an attempt to capture a holistic telling of the story and to get the feel of each participant’s experience. van Manen (2014) speaks of a “feeling understanding” which “produces a sense of nearness and intimacy with the phenomenon” (p. 249).

By presenting a careful interpretation of stories alongside relevant literature I can say with confidence that for these participants, this is what it is like to be an educator in an international teacher education module. These are the ways and the manner in which an international practicum forms and informs our ongoing living and teaching when we return home. I have shown that discomfort has been a powerful feeling across many contexts, that is: language, location, community and school. While phenomenology is not an empirical methodology and does not invite empirical language, this study has
strength, from the Latin *validus*[^4], in that I have attempted a scholarly treatment of the literature, the stories collected, and the phenomenon of discomfort as it arose for ITEM participants.

Chapter 3.

The Phenomenon of Discomfort

3.1. Pedagogies of Discomfort

Discomfort as a feeling in teacher development emerged throughout the study. In describing their experiences, beginning teachers used phrases like: it was uncomfortable; I felt strange; and it was different. Along with these phrases were others representing feelings of discomfort, such as: I had to sink or swim; I was thrown in with the sharks; and I had to just do it. In response to discomfort, participants said: I learned to adapt; you have to be resilient; and you learn to be flexible. When remembering the uncomfortable feelings encountered in an international setting, participants used phrases like: it changed my life; I can’t go back; and I will always remember. The thread of becoming ourselves, perhaps discovering ourselves, in uncomfortable encounters reveals that discomfort is indeed formative. The comments of study participants suggest that discomfort provided the catalyst for qualities like resilience and flexibility and that these qualities created a lasting change in their being. This chapter offers support for discomfort as a universal phenomenon as well as a definition of discomfort and a review of the literature.

Discomfort is a phenomenon discussed by philosophers, politicians, educators, medical professionals and business leaders. A Google search resulted in over fifty-seven million sites. A cursory glance at a select sampling of these exposed a common theme: discomfort is necessary for change. It can lead to creativity, productivity, and personal and professional growth. It can provide fresh eyes, a wake up call, and opportunity. While discomfort is typically avoided it should really be noticed and nurtured. Former US President, Barack Obama, in a discussion about the ways ordinary people change the world in the context of the Civil rights movement, said: “without discomfort you are left with the status quo” (Letterman, 2018). In her popular blog, Brianna Wiest (2015) writes “discomfort is what happens when we are on the precipice of change.” Author Daniel Pink (2011) writes about productive discomfort as a motivator for learning and creativity. Social Science researcher Brené Brown (2018) says “leaning into
discomfort can revolutionize the way you love, lead, parent, everything. Discomfort is the way home."

That discomfort is a scholarly discussion in a variety of disciplines and that it arises in popular discourse attests to its universality as a feeling in human living and becoming. In education, we have long discussed learning from experience or learning by doing (Dewey, 1938). In this study I suggest, as does Sivia (2017), that:

learning from experience requires a deep and sustained reflection on, and attention to, living through experience. We live through an experience with the assumption that we will leave an experience knowing something more about ourselves and the content embedded within the experience. Living through experience may also mean that the fullness of our lives is defined through experience – living through experience suggests that we become fully alive in our experiences and only experience can bring to life who we are and what we know. (p. 1-2).

Interviews with ITEM participants, graduates and faculty associates show that discomfort facilitates personal and professional growth as its embodied intensity brings a heightened awareness that lingers over time, informing ways of being in relationship with students. It is living through a discomforting experience, when we are called to be someone we have never been before, that we become fully alive. Our memories of such times are vivid and visceral. Sivia’s claim that “only experience can bring to life who we are and what we know” elicits Ingold’s wayfaring, Deleuze and Guattari’s becoming, Jardine’s whiling, and van Manen’s practices, as a fortification of thoughtful and tactful action.

Discomfort derives from the Latin fortis meaning strong, steadfast, brave, or spirited. Its antonym, comfort, means with strength therefore dis-comfort is without strength or bravery. To discomfort someone is to deprive them of courage. Courage derives from cor, from the Latin and later from the French for heart. Discomfort could be interpreted as depriving someone of a heart, a life-giving, life-sustaining organ. Related is discomfit or discomfiture, from which discomfort is derived, meaning unease or to cause unease, or in earlier times, to be defeated. I have settled on the more current use of the word discomfort, rather than discomfiture, to name the phenomenon found in the foreground of beginning teacher narratives as it points to the formativity of practice that

5 Etymology online - https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=discomfort&source=ds_search
student teachers indicated they gained while wayfaring with discomfort. Strength and courage were gained in walking unfamiliar, discomforting paths.

Boler (1999), an educational scholar, is widely known for the development of pedagogy of discomfort and frames it as both an invitation to inquiry and to action. She notes that discomfort, often a manifestation of anger or fear, arises when we are asked to consider our “values and cherished beliefs and to examine constructed self-images in relation to how one has learned to perceive others” (p. 177). A pedagogy of discomfort invites us to courageously and collectively “see things differently” (p. 176) and to understand that the way we view our worlds is shaped by the current dominant culture. As a result of seeing differently we are invited to action beyond self-reflection and passive empathy, beyond the binaries of innocence and guilt and toward “a new sense of interconnections with others” (p. 200).

Such pedagogy is fraught with risk as emotions are provoked and confronted in ways that disrupt the privileged, dominant cultural discourse. Boler is careful to note the personal (e.g. seeing oneself as a participant in oppression) and social (e.g. standing up to institutionalized racism or homophobia) risks and addresses the ethical responsibilities of educators in bringing pedagogy of discomfort to the classroom. She also brings to the fore possible gains associated with inhabiting ambiguity and acting with courage. Questioning the “familiar may lead to greater sense of connection, a fuller sense of meaning, and in the end a greater sense of comfort with who we have chosen to be and how we act in our lives” (p. 197).

In line with Ingold’s wayfaring and Deleuze and Guattari’s becoming, Boler discusses discomfort as an exploration into oneself in relation with others – environments, events, and beings. It is the courageous traveller, educator, and indeed human that seeks to “recognize what it is one doesn’t want to know” and then faces “a precarious sense of self” to gain “a new sense of interconnection with others” (Boler, 1999, p. 200). Wayfaring invites us to meet discomfort and adopt it as a fellow traveller and teacher along the meshwork.

Along with Boler, several scholars (Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012; Madrid et al., 2013; and Cutri & Whiting, 2015) have examined the impact of vulnerability on participants of international service learning projects and on novice teachers and teacher
educators in international education programs. They suggest that vulnerability has the potential to open or close our ability to interact with others. The experience of vulnerability may be, in certain places and times, too risky for one to see the promise of living through an uncomfortable experience. The research shows that, often times, participants and group leaders are unprepared for the feelings of discomfort and vulnerability that arise in these settings which speaks to the need for adequate support if discomfort is to be a teacher rather than a paralyzing influence.

Consider the word vulnerable, meaning stripped of fortification or more historically, raw of flesh. Amir, Mandler, Hauptman & Gorev (2017) use the terms “tender spot” to describe aspects of teaching that draw out emotion and “safe space” as the container necessary for discomfort to be pedagogically informative. These researchers support the observation of Luis (an ITEM Faculty Associate) that student teachers need “people who are willing to help them understand without judging” so that they can “try to make sense of what they see and hear in relation to their own cultural understandings. When you don’t have trust or comfort when you talk about issues around race, colour, education, privilege, [understanding] gets even worse.” Luis understands the need for safe spaces when helping new teachers explore tender spots around matters of social justice. Faulkner & Crowhurst (2014) caution that “pushing the risk-taker too far out of his or her comfort zone reinforces, rather than shifts, pre-existing attitudes” (p. 398). I recall Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978) and Csikszentmihalyi’s flow (1997). Learning happens in the sweet spot where challenge and security, where tenderness and safety entangle. To be vulnerable, raw of flesh, willingly or unwillingly, challenges our sensation of well-being. With a belief in wayfaring and becoming, such wounds can be seen for their growth potential if safe spaces are within reach.

Through discomfort, a bodily register, teachers in an international program, learn sensually, experientially as wayfarers do. Recalling and retelling their stories, the voices and gestures of participants often communicated discomfort as strongly, if not more so, than their words. They would sometimes whisper as Jason did: “that was so embarrassing” or speak in a high pitch with nervous laughter as Heidi did: “I stuck out so much as not being local.” Bodies sometimes squirmed, arms crossed, shoulders hunched, and eyes lowered. Participants commented that in remembering they could feel what it was like to have particular experiences. “The body is our anchorage in the world” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 146). The feeling of discomfort acts as a puppeteer for
our expressions and gestures and these involuntary movements reveal what we will come to know.

For discomfort and vulnerability to facilitate becoming we must be aware of Boler’s (1997) caution around passive empathy and lean into Zembylas and Papamichael’s (2017) suggested “pedagogical approach [that] is grounded in the assumption that discomforting emotions are important in challenging dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain stereotypes and social injustice and in creating openings for empathy and transformation” (p. 3). The authors suggest implementing pedagogies of discomfort and empathy simultaneously to provide productive\textsuperscript{6} ground for learning, a safe place for tender spots to be tended. Luis supports this thinking:

You know the best way to address issues of ethnicity, of colour, of privilege – you cannot talk to or address those issues unless there’s trust and understanding that we can have these conversations. If anything, I think my greatest challenge is to set – to create a relationship that allows for those conversations to happen.

It is Boler’s work that asks us to critically consider discomfort as a colonial pacifier. Spoken from the comfort of my privileged life I can say things like: Yes, how awful that is, it’s too bad, humans can be so cruel. And then, I can hop in my car, stop at the grocery story, arrive home, turn up the heat, and begin to cook dinner. I may feel sad for a few moments about the plight of immigrants, the wars in foreign countries, and the homeless camped at my front door. I may feel overwhelmed and powerless and while sympathetic, even empathetic, easily return to the habits of a familiar life. If I am not mindful, I can fall into the passive empathy that Boler and others caution against.

Walking along an unfamiliar path with a non-judgmental and provocative mentor facilitates the knotting of new perspectives, and potentially a more conscious and conscientious teacher who may be more inclined to engage in action. “The first sign of success of a pedagogy of discomfort is quite simply, the ability to recognize what it is that one doesn’t want to know, and how one has developed emotional investments to protect oneself from knowing” (Faulkner & Crowhurst, 2014, p. 398). How does discomfort play out in an international setting?

\textsuperscript{6} Ingold (2011, p. 12) offers pro-duction as bringing forth suggesting that, in this context, pedagogies of discomfort and empathy support teacher-becoming. It is in this way that I interpret the word.
3.2. Discomfort in an International Teacher Education Program

What is the nature of the discomfort experienced by student teachers in Oaxaca? How is it different from that experienced by students in a local practicum? What might open the spaces for tender spots to be explored in safe spaces that inform practice? Education 401/2 makes up the first semester of the Professional Development Program (PDP) at Simon Fraser University. Regardless of location, students in this course will participate in a variety of sessions about teaching methodology, behaviour management, and the provincially mandated curriculum. In addition they will spend several weeks in classrooms observing and teaching a short series of lessons. Many beginning teachers in PDP express trepidation about teaching their first lesson, interacting with students, and trying on their professional role. In addition to these commonly felt discomforts, students in an international placement face the discomfort associated with unfamiliar territory on many planes.

When responding to a question about the most significant learning, participant recollections named discomfort as the change agent for their personal and professional identities and practices. Close reading of the interviews revealed three main areas where discomfort was most transformative: language and location, community experiences, and learning about and practicing the art of teaching. Becoming-human, becoming-teacher thread through each. As we travelled along, discomfort, typically experienced as an obstacle, came to be seen as a valued, transformative knot along the path of living. Chapters Four through Six are a wayfaring along the meshwork of international experiences in Oaxaca, Mexico.
Chapter 4.

Disorientation

Photograph:

My eyes catch the “Salida” sign and my stomach tightens. It’s late, dark, and in an unfamiliar airport, surrounded by language I don’t understand, trepidation seeps in. Will I arrive safely at my hotel? Will I pay a reasonable fare? The driver is friendly and persistent and, after three attempts, finds a road to my hotel uncluttered with construction debris. Stopping in front of a barred door on a deserted street, he points to the sign above and requests his fare. Fumbling through strange looking bills and handing over what I hope is the requested amount, I am thinking more about how I will get into my hotel than what is owed. Rattling the barred door several times and calling out eventually results in a sleepy “¿Cómo estás?” as the concierge opens the door. I take a breath. (Personal travel journal, 2015)

This photograph represents a decisive moment in my travels as it ignites a visceral memory of vulnerability. Howard (2015) addresses the embodied knowing that is generated when one leaves the home world for an alien world. A home world is a familiar world “characterized by a certain steadiness and relative predictability, the home world reproduces its stability through shared and repeated practices, traditions, customs, and habits of community” (Schütz, 1944, in Howard, 2015, p. 2). Drawing on Husserl’s “sphere of ownness” the home world is “a familiar, taken for granted cultural order where things appear normal and without question” (p. 2) and “an alien world is constituted in relation to a home world” (p. 2) and perceived as strange or foreign. Alone, at night, in a foreign land, I sensed the strangeness and knew that I had crossed a threshold.

At home I am comfortable in my neighbourhood. Navigating the streets with confidence, I make purchases and share greetings with ease and pleasure. The butcher begins preparing my order as she sees me round the corner. The baker wonders at my early arrival: “you usually arrive later in the day, what’s happening?” They know my habits. My body is relaxed and without conscious register moves me along well-worn paths. Familiarity opens space for relationality as my “life history is intertwined through
the shared experience of inhabiting particular places and following particular paths in [my] environment” (Ingold, 2000, p. 148).

In my Oaxacan neighbourhood, without a common language or familiar faces and places, I am without my usual strength. Away from home, I am disoriented and discomforted. Student teachers in an international program have entered an alien world, as I did entering the hotel. Nancy (participant 2016) said, “it was a little touch and go. Like, we’re trying to get a feel of the city, where people live, where I can get a coffee, where I can get groceries, where’s a good place to get a taco, that kind of thing.” In an alien world we do not have the fixtures of the familiar to orient us. Living in an alien world, with unfamiliar territory and language, offers beginning teachers a unique opportunity to embody strangeness and vulnerability over time. In the following narratives, ITEM teachers share their experiences with foreign language and location and how the resulting discomfort informed and transformed them and in turn their pedagogical practices at home.

It is important to note that of the eleven teachers in this study, current participants and graduates, all speak fluent English and two self-identified as having a functional level of Spanish. For the monolinguists, not being able to communicate in Spanish was the first encounter with discomfort as they met their mostly non-English speaking host families at the airport. Later, an inability to clearly communicate with their students, presented an additional layer of discomfort. Keeping in mind discomfort as without strength, and that language is used to communicate needs and wants and, more importantly, to build relationships, student teachers were without strength to negotiate their new environment to satisfy basic needs like hunger and fatigue, nor were they able to share stories, ask questions or accurately share emotions. For effective communicators at home, this discomfort was particularly alien as their attempts to be in relation with others were hindered.

To look more closely at the discomfort of unfamiliar language in an alien world and the ways it may play a formative role over time, interview responses from beginning

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7 While the majority of Oaxacans speak Mexican Spanish, this is often second to one of several Indigenous languages including, but not limited to: Náhuati, Zapotec, Mixtec and Mazateco. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/indigenous_people_of_oaxaca).
and experienced ITEM teachers will be shared. As a researcher and wayfarer, entering a dialogue with these story excerpts reveals the traces of teacher becoming.

4.1. Language

I was living with a family that spoke no English at all and it was one of those assumptions I made going in that all these families had been doing this for fifteen years with the program from SFU, like they’re going to be able to speak some basic kind of English and then you get there and it’s like, okay, this is going to be really hard. It’s uncomfortable. (Heidi, ITEM participant 2016)

Heidi’s narrative is representative of many who felt the awkwardness of not understanding the local language. An inability to communicate easily, especially when staying in someone’s home, created anxiety about being misunderstood or considered rude or ungrateful. There were also concerns about not being able to relate with each other, to forge a bond. Beginning teachers are living within the familiar structure of a family home, of which they are not really a part, and the usual family ties of shared histories and ways of being are not present. Kayla (ITEM graduate, 2006) commented that:

it was really hard to communicate with my host mom. She was asking me the things that I wanted. I didn’t know what she was saying. She was like “si, si” as she pointed at things. I remember drinking coffee, and I didn’t even like coffee. It was really hard. I felt ignored because I didn’t understand the language. We tried in the best way we could. I drew pictures. It was hard. It was really hard. I found myself in my room most of the time.

For both Heidi and Kayla, a break in communication led to feelings of isolation. Alternatively Rita, a current participant and self-identified Spanish speaker, said: “I felt for a lot of my other colleagues, going to ITEM, because I could tell [the language barrier] was really, really hard for them and I was unfazed by it.” Rita’s comment offers a counterpoint to the stories of Heidi and Kayla, and many non-Spanish speaking participants, further validating that a language barrier contributes to feelings of vulnerability.

As teachers of English in Oaxacan schools, frustration grew as ITEMites felt limited in their ability to communicate with their students. Heidi worried about wanting “to support my students in the best way possible but there was a language barrier and I felt I
was unqualified because I couldn’t speak Spanish and help them get to where they needed to be.” Like student teachers in a local practica, Heidi wanted to be knowledgeable and skilled enough to support her students’ learning. Without a shared language, she believed she was unable to even clarify the learning to be supported. ITEM students, in comparison to those who participate in a local practicum, have the added challenge of a language barrier impacting their ability to be for their students.

Lacking their usual comfort and confidence disrupted the typical teacher-student power structure and, in response, student teachers created effective learning environments through the relationships necessitated by this disruption. Heidi noted “it kind of forced the students to practice more English because they couldn’t rely on speaking Spanish like they could with their regular teachers.” Having observed Heidi teach, I noticed her careful preparation of lesson materials that included drawings to communicate English vocabulary and a variety of props to support conversation. It was clear that she had well-established routines for practicing sentence structure and she used patterned language activities to reinforce grammar. She was also open to her students teaching each other when she didn’t have the language to clarify understanding. Heidi found ways to communicate with her students and more importantly took time to build relationships with them. She greeted students by name and looked them in the eye when taking attendance. “Oaxaca taught me that language is such a big part of who we are.” Heidi found relational ways through her discomfort by “trying to make a game of it.”

Wayfaring with discomfort can inspire ways of relating in a teaching and learning environment that move beyond what is typically understood as the teacher-student relationship. Deleuze might say that disruptions such as this lead us to see beyond the overcoded striations of the classroom. In Heidi’s case, discomfort with unfamiliarity inspired intentional eye contact, learning each student’s name, and engaging in play. She developed a relational understanding of what it means to be an effective teacher. Maureen and Jorge come to mind.

The following narrative from Kayla provides an example of the potential pedagogical formativity of discomfort as it lives over time.

I think what I learned from that experience was the frustration of not knowing a second language like ELL students coming to my classroom and not knowing English. I guess that’s what I take out of that, an understanding of how the students feel so now I try to include them.
When I couldn’t understand what was going on] I felt ignored and pushed aside. I think I’m very sympathetic to that and trying my best to make students feel included and able to participate. It’s always in the back of my mind. (Kayla, ITEM graduate 2006)

Kayla knows what it feels like to be able to think and communicate fluently in her home language. In Oaxaca she became the language learner and now knows what it feels like to be hindered by language. Because of this embodied experience, she creates learning opportunities to minimize these feelings for the English language learners in her care. When planning lessons she takes time to consider how each student in her class will be able to participate meaningfully. Kayla has a relational understanding of teaching, viewing curriculum not as something to be taught, but rather as a vehicle for students to be cared for. As a long time graduate of the ITEM, the impact of her discomfort has remained with her. She continues to draw on the non-verbal teaching strategies she was “forced” to learn.

We read stories, we’d use our voices, we’d show them pictures, and they were totally engaged. It was the same with games. It was just seeing that we have your attention, you are enjoying this, you’re learning, we’re together. Some [games] you don’t need English words to play, right, but you can easily show the kids how to play. They loved it. It was quite significant to me. I find it fascinating, the common love of games, no matter what the language. (Kayla, ITEM graduate 2006)

Kayla discovered, as did I with Jorge and Maureen, that voice and gesture can be unifying. When we look into each other’s eyes, and through movement understand each other, relationships are forged and we can move along, “together” as Kayla says. Other participants commented on the importance of feeling the experience as a way of understanding it in ways they could not have otherwise. Embodied discomfort lingers and prompts attentiveness in those who host it.

Teachers navigate a wide range of real and perceived obstacles that sometimes create a sense of “otherness” in their classrooms. They are exposed to and expected to mediate a wide range of learning styles and abilities, beliefs and values, personalities and behaviours. Those who have lived with a sense of Other, even for a short time,

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8 host – from the Latin hospitem meaning guest, stranger, sojourner, visitor (www.eytmonline.com/word/host). I am inclined to consider the formativity of discomfort as more powerful when it is hosted as a guest, a strange guest, passing through. By hosting discomfort, allowing it to inhabit me and me to inhabit it we form a reciprocal, hospitable relationship.
express a commitment to a relationality that builds a culture of inclusion while addressing any real or perceived obstacles.

So if I hear or see anything that has to do with ousting or making somebody feel lesser, it’s really, really important to me to teach the values of acceptance to my class. And so I think my experience in Oaxaca only just…it sort of was like a spark for me, right? (Bonnie, ITEM graduate 2003)

Student teachers in Oaxaca spend time creating new relationships with places and people in an attempt to create a home world in a foreign place, if only temporarily. They find the nearest coffee shop, grocery store and hangout space. They learn the necessary words for getting along in each of these places. They acknowledge merchants and friends with smiles and buenas tardes.

Knowledge, from a relational point of view, is not merely applied but generated in the course of lived experience, through a series of encounters in which the contribution of other persons is to orient one’s attention…along the same lines as their own, so that one can begin to apprehend the world for oneself in the ways, and from the positions, that they do (Ingold, 2000, p. 145).

Wayfaring with discomfort, ITEM teachers have learned ways of being that support their own becoming and that of their students.

In addition to the challenges of language, ITEM students find themselves in unfamiliar territory. They are international students in a foreign country. Some are travelling without their parents for the first time. Heidi’s narrative speaks to a feeling of being the Other in an unfamiliar location and Bonnie, an ITEM graduate, reveals the importance of remembering this feeling when welcoming those who may find the classroom an alien place.

4.2. Location

We arrived at night and we didn’t know the city and I felt like I couldn’t leave my room because I was terrified of getting lost and I didn’t have a cell phone or Wi-Fi or Google map. You had this map (gestures rotating a paper map) which is so twenty years ago and why am I looking at a map trying to figure out where I am? How do I even read this thing? Which way does it go? Also, I stuck out so much as not being local and that drew attention I didn’t want and so sometimes I felt unsafe. It’s uncomfortable. (Heidi, ITEM participant 2016)
This was Heidi’s first experience of feeling Other. For the first time in her life she was not perceived to be like everyone else. She is tall and light skinned. She doesn’t speak Spanish. Heidi didn’t know her way around and worried about getting lost. She was dis-oriented and dis-connected. This experience can be bracketed to reveal discomfort as disrupted relationality. Heidi’s sense of herself as Other caused her to imagine how others might be perceiving her. Without the familiarities of her home environment, there is “a disruption in the normal order of things [which] first solicits…a pathos or affect as a kind of pre-reflexive suffering or irritation” (Howard, 2015, p.3).

Heidi’s insecurity resonates with me. My first steps into Oaxacan daylight were aimed at breakfast. My eyes did not calmly sweep my surroundings but darted at random targets. Seeking the familiar in the unfamiliar my eyes collected letters, finding only incomprehensible words. I settled on the chalkboard menu to my left with recognizable breakfast words – *huevos, café, pan* – representing the daily special. It seemed like a safe way to begin so, without exploring any further, I stepped inside. I felt the glance of seated patrons and perceived myself as foreign. My senses told me I was not at home; I was without bearings, uncomfortable, and even a little bit afraid of the unknown.

While spending time with beginning teachers in Oaxaca, I noticed that when visiting unfamiliar places with their local Faculty Associate, they had an increased ease about them even though the language and location were new to them. This is not surprising but what is worth noting is their repeated return to these places. While the unfamiliarity was no different from other local hangouts, they felt safe because Luis had been here and in Oaxaca, “everyone knows Luis, he is like the King here” (Colin)! This speaks to the importance of a trusting relationship for learning to thrive and supports Schultz (2017) and Zembylas and Papamichael’s (2017) notion that discomfort is best navigated with support. As the following section will show, this is remembered upon returning home and informs ways of being in the classroom.

The feeling of Other is powerful and common enough to be the substance of movies, books and stories by the fire. Some of us will engage in unhealthy relationships to gain a sense belonging and comfort, however tenuous, and to avoid the heartache of feeling alone. As educators we go to great lengths to ensure we have inclusive schools and classrooms where everyone who comes through the door feels welcome and safe.
Having experienced disrupted relations in Oaxaca, beginning teachers return home with a visceral understanding of being the outsider: the one who stands out, doesn’t understand what is being said, is afraid to make a mistake and longs to belong.

Such feelings hibernate inside Bonnie, a fourteen year ITEM graduate, and come forth when welcoming international students to her home and in her classroom of young children. She has experience with discomfort. Here, I use the term experience meaning to learn one’s way around, from the Greek ek – out of and peri – around as in perimeter, the measure of around. Also considered is the German term Erfahrung indicating a journey or traversing. (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 18). Bonnie has learned her way around the feeling of exclusion as she has journeyed through it.

My experience in Oaxaca always makes me think back to being here too. It makes me think about how would somebody, like a student or someone coming from another country, feel coming here? And I think for me it definitely reinforced the idea of the relationships beyond anything else. How important it is to have those with the kids. In Oaxaca, we weren’t doing a lot, we were teaching them colours right so it was just about being authentic and just engaging with them and really truly wanting to be there with them and wanting to teach them. Just having that physical touch and also just, they knew that we were really, really happy and excited to be there and we were, I remember we were all so excited. (Bonnie, ITEM Graduate 2002)

Bonnie speaks of authenticity and touch as the relational lines of flow through discomfort. With a deep understanding of feelings of alienation and isolation, she sees and uses the power of relationships to facilitate the becoming of her students with whatever challenges they may face. She has since engaged in graduate work in social emotional learning and says,

Maybe the foundation of my thinking hasn’t changed but I think maybe the way that I show it with my students between here and now, and fourteen years ago, perhaps has changed. The importance of the relationships with the kids has been reinforced, and being an authentic person and the care that’s involved.

Bonnie has drawn knowledge from her experiences hosting international students and being an international student and teacher, and “is particularly well equipped to have new experiences and to learn from them. Experience has its proper fulfillment not in definitive knowledge but in the openness to experience that is made possible by the experience itself” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 355 in Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 22).
4.3. Pedagogical Formativity

You lived it and once you lived it, you can carry it with you and I do have those moments when I’m in my classroom in my long term practicum where I will notice a feeling and I’m like, oh, I know that feeling [of being the other] and I’ve seen that happen and it just goes back to okay, that’s how I felt so I’ve changed my being, of how to be, and just to respond to that I guess would be a greater awareness. (Jamie, ITEM participant 2016).

Jamie, Heidi, Kayla, and Bonnie, have lived through something meaningful. They have all experienced; found their way around discomfort because “a disruption in [their] normal order of things solicited them” (Howard, 2014, p. 3). They were called to respond to unfamiliar circumstances. Their experiences stand out from the everyday, “distinguished in memory as a meaningful event to [them]” (Saevi & Eilifsen, 2008, p. 3). Importantly, there was enough support to facilitate moving through discomfort in order to realize its informative and transformative possibilities. “A pedagogy of discomfort and a pedagogy of comfort can coexist and, indeed, may need to occupy the same space in order to realize positive social change” (Schultz, 2017, p. 269). ITEMites have a cohort of peers and a local Faculty Associate to offer support and mentorship as powerful, emotional experiences are navigated in relation to becoming teacher and becoming human.

The decisive moment is the disruption that causes us to capture a memory and hold it as significant. We see from a particular perspective, an international perspective, as international students and teachers. Each of us remembers an embodied sense of dislocation, disorientation, and disconnection. These experiences live within us and we can’t help but see the world, see our students, from this perspective. Because we have experienced the disconnection of communication and the disorientation of unfamiliar ground, we can appreciate that our relationships to the world are deeply informed by our common experiences hence “the severing of relations is a kind of extinction of self, a profound emptiness” (p. 141) that can only be filled by being one for the other (Levinas).

Recalling my Ecuadorian encounter with Jorge and Maureen, and reflecting on the stories above, I continue to curate the journey of what it is like to be a teacher in an International Program. Which images portend the next? Which summon past travels? What binds these decisive moments? These are golden hour moments in which a sharp focus and soft gaze allow us to become more human, through self-discovery and in
relation with others. Each splays open our human vulnerability for ourselves and others to see. Each offers an opportunity to be one for the other (Lingis, 1994), to cor-respond, respond with heart (Ingold, 2013), to experience a “primary impulse, a life force, which animates the places inhabited” (Smith, 2014, p. 234). Whiling (Jardine, 2012) with these photographs shows me the path on which I am travelling alongly, becoming educator, becoming human (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

I wonder if these transformations could have occurred in a local setting. Beginning teachers in local practica also experience discomfort but with the background of familiar surroundings. One may have a discomforting experience and then return home where comfort and safety may be sought among known people and things. In Oaxaca, student teachers at the end of a challenging day return to a temporary home and a language not their own. There is little respite from disorientation. This sustained discomfort lends itself to dwelling, “to embark upon a movement along a way of life” (Ingold, 2011, p. 12) and becoming. To ease the discomfort, one is “forced” to try something different, to move along a new path, to rely on others. Colin (ITEM participant, 2016) commented that participating in an international program affords an experience:

that is different when you are somewhere for a week versus two months. You actually get in and you realize that it’s different. We were living there. When you live inside of your own country your entire life you get insular and you have a more difficult time looking outside of that experience. I think it’s important to know, especially at a young age, that yes, we’re learning how to do it this way, but there are other ways. There’s not just one way that everything’s done and one way you’re going to be good at something. There are a lot of different points of view. I would like to, in any future classroom, instill that.

The time spent with discomfort facilitates a wayfaring mindset where “skills are developed and understandings grown” (Ingold, 2011, p. 12).

While some of the discomforts experienced by student teachers may seem easily attributed to privilege and inexperience, I suggest they express something deeper. Being able to effectively communicate and locate oneself in a context are basic to a sense of well being. In the home world, the taken-for-granted fulfillment of these needs barely registers. But away from home, in an alien world, these needs become central to one’s sense of comfort and stability and an inability to meet them can interfere with the ability to relate with others.
Unlike beginning teachers in a local practicum, student teachers in Oaxaca have the opportunity to understand what it feels like to be a language learner. Their inability to communicate, receptively and expressively, created a discomfort that has translated to empathy and resourcefulness when planning for their current students. Remembering the intellectual and corporeal discomfort guides their current relational practice. “Emotion rather than intellect alone becomes the space in which teachers can act to constitute their identities and classroom practices” (Madrid et al., 2013, p. 276). As Levinas reminds us, “especially where I meet the other person in his or her weakness, vulnerability or innocence, I experience the undeniable presence of loving responsibility: a child who calls upon me may claim me in a way that leaves me no choice” (Levinas in van Manen, 1990, p. 6).

Knowing what this feels like, ITEM students develop an understanding of, and compassion for, students who “don’t get it” whether the barrier lies with language, capacity or content. They know the feeling of exclusion when everyone in the group understands but you. They recognize it in the facial expressions and body language of their students and are compelled to respond.

Student teachers in this international program have a rigorous schedule with educational seminars, cultural experiences and teaching expectations. They are to get to know their host families, neighbourhoods, and to find their way to Ollin⁹, where they will meet throughout the semester. Students are required to teach English classes in their placement schools. Their stories of these first few days embody discomfort as unfamiliar language and location leave them without a compass. Unfamiliarity takes us beyond our frame of reference and leaves us seeking new guideposts. We are invited to look beyond what we know and outward to what might be.

Holding the knot of discomfort as if a photograph taken in the golden hour, we can turn a non-judgmental gaze to the inbetween-ness of discomfort – desired for its capacity to inform and dreaded for its manifest awkwardness. We can ask: From what does discomfort arise and how is it lived with and through? The decisive moment, the moments chosen as significant, ask us to consider: Who am I that this moment is singled out?

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⁹ Ollin Tlachtoalli: Centro de Lenguas y Cultura Mexicana A.C. – a Spanish school, located in Oaxaca, founded on the principles of community engagement and social justice through education (ollinoaxaca.org.mx).
out as most significant to my teacher becoming? How am I situated and is this where I wish to be? We can examine the background and foreground of the photograph and ask ourselves: From what angles might this photograph be perceived? Gibson, in Ingold, tells us that the environment is “neither seen-at-this-moment nor seen-from-this point. On the contrary, what one perceives is an environment that surrounds one, that is everywhere clear, that is in-the-round or solid, and that is all-of-a-piece” (2011, p. 226). Holding the knot of discomfort, as if one can hold the movement of life, we are invited to consider paths we are travelling with all their “histories of movement and changing horizons along the way” (p. 227). There is an opportunity to articulate our becoming as it is happening. Our perception of the world, our perceptions of teaching and learning, are the “outcome of a lifetime’s observation along all the paths we have ever taken” (p. 227).
Chapter 5.

Learning in Community

The world is not what I think but what I live through. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xvi)

Photograph:

Whistling, yelling, and Spanish directives bounce off the street as vendors ready the market just outside of Hotel Casa Cue. Aromas of charcoal, gasoline, flowers and herbs mingle to confirm I am not yet familiar with this place. Eyes widen to interpret colour and movement, people and traffic. My slightly anxious belly rumbles, reminding me of today’s first task. To my left is a chalkboard menu with some recognizable words: huevos, café, pan. Alone, I step inside el restaurante with some trepidation. Using gestures and the few Spanish words in my repertoire, I order the desayuno especial.

In my foreground is a family eating at a nearby table. The atmosphere is joyful; laughter rings, hugs and kisses are exchanged. Multi-generational family members embrace around the table. Elders watch patiently and coach manners, children passionately express and absorb ways of being. Inter-generational inter-changes create safety, inspire confidence, and strengthen the meshwork of this community. Against the background of my discomfort I become intensely aware of eating as surviving and eating as thriving. The family before me nourishes bodies and spirits with a jovial buen provecho.

This photograph was selected from my shoebox as it represents a powerful moment of awakening. I felt the importance of spending time in relationship to living a well-lived life. Ingold’s inhabiting and Jardine’s lingering make sense, viscerally, in this

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10 Buen provecho, with no direct English translation, translates to the French “bon appetit” (Google Translator), a phrase commonly used to mean enjoy your meal. Since my revelation in Oaxaca I am wondering about what it means to eat well. To eat well is to enjoy food but also to sink into social time, to linger at a communal table. Snyder says, “Eating is a sacrament. The grace we say clears our hearts and guides the children and welcomes the guest, all at the same time” (Snyder, 1990a, p. 175 in Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 37).
scenario. My sudden understanding is that the way we eat reveals what we value. It strikes me how often I eat in proximity to people but not necessarily in conversation with them, how often I eat standing up, on the move, or alone. Eating is more often a function than an experience. The conditions we create for educational journeys reveal what we value. Teacher education courses often emphasize methodology over relationality. Classroom teachers are quick to move from one subject or project to the next to ensure the curriculum is covered. The pedagogical encounter is more often a function than a feeling. Only in a place away from home could such a realization be made as the familiar, eating in a restaurant, became strange in an unfamiliar context. At Colegio Motolinia de Antequera, a private school in Colonia Reforma, the decisive moment above entangled with a classroom experience.

Photograph:

“Maestra, Maestra!” Children clamour for their teacher’s attention as they do for the attention of their elders at the table. Words bump into each other across the classroom, the volume increases, as the teacher moves gracefully amongst her students acknowledging requests with gestures, expressions and brief conversations. With joyful communion, teachers and students tell stories, share laughter and exchange hugs. Multi-generational classroom participants embrace, teach, support and en-culture. Intergenerational inter-changes create safety, inspire confidence, and solidify the meshwork of community. (Personal journal, 2016).

I wonder how we might “break bread” in classrooms to bring a more relational, communal experience. How might educators draw on a familial and communal sensibility to respond in more pedagogically nuanced ways? I propose viewing the classroom as a communal table as a way to shift our ways of being, our practices, with children. The structure and edges of a “good” lesson plan, the mechanics of methodology, the sharply held professional boundaries may soften and blur, ease the tension, and in the meshwork of community make the unfamiliar spaces worth the while. Bodily closeness, a community sensibility, and time for digestion may open the space for honouring each other and the learning available. We are here for each other. In the classroom community, with all its many and varied ingredients and inter-relations we can say “buen provecho!”
Experiences in alien worlds afford opportunities for light breaks, for slight disruptions. We are struck by something. We know in the moment that “something is happening, something is at play” (Jardine, 2018, p. 5), even if its significance is not clear right away. A wayfaring perspective encourages us to notice entanglements as we go along, creating and following lines of flight. While we have a tendency, as educators, to travel in a straight line, to get to the point – picture a table of contents, a course syllabus, a scholarly paper – a life well lived is an entanglement of our movement through the world. The wayfarer’s act of travelling is an “ongoing process of growth and development, or of self-renewal” (Ingold, 2007, p. 76). Wayfaring teachers, then, travel with students and the curriculum creating knots on the meshwork, becoming as they go, breaking bread at a communal table.

In the next sections of this chapter, two ITEM participants share self-identified significant encounters and the ways in which they are informing their pedagogical thinking and practices. Their stories have been viewed through Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) notion of de- and re-territorializing what they call over-coded striations, entrenched perceptions of how things are. Wayfaring with Deleuze and Guattari and the beginning teachers in Oaxaca, I continue to reconsider my own understanding of the coded structures that often define and constrain the student-teacher relationship. My continued explorations are reminding me of Gadamer’s (1989) free spaces and Seidel and Jardine’s curriculum for miracles (2014), both of which seem not only possible but increasingly imperative in my own work as an educator.

5.1. Territorializing the Student-Teacher Relationship

Students in ITEM are treated to a wide variety of cultural experiences as part of the program. In Oaxaca, there are trips to some of the tourist stops such as Monte Albán and the Mercado de Benito Juarez. In such locations guided tours are provided and the local, Indigenous history is shared. In addition, because the Faculty Associate is a member of the community, ITEM students spend time with children and families in smaller neighbourhoods outside the city. They also live with local host families and have opportunities to attend family dinners and events. These opportunities, presenting the quotidian of schooling and living in Oaxaca, offer something different from a local
practicum making ITEM a unique experience that may inspire a more aware and tactful teacher. Wayfaring phenomenologically with these stories, we can consider what it is like to teach and learn in an international setting and what are some ways practices at home might be transformed as a result of our time away from home.

First is Colin who describes a shift from his coded understanding that his teacher role is to deliver a well-planned lesson to taking time to care for his students as a first priority. He has recognized and adopted the “intimate pedagogical act of responding and summoning” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 458 in Seidel & Jardine (2014, p. 3). Next, Jason shares a moment of discomfort that disrupts his notion of professional boundaries. In addition, Faculty Associate Luis explains his desire to move the teacher-student relationship away from the current model of teacher control.

Here is Colin’s response to a question about a significant experience in Oaxaca, focusing on the ways it may have impacted his teaching or way of being in the world.

The thing that sticks with me when I try to describe Santo Tomás was that first day that we went there and we were shown around the entire community by the kids. They were so excited and eager to show us some of the things that they had and the places that they went and you know, the homes they lived in. I was grabbed by the hand by a couple of kids who were really excited to show me things that weren’t the things I thought I would be seeing. I thought, oh, they’ll show me their school and they’ll show me like where their mom works or their dad works. No, they were like that’s where I go to class, it’s fine but I really want to show you this place where we do jumps off our bikes. Or I really want to show you this place where we catch insects or we pick pumpkins. It was incredible to see the perspectives and to get that first experience and have it be, oh, what is important to these kids, what do they care about? Rather than assuming or prescribing things that would have inevitably been wrong. (Colin, ITEM participant 2016)

Colin has discovered the importance of following children’s interests; their lines of movement are more telling and interesting than his overcoded teacher ideas. What he expected them to show him – where parents work, where they attend school – is an adult view, an educator’s view of what might be important in a child’s life. But, the children showed him otherwise. The children’s choices invited Colin to see the fullness

\[11\] Here I refer to van Manen’s (1986) interpretation of “pedagogical tactfulness” (p. 46) where teachers have a “particular sensitivity and attunement to situations” (p. 48).

\[12\] Here I refer to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concept of coding as the expected ways of being and doing things, that which is culturally accepted and expected.
of their lives. Colin’s eyes were opened to seeing children as having lives of their own, of being resourceful, of living right now, not needing adults to create a life for them in the present or prepare them for a future life. While telling this story, Colin’s voice rises in pitch indicating surprise and slight disbelief, along with a “this is wonderful” tone. He was clearly moved by the experience and his choosing of this decisive moment reveals a “light break, a slight disruption of normal experience in which things do not quite coincide with previous experience…in a practical, everyday situation” and “while such mundane tasks go largely unnoticed in the home world, they can take on new meanings and even spiritual dimensions under different circumstances” (Howard, 2015, p.5). Wayfaring this dusty path in rural Oaxaca has brought to the fore another way of relating with students and transformed Colin’s classroom practice.

I started every one of my classes here with check in. We would all sit in a circle and we would go around the circle. You’d have however much time you needed to tell me something you’re excited about, worried about, or what you had for breakfast or something that’s going on for you today. That helped me not come in with assumptions to the classroom and I see that first initial experience in Santo Tomás as sort of akin to doing one big check in. (Colin, ITEM participant 2016)

Colin didn’t adopt the practice of getting to know his students through a methodology course. Instead, he took the invitation to be in relationship with his students in an entanglement of living experience and was awakened to their inner lives in a way that shifted his thinking, his being and his classroom practice. This encounter struck Colin as it wasn’t what he expected. The children re-territorialized the relationship between teacher and student by taking the lead to share what was of interest to them. In turn, Colin de-territorialized the classroom space by refusing to remain confined to the “dominant system of signification…in order to make new connections” (Roy, 2013, p. 21) with respect to pedagogical practices. In the next section, Jason shares a similar story of disruption that shifted his perspective on the expected performances of a teacher-student relationship.

Jason’s high-school students invited him on a forest hike on an early Saturday morning. Initially reticent to socialize with his students on the weekend for fear of crossing professional boundaries, he decided the chance to spend time in nature was too great to miss. Jason met his students on a street corner at 6:00 am and was led on a mountain hike. Along the trail, Jason had an embarrassing moment and it was necessary to reveal more about himself than he would have liked and to rely on his
students for guidance. In doing so, he risked discomfort that resulted in an evolving perspective on the possibilities of the student teacher relationship.

I saw them, my students, outside the school context where I didn’t have authority as a teacher. I saw the way they are and I think back and realize that they were already showing me they were capable. I didn’t have my teacher hat on, they didn’t have their student hats on, and it was really nice. I would never have discovered that place if it was not for them. And, um the students related to me in a different way outside the classroom, they were sort of, we were more equals. (Jason, ITEM graduate 2002).

Like Colin, Jason is seeing his students with fresh eyes. When the teacher enters the child’s space and follows the lead, the usual power dynamic, the typical coding, is disrupted and new ways of being together emerge. Both the student and the teacher become individuals in relation with each other. Jason continues to reflect on the expected performances of formal schooling and the coded relationships therein and goes on to say:

This just came to me, we may not be able to easily affect the kinds of directions an institution takes but I do think we need people who don’t adhere to the harshness of those imperatives. There’s a kind of hardness to [just one way] but to be able to say life is not going to be that bad if you don’t have your [usual comforts], many people have experienced life without these things. It’s softer. There’s more room for possibilities.

Jason is questioning the overcoded striations of the institution. Because of his international experience where disruptions occurred and alternate performances were afforded, he is not bound by the molar (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), the well-defined, but able to see and follow many possible lines of flow. He is:

not so convinced that what we do, that the imperatives that keep coming along the way, everything has to go in a certain way, I don’t think I am as bound by that. Having the Oaxacan context brought a lot of questions in my mind. That this is one context, in a certain way, I have to work in this context but at the same time, I’m not under the spell of whatever enthusiasm that seemed to be going around.

Disruptions caused Colin and Jason to re-territorialize the teacher student dynamic. They have been vulnerable to their students, following their lead and taking a turn toward an increasingly relational pedagogy. In addition, Jason has expanded his view of schooling as an institution and is less likely to “come under the spell” of the latest
educational initiative. This tangled mess of interwoven and complexly knotted strands, gathered in Oaxaca is creating a path for a more relational pedagogical practice.

Faculty Associate Luis speaks about the importance of shifting the paradigm in education that puts teachers always in control.

When the kids take them and show them the community, unconditionally, then a lot of things click for them. I think one of the most important ones is that they are not in control. It’s the kids who are in control. I think that, for me, especially for this program, is a wonderful way to start resetting the paradigm of education a little bit, which is one of the components of the program. As any professor, we work around our own philosophical understandings or beliefs. That’s one of my beliefs that we need to change the paradigm that education is about controlling. (Luis, Faculty Associate, Oaxaca)

Luis also speaks to re-territorializing the expected performances between students and teachers. As an experienced teacher and teacher educator, it is his intention to show novices that a different kind of relationality – one that is more reciprocal, less power structured and linear, in fact more rhizomatic – has benefit. If we are to have any prospect of shifting the tide of humanity from one of power and control then surely educational institutions ought to be leading the way.

5.2. Becoming

Deleuze and Guattari’s *becoming* is a complex concept that refers to the ongoing movement and transformation of being in relation to other beings, or perhaps one could say of *becomings* in relation to other *becomings*. “Becoming is the something else, the newness that is created. Becoming is the movement through a unique event that produces experimentation and change” (Youngblood Jackson, 2010, p. 581). Novice teachers come to their practice with coded, well-defined, ideas about how teachers and students are to behave in school settings. Colin’s and Jason’s experiences in the community disrupted their understandings and they changed as a result of moving through an experience.

Colin’s wayfaring invited him to know his students rather than assuming things about them. He commented that letting go of assumptions was also important when in unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people. When asked how this realization impacted him, he said:
getting thrown into a culture where you know very little, essentially next to nothing, makes you realize that you don’t know everything. I think I’m more contemplative than I was just because you know, we are constantly in growth and that we are capable of experiencing a negative thing and learning more from it than we would a positive.

Colin’s comment that we are constantly in growth reminds me of Ingold’s statement that we are “always humaning, creating [ourselves] as we go along” (2015, p. 140). Deleuze and Guattari say that “the process of becoming-other is theoretically unending” (Semetsky & Lovat, 2011, p. 489). Colin realizes that disruptive moments have been significant in his becoming-teacher.

Jason, an ITEM Graduate, former Faculty Associate and practicing teacher, has been becoming-teacher for many years. Remembering his novice teaching days he recalled a time of discomfort as significant to his practice as an educator. When asked how discomfort has facilitated his becoming over time, he said:

all of those experiences going through self-doubt, going through with something despite doubt is empowering in a way because I can look back and say I did that and I felt the same as I do now. I’m going to continue to do things; I won’t be deterred by doubt. But also, the capacity to do something that is entirely frightening like something that in some ways I know I have no skills or repertoire of my own inventory of skills to be able to cope, that kind of fear, I don’t know if it’s a kind of capacity but it sets me up to be able to take on other challenges in the future.

Following Ingold’s (2011) wayfaring, Jason’s remembering photographs of doubt over time have not led to knowledge that can be applied only to specific situations but rather he has “stories of journeys actually made” (p. 154) that inform a way of being as he makes his way through the world. “Wayfaring yields an alongly integrated, practical understanding of the lifeworld” (p. 154).

Spending time in Santa Tomás and in the mountains, with students leading the way, inspired curiosity about and respect for their lives outside of school as they were seen as capable leaders and holders of local knowledge – one could say – wayfarers! The usual student teacher code was disrupted and re-territorialized during uncomfortable encounters. Within these encounters, new perspectives, frames of reference and ways of being were made available for both the teachers and the students in their becoming-human in relation with one another.
Decisive moments when “all my senses were so heightened” (Nancy, ITEM participant, 2016) invite us to linger just long enough to “become other, grow, and form [oneself] as increasingly adept and responsive to other beings” (Smith, 2011, p. 24). The space inbetween the familiar and the strange, comfort and discomfort, the home world and the alien world affords an opening, an entanglement, a knot “where we can sense in the smallest or largest of events, that something is going on” (Jardine, 2018, p. 5).

Attending to these entanglements is not “from having arrived at a position but from being pulled away from it, from displacement” (Ingold, 2015, p. 134). Repeated displacements away from familiar language, location and community in an international practicum have revealed to these study participants that their identities, and teacher identities, are an ever-evolving social construction (Britzman, 2003). One does not become a teacher rather one is becoming-teacher all the time, over time.

5.3. Pedagogical Formativity

As indicated in the previous sections, learning in community is memorable. Consider your own childhood school experiences – what you are more likely to remember is your class camping trip or adventure to the market over a lesson on the structure of government. Beginning teachers, with sparkling eyes and vibrant gestures, remember and share stories about their experiences in the community not workshops on the technicalities of lesson planning and classroom management. What are the elements of learning in community that make it so memorable? It is unpredictable, unexpected, and potentially uncomfortable. It is alive! In the community, participating in the life of those we encounter, learning is experienced viscerally. We feel it, we are learning within rather than about. Like Jorge and Maureen, Oaxacan children and Canadian novice teachers are invited into Ingold’s (2011) correspondence, or response from the heart.

Without a common language and with little if any knowledge of the community, ITEM participants are called to respond to and with students in their communities. Without familiar structures in place we learn to be rather than to do. Jason (ITEM graduate, 2002) spoke of having his familiar world “shattered” by the “beautiful simplicity of their lives and the openness and generosity of relationships” while visiting a rural neighbourhood. This experience in a rural village, not available to students in a local practicum, disrupts, or as Jason says, “shatters” our familiar ways of being, shows us another way, and shows us what is valued and valuable. Perhaps Jason is inspired to be
a more empathic, relational teacher because his world has been shattered through an international experience. In common with other participants, it was mostly community experiences, having nothing to do with the mechanics of teaching but everything to do with the knotting that contributes most powerfully to becoming-human and becoming-teacher.

This additional layer of discomfort, of disruption, afforded by an international placement could not be replicated in the comfort of one’s own home. Discomfort as a fecund space is understood across many disciplines, as mentioned in Chapter Three. This puts SFU’s ITEM in a unique position within teacher education programs. Comments from this study’s participants make it evident that the becoming gained in Oaxaca could not have happened at home. Citing discomfort with the unfamiliarity of language, location, and community experiences strongly suggest that life lived away, in discomfort, affords life-altering entanglements that in turn inform pedagogical practices.

It is important at this juncture to be reminded of Boler’s (1997) passive empathy. Have ITEM participants managed to “empathize with the very distant other, [and] recognize [themselves] as implicated in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront” (p. 257)? When I wonder about Michael in Ngombe and Heidi shares concern for the children in Cuajimoyas, do we ask ourselves: what is my responsibility for and in this entanglement? Do we become educators who address such concerns actively? Longitudinal studies might answer such questions definitively, however the stories told by ITEM graduates suggest a greater awareness of the impact of their presence in the world because of their international program. While they may or may not take action to address specific social forces that create obstacles, their stories indicate an awareness and intentional response to mitigate obstacles in the classroom. Bonnie (ITEM graduate 2003) spoke for many when she said, “I had a lived experience of being a foreigner and it made me a more reflective and aware person.” It is the ongoing journey that shows us who we are and where we stand, just now.

Each ITEM participant, students in the program and those who have graduated, referenced a community experience as being significant to their becoming-teacher. These experiences involved discomfort or surprise and resulted in a shifting perspective, a new relational lens through which to view teaching and learning. Interestingly, each experience shared was set in rural Oaxaca, not in the neighbourhood in which they were
living and teaching. These life experiences have a powerful influence on pedagogical practice as the dominant discourse of what it means to be a teacher is disrupted. When Colin was “grabbed by the hand” he was drawn into a community and another thread on the meshwork was knotted. Faculty Associate Luis reminds us “resetting those beliefs is the first step to becoming better educators or more responsible educators.”
Chapter 6.

Horizons as Invitations

Photograph:

It’s my first time in Oaxaca with student teachers from SFU’s International Teacher Education Module and I am just checking things out in anticipation of conducting some research here next year. I visited a few schools today and wow – classroom behaviour is different! It is so noisy – outside the open classroom window is a cacophony of practicing bands and physical education classes, inside kids are talking over the teacher, wandering around or doing seemingly irrelevant work. There is frequent calling out, laughter and comings and goings. Older students are quite publicly affectionate with one another. It feels chaotic and joyful and exciting and uncomfortable at the same time. The teachers seem completely unfazed, like this is just how it goes. What is happening here that doesn’t happen at home and for what reasons? (Personal travel journal, 2015)

The photograph above presents a sharp contrast to my well-defined notion of what a productive classroom looks like. Smith & Almarza (2009) propose “if culture infuses the sense of place, and if it is seen, felt, heard, tasted and smelled, then culture may be sensed as permeating the schools and classrooms, especially in contrast to what is recalled of the senses of being in classrooms back home” (p. 11). I am reminded again of the family in the restaurant enjoying breakfast together. That same joviality, joie de vivre, alegría de vivir, permeated the classrooms I was privileged to visit. If the culture of a place permeates the classroom as Smith and Almarza propose then the physical expression (moving, laughing, calling out) of vitality makes sense in an Oaxacan classroom. While such behaviour might not make sense in a Lower Mainland classroom, perhaps having lived it will inform a teacher’s attunement to the many ways of living, teaching and learning. Perhaps this teacher will be more able and likely to dwell in possibilities for classroom life because of her experience away. The pedagogical question at the fore is about how we might protect ourselves from the confinements of the coded notions of an effective learning environment and open ourselves to a wider range of possibilities.
All of the novice teachers who participated in this study spoke to classroom noise as a disruptive and a perceived impediment to their ability to teach and students' ability to learn. Questions about the effectiveness of noisy classrooms in the Oaxacan context have been considered for at least ten years, as evidenced by Smith and Almarza (2009). A participant story from their study mirrors my own.

Students in Oaxaca classrooms are very demanding. They continue to yell “teacher, teacher!” even when you are busy helping another student. They bombard you whenever they have a question or are finished working on something. Some of the students sit at their desks and yell, while others come up to you and follow you around. Often they don’t seem to care if they are interrupting when you are with another student, and will drag you over if they need you or even just to see something irrelevant to the work they are supposed to be doing. Why the impatience and behaving in ways we find rude? (ITEM participant, 2009, quoted in Smith & Almarza, p. 13)

I suggest wayfaring gives us the opportunity to get out from under the weight of discomfort and the befuddlement of anxiety that tends toward judgment. Through our experience with the strange we might notice that “our lived surroundings teach, and that our attunement to these teachings is key to a thoughtful, sustainable and livable future” (Seidel & Jardine, 2016, p. 1). In the next two sections of this chapter, three narratives are presented, each showing a turn toward a relational approach to being with students in schools.

6.1. Chaos or Communion?

In Oaxacan classrooms, noise is initially described as uncomfortable, even rude. However, over time, beginning teachers consider the cultural complexions (Smith & Almarza, 2009) of this vibrant place and wonder about the various ways a productive classroom might look and feel with a turn toward a relational pedagogy. In the next section Heidi, Lisa, and Kayla show how their international practicum informed their evolving pedagogies.

It was sometimes an adjustment to get used to the level of noise. They would run their P.E. classes in the middle of the courtyard and all the classrooms were open to this courtyard and sound really travels when you’re trying to do a lesson. It feels a little bit more crazy. They had so many community events where you could feel the school had such a strong community. It included parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles and everybody and so the students were also really
involved in their traditional dances and artwork that they would put on for these community events. (Heidi, ITEM participant 2016)

Heidi initially found the noise distracting to her teaching but upon reflection gained an understanding that lives lived outside of school were not necessarily left outside the door. She noticed that there are “different ways of living and those students are cared for and loved by their families and are happy and they have that sense they belong to their community.” She came to see that the intergenerational participation in traditional events wove its way into the school context, which led her to:

celebrate student strengths and let them choose the way they want to demonstrate the learning outcomes and bringing their personal experiences into the classroom and allowing students to tell a story about something that happened to them.

Students embody their community in and outside of school, in the classroom and at the table, along “a meshwork of entangled lines of life, growth and movement” (Ingold, 2011, p. 63). Considering Heidi’s comments, I am reminded of the way our stories draw us in together. A good story inspires conversation, stimulates inquiry and engages our emotions. To share a personal story is to carve a message to say, “I am here.” Stories reach out and connect us to one another. An attuned teacher entangles student stories with each other and with the curriculum. The classroom becomes a place of lives lived, or lives living, rather than a place of preparation for some imagined real life outside of school. This is contrary to the efficiency model that has taken hold of our schools where “intellectual whiling in the leisures (schola) of school simply seems dense and unproductive (Jardine, 2012, p. 175). It is my deepest hope that Heidi retains her belief in the importance of entangling worlds, school and home, with stories and brings this home to her classes in the face of pressures to do otherwise.

Lisa’s story is shared here in two parts that reveal a shift in her pedagogical postures. Like Heidi, she has reflected on the perceived chaos of a classroom and taken time to notice what is really going on. Lisa finds herself striving to hold on to her new thinking and way of being in the classroom despite different expectations from her school culture at home.

I have always grown up with the notion that the teacher is at the front of the class giving the lesson, everyone has to be completely quiet, you have to listen to what the teacher says and if you don’t its
disrespectful. That’s how I grew up. That’s how I always saw education and teaching and being a student.

Lisa came to teaching with a deeply coded understanding of the teacher role – “give a lesson” and the student role – “be quiet.” Her time in Oaxaca offered her another perspective.

In Oaxaca, the kids are always talking and it’s always noisy. I don’t think I ever had a quiet classroom. But I came to realize that the kids were paying attention. They knew exactly what was going on, they were aware and they could do the work. And so it was a big shift for me that quiet doesn’t always necessarily mean focused and engaged. So that was really interesting and something I tried to bring back here. (Lisa, ITEM participant, 2016)

Lisa has made a “big shift” in her understanding of a productive learning environment. Circulating amongst her students, who were “always talking,” she noticed that their conversation was most often directed at the task before them. My visit with students in her classroom revealed that they were helping each other to learn English words as they sought to accurately place furniture pictures onto the rooms of a house. Opening herself to the culture of this classroom and encouraging her students to work together opened the space for a decisive moment in a student conversation of which I was privileged to be a part. I tell this story not to focus on me, but rather to shine a light on the possibilities for entanglement on the path of ever-moving teacher-becoming. A return to Lisa’s evolving pedagogy will follow.

While arranging pieces of furniture, one student placed a bed in the living room. Putting on my best teacher questioning facial expression, I pointed to his paper house. He asked: "¿por qué no puede ir en la sala?" “Why can’t it go in the living room?” Well, I thought, because people sleep in the bedroom not the living room. Here a beautiful disruption occurred and I was instantly faced with my privileged, coded notion of where people sleep. In this uncomfortable moment, I had a choice to move out of my teacher role as having the correct answer to conversing, even communing with a child about where people sleep in his home. While arms reached between us, for scissors and glue, the movement and sounds of the classroom faded to the background as I invited this boy to tell me about his home. In broken Spanish and English and with the support of his tablemates, I learned that with several intergenerational family members sharing a small house, three people slept in the living room.
Not only were the students helping each other with language learning but also, their open conversation was teaching me to become an increasingly attentive, sensitive and relational teacher.

Upon return to Canada, Lisa’s mentors reminded her about quieting the classroom. She felt conflicted as her Oaxacan experience showed her that conversation and movement, essential to relationships, was a supporter of learning. Conversation is communal, relational and opens the space for deeper understanding of one’s students. Of course, it takes some experience for teachers to know when noise is helping or hindering learning and there are many subtleties to be learned. The point is that this novice teacher is wayfaring, learning as she goes. Lisa’s lived experience in Oaxacan classrooms has informed her pedagogy at home and so she is fulfilling the task of the wayfarer, which is “not to act out a script received from predecessors but literally to negotiate a path through the world (Ingold, 2011, p. 162).

Kayla’s (ITEM graduate, 2016) narrative tells another story about being in relationship with children because of her Oaxacan experience. She recalls a new student joining her class and the challenges some of his behaviours presented. She feels she was able to understand and support this student because of her international experience.

When I had Darren¹³ last year, for example, I knew where he was coming from. I understood. Just knowing, the whole being in the culture and immersed and seeing the way students behaved there and the way they’re disciplined there. What we saw in the classroom [with Darren] didn’t really surprise me because this is very different than what he came from. The expectations are quite different, I think. It was tough! I feel like through those experiences [in Oaxaca], I’m able to connect to some of the students as well by understanding those experiences. Seeing what the kids were like, what everything was like.

Darren was used to moving about, talking, relating with his peers in his home world. Now, in Canada, an alien world for him, things didn’t make sense and his behaviour stood out as rude or non-conformist. Because Kayla had an Oaxacan practicum she had the ability to see Darren with a soft gaze. Her frame of reference went beyond the well-defined frame of a Burnaby school and she found ways to allow Darren

¹³ Darren is a pseudonym for a grade 1 student in Kayla’s class. Darren’s home country is Mexico and he speaks Spanish. Darren and his family had been in Canada for a few months at the time of this interview.
his space to move and relate. Rather than problematize the child, she adjusted the environment so that he might find his way with her attentive coaching.

Kayla could block out the “noise” of expectation that codes our perception of what a good teacher does, how an effective teacher controls her students perhaps because she had a noisy experience in Oaxaca. As teachers we need to be able to listen through the “cacophony of how tos and why nots, noise so thick that even the reasoned voice, the sound advice is lost in the background, overwhelmed by questions and evolving assumptions” (Hassett, 2016, p. 221).

Each of the stories above reveals the ways in which an international practicum can inform a relational pedagogy as novice teachers are faced with discomfort. While initially focussed on the mechanics of teaching and assuring a controlled learning environment, each teacher was able to move toward a more open position from which to approach and guide her students. “There is an evident and, for some student teachers, disturbing noisiness to the Oaxacan classrooms. Some student teachers go no further than interpreting this unruliness as a lack of classroom management on the part of their sponsor teacher” (Smith & Almarza, 2009, p. 12). The participants and researcher in this present study, however, were able to move from disruption of the unfamiliar to a broader view of what classroom life might be. Heidi noticed and welcomed students lives outside of the school into the classroom; Lisa shifted her understanding of the roles teachers and students are expected to play; and Kayla opened time and made space for Darren to settle in.

6.2. Hard and Soft Edges

Photograph:

Clustered between a brick wall and wooden fence, dirt beneath our feet, we listen to Michael enthusiastically share his knowledge. I marvel at what Michael and his peers call school. Out of a closet containing donated books and markers, outdated maps and teaching posters, along with jars of peanut butter and loaves of Wonderbread, came the rickety chalkboard toward which Michael points as he announces each label and carefully explains each step of a life sustaining cycle. Here we are in Africa, where rain and clean water are scarce, and we are hearing
about the water cycle. Seems ironic in a way and I feel weird about being a
privileged North American being presented to as a “special guest.” (Personal
travel journal, 2009).

Here, in a Zambian compound called Ngombe, the shutter clicked, an impression
was made and today, nine years later, I realize that this was a decisive moment in my
travels as a person and an educator. Against my privileged background of what school
and learning look like, Michael came to the foreground, shining light on my situatedness
and offering another perspective about the heart of schooling – not the furniture, current
books and smart boards, but the power of knowing about the world and the pride in
sharing that knowledge. Looking back, my “weird” feeling is really discomfort from a
place of privilege where I “marvel” at the mud alley school containing none of those
things. The shining light in Michael’s eyes is as bright as that of my students at home
when they learn something new and the feeling of teacher pride just as fulfilling. The
background of the “things we can’t do without” in our classrooms at home recedes to
centre my gaze on what is really necessary. Having wayfared briefly with Michael, in his
school, I am called to view the horizon where the earth meets the sky and “where the
reach of the imagination meets the friction of materials” (Ingold, 2013, p. 73) as an
invitation to keep going rather than the place that stops movement.

While the international experiences above focused on ways classroom pedagogy
has been informed, the following section picks up the knot and threads its way to larger
scale disruptions in the system of education. Jason’s recollections below entangle with
my own as we talk together about the expectations of a system that challenges our
deeply felt desire for schools to be places of wonder and beauty. We agree that our
perspectives have been shaped by our experiences in places away from home, as this is
where the contrasts face us, disrupt and discomfort us. It is as if we are caught, in a
moment, in the place in-between what is familiar and unfamiliar. Ingold (2015) calls this
arterial, rather than liminal space, “where between is liminal, in-between is arterial;
where between is intermediate, arterial is midstream” (p. 147). Jason and I are
midstream, our thinking and practices as long-time educators are always moving, as
wayfarers must. Jason’s musings inspired the title of this chapter section: Hard and Soft
Edges.
Meeting Oaxacan families and spending time in their communities, Jason has been struck by “the beautiful simplicity” of their lives. He speaks this phrase with reverence, almost breathlessness, as he questions the confinements of expected performances within the larger system of education at home. It is worth noting here that it is from a place of privilege that Jason and I can talk about a “beautiful simplicity” for we too could live such a life if we chose. The families and communities referred to in our conversation do not have the luxury of choosing something different. It is possible that from another perspective this beautiful simplicity would be described as great hardship. Jason’s phrase has been offered to make a distinction between the soft, relational edges he found in Oaxaca and the harder, more technical edges he experienced upon return to Canada to complete his long practicum. He also shares a story that came much later in his teaching career that illuminates the formativity of a relational pedagogy as inspired by international experiences. Let’s begin with Jason’s return home.

One of the difficult adjustments after I came back from Oaxaca was to go into a 405 situation in a Canadian school and suddenly there are units and curriculum mandates, objectives to meet, lesson plans to do all the time and SAs and an FA who had expectations about how my Canadian classroom is to be run. So in some ways I put aside whatever I did for 401/2 in Mexico and concentrated on what needed to be done in 405 even though there were explicit attempts by my FA to make the connection. I think it was (pauses, deep sigh) minute compared to what the demands of the classroom presented. And in my career as a teacher, yeah, it was the curriculum and the provincial exams as well [that guided my practice]. (Jason, ITEM graduate 2002)

Jason’s comments are representative of many ITEM students who participated in this study and those with whom I have chatted informally. While in Mexico, student teachers were inspired to come to know themselves as people and educators in an alien world. They worked with a local Faculty Associate whose intent is for his students to experience discomfort and disruption in a supportive environment. Student-teachers have their eyes opened to ways of living and schooling that they may not have considered before and it is this discomfort, this unfamiliarity, that influences their teaching practices for years to come. Returning home to complete a long practicum in a Lower Mainland school, many students express an abrupt halt to the relationality of Mexico to the technicality of Canada, as Jason’s comments exemplify.

Jason’s journey is taken up several years later and he speaks animatedly about “having the taste” of something alive in Oaxaca and how he could never go back to a
“hard” teaching practice. Here he describes a meeting with colleagues revealing the impact of his pedagogical wayfaring, which no longer allows him to participate in the over-coded roles of a confining system.

When I became an English Department Head, I went to the meetings where all the Department Heads were and I saw all the tired and jaded teachers that had been teaching for a long time and any idea that gets put out there, shoot it down right away. And people who were just like look, I’ve been doing this since 1965. And I thought I have to be on guard, I don’t want to have that attitude.

While recalling this moment, Jason’s photograph develops further.

Here’s a thought that’s just occurring to me right now if we go with hard and soft. Hard or adhering to a kind of harsh, hard model or an attitude with education, it feels a certain way. A softer approach also feels a certain way. I wonder if this hardness becomes a kind of brittle, something that’s more easily shattered? Soft is more flexible, supple.

Jason makes a connection between his Oaxacan experience and his way of thinking and being as an educator. We can appreciate how the vibrant culture of his international practicum has inspired a relational, flexible approach to his practice. Jason’s horizons of possibility can never be hard or limiting.

I think that going to a new place and feeling the freshness, the challenge of living anew, meeting people who come from an entirely different field of experience, that is very vibrant, and rejuvenating and exciting whereas insisting on something over and over again, trying to make something conform, which is more to do with the hard attitude, of education, feels a certain way too. It can be exhausting, it’s frustrating and I think perhaps remembering what it was like to be in a new place and to leave my agenda and to just let something arise, that is the taste of it, you don’t forget it. And then the hardness becomes unpalatable. Maybe that’s why I left the classroom at a time when I started to feel cynical. I don’t want to become that. (Jason, ITEM graduate 2002)

Jason and I have wayfared in similar places and I commiserate with the sometimes uphill battle to maintain the soft edges, to dwell in the arterial spaces, when the institution itself and some of the people within it seem to be living a hard line or narrow path, moving from one destination to the next, showing me how to be a proper educator. Sometimes I just need to breathe “a soft breath,” that inspires a curriculum of miracles (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 13). Jason’s words – “freshness, anew, vibrant,
rejuvenation” – are living words, words of excitement and freedom. They breathe life into classrooms and schools where movement is constant and welcome.

6.3. Pedagogical Formativity

Experiencing schooling away from home reveals that productive classrooms and schools exist in a variety of iterations. Learning can happen in a wide range of locations and with few or many resources. In this chapter we saw how the culture of a place and its people must inevitably seep into its schools and classrooms and our experience of these unfamiliarities might jar us into new ways of thinking and of “living anew” (Jason, ITEM graduate 2002). Education need not focus on “small ideas such as preparing children to be future workers in a global economy” (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 11). Yet, for beginning teachers it can feel impossible to hold on to the vibrancy and relationality of an Oaxacan classroom in the face of pressures at home.

It is typical and understandable that the concerns of beginning teachers lie with the technical aspects of teaching, whether in local or international practica. They want to know how to plan a lesson, how to manage a class, how to teach certain subjects, how to keep everything under control. These technical aspects are grouped beneath the intimidating heading of instructional control. Broadly, teachers are deemed to have instructional control when all students are able to participate in meaningful learning, in a calm, orderly environment. This orderliness is often the informal measure used to judge teacher competence by colleagues and parents and is therefore a powerful influence on practice. It can be especially confining when novices are attempting to earn teacher certification.

It is heartening to hear stories like those above as they show that a relational pedagogy can be inspired away and lived at home. Living with “noise” led to inquiry about its cultural foundations and onward to informing teaching practices – welcoming student’s whole lives, listening to and adapting classrooms for children, and softening the edges of a system. In an alien world, steeped in discomfort, beginning teachers leaned on each other while feeling, discussing and confronting their personal and social identities. Their “collective witnessing” (Boler, 199, p. 176) opened the door to seeing differently, to seeing something “larger and other than ourselves” (p. 178). ITEM provides a container for these becomings to be opened when the time is right at home.
Despite the pressures of curriculum delivery and instructional efficacy, international teaching experiences have been pedagogically formative and, by the participants and accounts in this study, acknowledged and nurtured.
Chapter 7.

Who Chooses ITEM?

Let’s take a short detour to consider a question often on people’s minds. As noted in Willard-Holt (2000, p. 505), “there is little controversy surrounding the value of cross-cultural experiences for teachers.” What has been questioned is: Do international teacher education programs foster intercultural competence, an openness to diversity, cultural sensitivity, and “an ethnorelative world view necessary for responsive teaching” (Marx and Moss, 2011, p. 35) or do those who choose an international program come into it with such a view already? Are current international teacher education modules nurturing existing qualities and, if this is the case, how might we inspire those who don’t already possess these qualities into the program?

The assumption in the paragraph above is that intercultural experiences, travels away from home, lend themselves to the development of a broader view of the human condition and therefore a more responsive teacher. This could be argued but it is not the purpose of this paper to reject the assumption, as the goals of ITEM would suggest a belief in this tenet.

Within the group of participants in this study there were some who had travelled extensively prior to Oaxaca and others who had never travelled abroad before. It would be easy to assume that those who choose ITEM already have the qualities that the program wishes to cultivate or at least an aspiration toward them. Since a comparison study (local versus non-local) practica, measuring ITEM goals, has not yet been done and since ITEM participants can only imagine what they would or would not have gained in a local practicum, an empirical conclusion cannot be drawn. But, given that there were participants in this study from both travelling and non-travelling backgrounds, I propose prior travel alone is not the only determinant in cultivating a responsive teacher, though of course it is one of the knots in the meshwork that facilitates the kind of teacher-becoming that an international teacher education module aims for.

What follows are excerpts from several participant interviews that draw attention to teacher becoming in an international practicum whether or not one has previously
been a traveller. While institutional pre- and post-trip surveys, using rating scales and some short answer questions report that ITEM does indeed meet its goals, the stories below offer, I suggest, a more layered picture of ITEM’s impact. It is the knotting of discomfort in an alien world that disrupts just enough to move participants along the meshwork in ways that have the potential to change the way we wayfare in schools, over time.

Natalie (ITEM participant 2016), who has travelled extensively before and has a functional level of Spanish, was surprised at the intensity of her initial discomfort once in Oaxaca.

Going into it, I was like, I got this. Why are we doing these seminars on culture shock? I’ve travelled before. I grew up in Southern California and I’m slightly familiar with Mexican culture. I know how to speak a bit of Spanish. I was just so excited going into it and then I got very homesick, which I did not expect. Right around – pretty early on, actually, I think early October. It was when Fall started to hit here and all the leaves started changing, because that’s my favourite time of the year. All my friends were sending me pictures of it. And then I missed Thanksgiving at home. I think that’s when it really hit. So that was particularly challenging.

Reminded of her friends, family and the seasons and traditions of home, Natalie was surprisingly discomforted by her alien world. Despite her excitement, previous travels and familiarity with the language, Natalie had to live through something, as she knew she was “not going to go home.” Natalie both lived through her discomfort and, as her words tell us below, she believes she is better for it.

I think through that you learn so much about yourself. I think the biggest thing I took was that I could do it. I think looking back on it now it’s – as much as I hated it then, I wouldn’t necessarily mind doing it over. You get out the other end of it and come out as a better person, I think. You’re more open, you’re more accepting of other people. And I think I just, I like that feeling of discomfort. And being in a place where you need to – you need to learn how to do things a different way. Or you need to learn how to be OK by yourself, or how to adapt to a different culture, even though it’s horrible at the time. But I think I crave that now.

Jason, a fourteen year ITEM graduate, supports the notion that people who are already interested in, or experienced with, travel abroad are predisposed to select ITEM. In response to a question about linking his ITEM experience with his teaching practice, he said:
I think it has more to do with teachers, the person, the soul of the teacher, the heart of the teacher. That was very important about ITEM, rather than the practices [in the ITEM program] per se.

This suggests that it is the kind of person who chooses ITEM that yields desired program results and not necessarily the program itself. However, Jason goes on to say,

that doesn’t mean that ITEM only confirmed what I already was. I think every experience opens one up to other possibilities. Oaxaca was an entirely different, different context.

While Jason, who had travelled broadly before Oaxaca, acknowledges his predisposition to the goals of the program, he also acknowledges that ITEM had an impact on his becoming-teacher. This is evidenced in previous chapters where Jason’s stories have been shared.

Similarly, Rita, a confident traveller who seeks international opportunities, describes her practicum as having influenced the way she views the world. She now finds herself having challenging conversations with family members perhaps portending those she might encounter with future colleagues.

I definitely had those tough conversations because we have to teach them that [colonizer] perspective and I always say that to my parents and they’re like, no, but that’s how they think. And it’s their education; it’s through being the white way or the European way. And I was taught that also. ITEM was one of the biggest eye openers ever for me. (Rita, ITEM participant 2016)

Rita was excited to travel and she was open to experiencing a new culture. This is not enough to meet program goals like intercultural competence. It is the program that opened Rita’s eyes to her colonizer ancestry. While some beginning teachers may have predispositions toward ITEM program goals, they continue to learn with every experience and become-teacher as they wayfare.

Lisa stands in contrast to the others in that she has not travelled widely or without her family. In fact, Lisa’s family and friends didn’t believe she would actually register in an international program at all. Her story makes a case for the program itself contributing to a responsive teacher through discomfort.

Like I’ve always said, I’m going to live in Coquitlam, that’s where my life is and it’s going to be and I have everything planned to a tee. And so [ITEM] was very out of the blue for me. It wasn’t, I mean, it was
planned but not really. It was more like people didn’t think I was going to go so I wanted to prove to them that I could go. Like if you had asked me even a year ago, I would have been like, no way, you’re out of your mind, there’s no way I’m going to Mexico. (Lisa, ITEM participant 2016)

With bravado in her back pocket, Lisa took a risk. She describes her experience as:

personally refreshing. I like to be very organized, have everything planned, and have a schedule for everything. So ITEM was kind of like a slap across the face. It felt kind of good to just live and not live off of a schedule. It got me out of my comfort zone. I’m still very organized and I like things a certain way but I don’t plan every second anymore. (Lisa, ITEM participant 2016)

The discomfort led to being differently in the world. Lisa has experienced discomfort and it “slapped her in the face,” woke her up to another way of living. Perhaps, as a teacher, Lisa will be able to go with the flow with her students more readily now that she doesn’t feel the need to “plan everything to a tee.”

Whether or not students come to an international teacher education program predisposed to intercultural competence, having an openness to diversity, and/or increased cultural sensitivity, it seems reasonable to say that wayfaring internationally at the very least supports nuanced development of these qualities in ways that could not be achieved locally.
Chapter 8.

Wayfaring is Worth the While

8.1. Wayfaring and Remembering

Thank you for bringing back those memories for me. Life speeds up and then you get filled up with other memories and you tend to forget things but when I’m talking I can remember. There are moments that I remember being so special. And many of them are pieces of knowledge that I take away. I learned a lot. I have no regrets. I loved it so much. (Bonnie, ITEM graduate 2003)

My conversation with Bonnie brings me back to the curation of photographs discussed in Chapter Two. Upon returning home, reminiscing over carefully chosen souvenirs\textsuperscript{14}, memories and emotions are “given light” as Lisa (participant 2015) so eloquently says below. The nuances of certain encounters are looked upon as if in the golden hour, in the space between light and dark, familiar and unfamiliar. In this light the phenomenon of discomfort, lived internationally, reveals itself as formative over time. Engaging with her memories, Bonnie recalls the “pieces of knowledge” gathered along the way exemplifying Ingold’s wayfaring on the meshwork where “lives are lived, skills developed, observations made and understandings grown” (Ingold, 2011, p. 12).

During the interviews conducted with ITEM participants, the importance of remembering was often mentioned, usually in a soft or wistful tone. A memory can rise up from below, awaken our senses, and remind us of who we are and who we can be. Lisa, Jamie, Kayla and Bonnie speak to this.

It’s important to be grateful for the uncomfortable experiences and not let those memories die. Like, give them light, appreciate them, and be humble and grateful for them. And I think that I’m always going to carry that with me in my practice because I lived it. (Lisa, ITEM participant 2015)

It stayed in my mind. I should thank you for making me go back through it. It was good to go back to it. I hope I can learn to be more grateful for everything that came before me and everything that comes

\textsuperscript{14} From the French souvenir, a remembrance or memory, and the Latin subvenire, to come from below. (Retrieved August 14, 2018 from https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=souvenier).
after. I hope to carry out this idea of being open and welcoming into teaching. (Jamie, ITEM participant 2015)

This interview was a nice reminder. It was inspiring to remember the things that I observed in Oaxaca and reflecting on them helped me see teaching sort of as being the journey and also the journey teaches you. (Kayla, ITEM graduate 2006)

I think at the moment I knew the connection [with children in Santo Tomás] was significant but it really took until after to reflect and realize that it was amazing, it was just so enriching. The experience will always live with me, and remembering the stories and feelings makes me think about how I felt in the moment and what was important and what I learned. (Bonnie, ITEM graduate 2003)

Participants also commented on the importance of remembering uncomfortable or unsettling times as those that inspire a relational attunement to their students. Jamie spoke of her discomfort with the pace of life generally and how a quiet moment with her host parent “struck [her] as significant” because it changed the way she sees herself and how this might be important for her students.

I often feel very rushed and I’m not an elegant speaker where my thoughts in my head can translate so beautifully into words and I sometimes get frustrated in a world where we think that you have to speak always, just go, go, go, and do everything. Having that quiet conversation about death with my Mama made me realize that my quieter demeanor allowed for that moment to happen and I kind of realized there are times in life where you need to be quiet and just have that feeling and have that space to allow somebody to share with you. And that’s kind of changed me to realize that it’s okay to be quieter and that when you do wait patiently, you just seem to be kind of open where it’s fine to share something. That stuck with me and it’s changed me into thinking maybe that’s a way I can get to students as well. Maybe they’ll open up to me if there is time for quiet, if I am quiet. (Jamie, ITEM participant 2015)

In this case Jamie’s discomfort with her own quiet demeanour was cast in a different light. Typically there were several people at the dinner table but on this night it was just Jamie and her host mother. Worried about not being able to easily converse without any translators present, Jamie cast her eyes downward rearranging the food on her plate. Pointing to a picture on the sideboard, Jamie’s Mama began to speak in halting English. Listening to her host mother share a deeply personal story, Jamie was “lit up” and saw herself and her potential relationships with students in a new way.
It is remembering, re-entangling with our lives that reveals our becoming and inspires us to continue moving alongly. Curating the photographs, my own and others’, suggests that wayfaring opens space for “a continuity of attention and devotion” (Berry, 1986, p. 32 in Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 129). Understanding begins when something addresses us or faces us. This wonder sweeps us up, captures our attention, and if we attune to it, linger with it, we may be in-formed, re-formed, even trans-formed as our path winds its way into knots of becoming along the meshwork. Re-visiting and re-membering our souvenirs, the ones that strike us, asks something of us: What does it mean? Why has it stayed with me? What might it mean for how I live my life? Knowing that our lives are bound up with one another, entangled, my gaze softens. As a teacher and teacher-educator, a softer gaze is more relational, more open, and it invites me to wonder what we are creating here together. I am called to respond, and indeed to cor-respond.

A memory is the story we hold in our bodies from a time passed. A memory visits us, taps us on the left shoulder while hiding behind our right, reminding us of our knots, our traces and threads. Re-membrances of discomfort shift our background to our foreground, rearranging our frames of reference and suggesting additional ways to understand and be in the world. Free spaces, where fecundity bubbles, offer themselves to us and we can offer them to our students. “It is suggested that the pedagogical good is not a quality that we as teachers can possess, or do, or practise, but rather a relational force beyond our pedagogical practice that opens up the world to children and preconditions the pedagogical relation” (Saevi & Eilifsen, 2008, p. 1). I suggest that the notion of wayfaring clearly articulated to teacher educators, practicing teachers and novices might precondition the pedagogical relation and could shift our current classroom practices. The photographs in this project offer a tangible way to look at movement within a captured moment of a living life allowing us to un-tangle and re-tangle ourselves.

“Our past (and passed) experiences speak to us in the present by a certain experiential recognition, or what Bachelard calls reverberations, which go immediately beyond our assumptions and understandings and let us experience resonances, sentimental repercussions, reminders of our past” (Saevi & Eilifsen, 2008, p. 10). ITEMites have already been deeply touched by their experiences and may not recognize this until the surface of their present is stirred. When faced with the other in the present, a stirring of deep reminders of the past compel us to respond in heartfelt ways that
promote the belonging and “with each other” that is necessary for learning, for nurturing whole human beings, and for thriving.

8.2. Wayfaring and Whiling

Wayfaring and whiling have entered my pedagogical conversations and practices. I can trace a path of becoming from my own days of student teaching when my practicum mentors taught me the value of questioning decisions in relation to student success. Many hours were naïvely spent seeking answers or solutions so that my teaching would consistently result in learning for all students at all times. Later, van Manen’s pedagogy of practice entangled and my reflective lens sought the influences of time and space, corporeality and materiality, and relationality. I began to see my practice less as a series of activities to organize and problems to solve than opportunities for human connection. With Jardine’s mentorship in whiling I have come closer to the givenness of experiences by lingering with them. “Worthwhileness has to do with a way of treating things, away of composing our understanding of something, seeking its kinships…and in the same breath, composing ourselves” (Jardine, 2012, p. 176). Ingold’s wayfaring is occurring. I feel myself in motion - in thinking, in writing, and in pedagogical practices. The words spilling onto the page through swift finger strokes develop thoughts left to right and back again. I am aware of motion while in motion. I sense the entangling of experiences and memories and reflexivity and this feeling moves me.

To inhabit this feeling, as a teacher, principal, and teacher educator is challenging within the managerial demands of a large organization and its many stakeholders. I need to hang on, lean in, and remain attentive so as not to succumb to the oft-discussed mandated goals and objectives in service to system results but not necessarily individual becomings. I am not arguing for an education or curriculum without goals but I believe there is room for greater attention to the relational nuances living in moments. Here I engage with Lloyd and Smith (2015) who are bringing a motion-sensing phenomenology to the movement disciplines. I return to discomfort as a departure point or catalyst for moving relationally when they say, “delving beneath superficial sensations creates bodily encounters that are lasting, life changing and life affirming” (p. 272). I live again the movements of Jorge and Maureen in Ecuador, the speed-stacking activity in my own school, and the collection of stories told by
participants of ITEM Oaxaca. I am attuned to the feeling of discomfort in these ordinary experiences and with a phenomenological reflexivity reveal their extra-ordinariness. Wayfaring, I trust entangling movement to support and guide me to “become something more than [I] had been before” (p. 176) and this is worth the while.

8.3. Wayfaring and Becoming

My lingering with photographs and wayfaring among experiences in a rhizomatic way – back and forth, around – each photo taking me along connecting trails – has shown that discomfort can be a teacher. Now that I have learned to inhabit discomfort I am better able to settle into situations, see possibilities, believe that all is, and will be, well and this too will open lines of flow in the process of my own and others’ becoming. This reinforces that I am always in relation with others – people, things, and cultures. My purpose is to be at home in relation with others and so discomfort is necessary and in fact, welcome. Human inter-connection is necessary for physical survival – we are born into families, infants are dependent; we create tribes – safety in numbers; and now, despite our individualistic (post) modernism, we find ourselves moving beyond, or perhaps returning to our inter-relations for social survival and indeed for the survival of the planet that sustains us. “We are even more dependent upon the human condition than what we have previously understood” (Britzman, 2008, p. 11).

Entangled in these ideas, I wonder if ITEM affords a discomfort that draws us both into and out of ourselves. When feeling foreign, when feeling Othered, our vulnerabilities open like wounds and we seek cover. At some point there is a realization, or perhaps a more compelling draw, that remaining inward is in fact less supportive of our thriving, our going along, our human spirit, and we meet discomfort with a cautious handshake and step out of ourselves in order to return to ourselves.

An international teaching practicum comes with unfamiliar ways that a local practicum cannot offer. Traversing language, location and community without one’s usual comfort or strength is experienced viscerally and remembered sensually. When sharing stories, participants fluttered their hands about their faces, ducked their heads and hunched their shoulders. Words were punctuated with laughter, whispers, sighs and sometimes shouts. Discomfort lingers in the body creating and recreating memories. The body is memory-haunted and when those memories are animated, living moments are
re-collected in a breath, giving us a chance at connection. The desire for inter-relationships is re-called; the longing to feel with one another arises and informs teachers to be for the other no matter the challenge. For the gaze of a child to ignite these body memories is to be moved, to be faced, and to be called to correspond. It is here that vital contact arises!

Being in the process of “development [is] our human condition” (Britzman, 2007, p. 1). The path is always one of “composing and revising a history of learning to live with others” as we travel with our “tendency to repeat, regress, and fixate upon moments of breakdown or gratification” (p. 1). Maxine Greene talks about the “teacher as an incomplete project, as unfinished, as in the process of becoming teacher with others” (Britzman, 2007, p. 3). In practice, this requires a teacher to wander the path of uncertainty. One can only do this with the knowledge, with the deep understanding, that this path, while uncomfortable, is indeed walk-able and the vital contact necessary for learning is found along the way. Classroom teachers spend all day attempting to make the uncertain certain, the unlearned learned, the unmanageable managed. Perhaps an acknowledgement of and lingering with discomfort might allow us a more human, more relational response to our colleagues, our students, and ourselves.

Amanda referred to her current collaborative practices with colleagues as inspired by her time in Oaxaca. Her story reveals one way that uncertainty contributes to teacher becoming relationally with colleagues and students.

I think for me probably the big one is the relationship building that I do now. I think realizing to work collaboratively with people takes time, it takes effort, and it doesn’t happen instantaneously. I think that’s a big part of my pedagogy right now and how I deal with colleagues and students. In Oaxaca, we had six weeks to get to know our students and some you got to know well, some you didn’t. It doesn’t happen in a week. It would be lovely if it did. And so, taking time to get to know staff, get to know your students, I think that’s really stayed with me from the ITEM. (Amanda, ITEM graduate 2013)

Natalie’s experience echoes Amanda’s as she describes her becoming in the presence of discomfort.

When you go abroad somewhere, everything that makes you who you are is gone. Your friends are gone, your pets are gone. Your family and favourite foods are gone. Everything that makes you at home isn’t there anymore. So you need to decide how you’re going to make
yourself. You are building yourself up from the bottom of who you are to who you want to be. (Natalie, participant 2016)

In this project, I have attempted to lean into the strangeness that manifests as discomfort in an international teaching practicum. I have suggested that pursuing the tension of disorientation that occurs in an alien world can be formative to evolving educational practices.

8.4. Wayfaring Internationally

Beginning teachers, in a local practicum, often feel out of their element and overwhelmed by the program demands, both personally and professionally. It is not my intent to suggest their discomfort is less real than that experienced in an international placement, however there seems to be something unique about the discomfort felt away from home. Amanda explains it this way:

Everybody feels like they are drowning, whether you are in Mexico or not. Maybe all PDP is sink or swim. But the depth of the pool is a lot bigger when you’re international. You are away from home, away from family and you take away all those comforts of home and all those support systems. Just by being abroad you’re uncomfortable. (ITEM graduate, 2013)

Colin offers another perspective:

I’m going to use this metaphor, resistance training or altitude training where everything’s a little bit more difficult in Oaxaca and you have to try things that you wouldn’t try at home. So I think that has made me a stronger, more well rounded educational professional than I would be otherwise. And it’s not to say that they can’t gain those tools here. But I think that the experience made us gain them there whereas we would have had to be intentional about getting them here. (ITEM participant, 2015)

Luis, a Faculty Associate says:

I think that disruption of what a student can and should be, could be, must be, is important. And this only happens, in my opinion, when the students ... have very few references as to what it should be like. Now, when they’re in the Canadian context, they are very familiar with the social practices, with the language, with even the whole understanding of an international classroom. But in this context [Oaxaca], I think when we don’t know much about what to expect, it allows them to look closer at what the kids are doing.
Howard (2015) references Husserl with the term “light breaks, slight disruptions of normal experience in which things do not quite coincide with previous experience” (p. 5) to describe discomfort away from home. Light breaks happen “in practical, everyday situations, such as eating, bathing, interacting with locals, and finding one’s way around” and “while such mundane tasks go largely unnoticed in the home world, I discovered that they can take on new meanings and even spiritual dimensions under different circumstances” (p. 5).

We can see a common situation from a new perspective, with a different lens, in a way that shifts our view of the world and ourselves in it. We alter our knot as we collect and entangle new threads. Experiences are brought to life in the alien world as “environments and alternative modes of dwelling reveal that radically other ways of being-in-the-world exist” (p. 9). As we dwell in our alien world, our perception of our home world, and indeed ourselves, becomes something other than it was before. Kerdeman (1998) suggests that it is only when discomforted that becoming might occur: “Unless the student’s own possibilities are at stake, the best designed experimental situations and the best attempts to motivate the student will not lead to learning” (p. 255).

Recalling Jorge and Maureen in Ecuador, an alien world for me, the connective capacity of rhythm and rhyme was illuminated in a way that allowed me to be different in my home world. What would have gone unnoticed in my familiar home world – spending time with adults and children in community – was suddenly an uncomfortable situation in which I did not know how to be. A simple game that would normally be relegated to the background jumped to the foreground and was seen afresh. An everyday occurrence was “lit up” (Howard, 2015, p. 6). The slight disruptions, the light breaks, that ITEM students live with in an alien world stand in stark contrast to the background of their home worlds. As a response to the stark contrast between home and away, Nancy represents many when she says,

you’ve got to sink or swim and if you don’t know how to swim you better start kicking. It’s a resilience you build within yourself and I think that is what’s very valuable. One thing I learned when I look at my short and long practicum is that as a teacher you have to build resilience or else you can crumble and in my long practicum I crumbled a little bit. I crumbled big time actually once. And I needed to build my resilience. And I felt like I have it because of Oaxaca but it’s something that’s ongoing. It’s something that Oaxaca taught me
first, introducing me to this idea of resilience. (Nancy, ITEM participant 2016)

Nancy’s “own possibilities were at stake” and experiencing the feeling of “sink or swim” offered wayfaring paths on which to travel alongly – not from one skill set to the next, not from one knot to the next, but tangled in occurrences that yield an “integrated practical understanding of the lifeworld” (Ingold, 2011, p. 154). Colin summarizes his understanding and movement this way:

life sort of happens in little bursts where things stay the same for a really long time and then something shifts, something happens and all of a sudden things are radically different. And then you go for another stretch before something important happens and knocks you a little bit and you have to get on your feet again. You can have that eureka moment and it can happen a month or two after you come back. (ITEM participant, 2016).

Wayfarers continue traversing the meshwork holding memories gently, lingering in knots, and leaning into the “eureka moments.” In the next chapter I explore a pedagogy of movement in relation to writing, researching and teaching.
Chapter 9.

A Pedagogy of Movement

To be a phenomenologist requires a commitment beyond that of following a procedure or protocol. It is a commitment to taking up the ways both traditional and creative, of describing the meanings that lived experiences hold. (Lloyd & Smith, 2015, p. 255)

My phenomenological inquiry is a living inquiry with a commitment to the relational attitude described in the quote above. I have taken up my own international experiences and those of beginning teachers in an international teaching program to explore the arising feelings of discomfort. To learn my way around discomfort I leaned into it. I leaned into my knotted stomach and sweaty palms as a traveller, an educator and a researcher. I attuned to my verbal hesitations and awkward gestures. I exhaled into sparkling eyes as discomfort left me when entangling with another. Leaning is bodily movement in relation to someone or something. Movement is calling my attention in writing, researching, and in teaching.

9.1. Writing as Movement

What happens when I write? Ideas jump synapses too quickly to capture sensually on the page. Time travels forward and backward, space is a-gimbal, making it impossible to articulate what is felt in real time, on the ground. Black marks on a white screen seem thin representations of multi-layered moments of my living. My words on the page appear a more muted version of the bodily vibrancy felt, pulsing with energy as I re-member my photographs. Frustration looms monolithic and blocks any ability to write with flow or in flow with the excitement of memories and rushing thoughts. I squirm in my chair, sigh, and even swear. But writing is wayfaring I remind myself. Moving along a life compels Janus-faced seeing, that is, both looking back and looking forward to understand its deep and nuanced meanings. Life can only be lived forward, messy, stumbling, and entangling. The living and the writing are in constant motion informing and transforming each other. There is “an intertwining of what moves us” (Lloyd & Smith, 2015, p. 268). This project is one of moving practices: whiling, wayfaring, and becoming. Words, catapulted by keystrokes, land on the page, right to left, right to left, forming and
reforming thoughts, moving me and intending to move the reader. What appears linear on the page is really a telling of a winding road, a multi-dimensional life. Lines on a map like lines on this page – those that form letters – are simply that – lines without meaning, without the reader’s interpretation and traces of living that are brought to bear. My attempt has been “not to represent the world but to trace a path through it that others can follow” (Ingold, 2011, p. 162).

My thinking moves while I write. My understanding deepens and with it my curiosity. Perceptions and ideas held in earlier photographs and paragraphs entangle with those experienced and written about later. Continuing to read and write I feel myself moving alongly and taking comfort knowing that what is now is already becoming something else. Writing brings an intimacy with my living that is increasingly present and vibrant. I lean into the keyboard as I lean into life. The writing and the living are wretchedly tangled and both are worth the while. I know that I have been moved, that I am moving, when my breath catches, when my heartbeat skips, and sweat shines my upper lip. Something worth the while is happening.

9.2. Researching as Movement

The walker’s attention comes not from having arrived at a position but from being pulled away from it, from displacement. (Ingold, 2015, p. 135)

The strength of this study lies in its photographs, the curation of my own and others’ experiences. It remains close to the feeling of discomfort and its capacity to be pedagogically informative. It speaks to the need for international opportunities within teacher certification programs to move people away from home geographically and emotionally. Unfamiliar moments, felt in the body, are lit up along the journey inviting relationality.

Hermeneutics helps me to interpret my own experiences in relation to those of ITEM participants. It was my own international experiences that inspired my wonders and indeed the desire to look deeply into my own practices. Some may see this hermeneutic approach as a limitation to the study as the lived experiences shared are interpreted and highly individual and therefore not reproducible. In this study I sought to carefully describe what it was like for me as a traveller and what it was like for student teachers in an international teacher education program. It is hoped that readers will be
able to gain an understanding of what it is like to live through discomfort and to wayfare as educators in order to become educators who inspire our students to consider living in the world more relationally, even rhizomatically.

In seeking to understand how teachers and teacher educators approach their practices we create meaning and construct knowledge as we are created and constructed by the world. Interpretation is necessary to understand what it is to be a teacher and, in this study, a beginning teacher in an international program. What if future novice teachers about to touch down in Oaxaca read this dissertation or parts of it? With the language of discomfort and wayfaring at their disposal, might they approach their lived experience differently and what kinds of formativity might be available to them?

Wayfaring is worth the while for teachers who see themselves and their students as participants in the meshwork of living, who understand they are restrained only by artificial codes. Such teachers know their own frames of reference and they are willing to bump up against the edges and move into uncharted territories with their students. ITEM participants are moved beyond their usual frames of reference simply by living and working away from home. They are at once, all of a sudden, disoriented, disconnected and comforted. Beginning teachers in a local practicum cannot have such a visceral experience.

Wayfaring is not an easy path, for it necessitates time to notice in all directions, to tend what is noticed, and to respond mindfully. To wayfare is to feel and take risks while moving in unfamiliar places. “What we learn through suffering is not this or that particular thing but insight into the experience of human finitude. The truly experienced person is one who has taken this to heart” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 357). Ingold (2013) has presented wayfaring as our way of movement along life’s path and it seems that this concept can be applied to education as easily as to anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture.¹⁵

When all of our experiences gather, all of our threads entangle, “one’s identity, one’s character is shaped and cultivated in the very act of shaping and cultivating an understanding of the world(s) we inhabit: you become someone in the difficult cultivation of free spaces” (Jardine, 2012, p. 19). We become someone in our discomfort and this

¹⁵ Others considering Ingold’s work in education, include Connell, 2008; Ross & Mannion, 2012.
takes practice as does teaching with relationality rather than technicality at the fore. Smith (2011) says we “become something other in the moment of engagement” (p. 16). I have had the great privilege of becoming something other many times over the course of my life.

This study is an attempt to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the impact of international placements for beginning teachers. It offers an interpretation of thirteen ITEM participants, current and graduates, alongside my own experiences and surfaces discomfort as formative of pedagogical practice, as a knot on a meshwork of becoming. The relational dynamics that develop when wayfaring, particularly away from home, lead to a shift in teacher education from a technical focus (this is how you teach) to a relational focus (these are the ways we learn together). The two areas of discomfort that had the most impact on beginning teachers in an international setting were language and community – both relational. The learning about how to teach is experienced locally and in an international setting and it was the least concerning thing to ITEMites. While they had some concern about returning to Canada prepared for their long practicum, not having had the BC experience, the graduates all mentioned that this was easily caught up on. The real learning about who they are as people and how they choose to be, not do, as teachers was most strongly influenced by their embodied experience in Oaxaca. “The condition of our bodies influences our perceptions and sometimes it takes exceptional differences from our norms to notice that fact” (Giorgi, 2015, p. 156). Feelings of discomfort, experienced outside the norms of a home world in an unfamiliar context influence perceptions and therefore ways of thinking and being.

Wayfaring and becoming offer a relational discourse, which is in contrast to the current dominant performative discourse in teacher education. Paths are opened to acknowledge and move through discomfort relationally, recognizing that learning is a cumulative trace. I know this because I am a traveller and a wayfarer. I am a writer. Sitting with my shoebox of artifacts, I see myself seemingly captured in time and also in the entanglement of all time. A two or three-dimensional artifact represents more than is available on its angles, surfaces and edges. Taking time to retrace my steps I become more at home in the world in relation with others. I live differently. This is the work of phenomenology and the practices of which it speaks – to inform the good life, to ensure that the dusty shelf on which this dissertation may live its life will have served at least one life and therefore necessarily will serve others.
9.3. Teaching as Movement

Wherever anything lives, there is, open somewhere, a register in which time is being inscribed...and in the life of every being, as it unfolds, contributes at once to the progeneration of the future and a regeneration of the past. (Ingold, 2000, p. 143)

I offer wayfaring along the meshwork as a way of thinking about our work as teachers and teacher educators so that we might address Ministry mandates and curriculum goals with the understanding that our lives are knotted with each other and that movement through and along these entanglements is where the good life resides. Wayfaring is a way to lean into and attune to feelings like discomfort so that we might move with and through them along our way to becoming-teacher, becoming-human. This dissertation includes stories from many who attest to the informative and transformative potential of moving through discomfort.

Given the overwhelming positive testimony to the achieved outcomes of international placements for pre-service teachers, what might this study offer to this body of research or to teacher education programs generally? Drawing on Ingold’s wayfaring, Deleuze and Guattari’s becoming and van Manen’s pedagogy of practice, this study offers a relational conception of teacher education. Wayfaring into and wondering about the unique characteristics of international teacher education programs, most intimately those of ITEM Oaxaca, I have offered a possibility for teacher education that might live in preservice programs and beyond as practicing teachers becoming increasingly sophisticated and nuanced in the ways they create learning environments in BC public schools. Building on the phrase: notice, name and nurture, the trendy vernacular in our current gestalt, I suggest that dwelling in moments, lingering on the meshwork, and examining knots may lead us to a deeper understanding of our work and practices that support becoming over time with a relational register. We need to notice moments, name our feelings and understandings, and nurture that which facilitates our becoming. This means moving beyond the familiar, coded notions of teaching and learning. It means taking time to question the “need for surety and certainty” (Roy, 2003, p.86) that many educational stakeholders seek.

Wayfaring gives us permission to live in uncertainty as teachers. “Research has shown that what students learn is often unpredictable and uncertain, and depends less on predetermined activity than on the goings-on at various levels in a given context at a
given time” (Roy, 2003, p. 86). Through a Deleuzian lens, teachers might see as positive those uncertainties, “the very slippages, affects, and other unruly curricular experiences that tend to embarrass technocratic rationality, and look at these new possibilities for curriculum development” (p. 85). An international setting welcomes teachers to unfamiliarity by the very nature of being away from home. Disruptions and irregularities are a given and, while lines of movement are present in our every day at home, we must choose an unfamiliar path when away. Beginning teachers in Oaxaca must move through disruptions in ways that students in local practica are not called to do. Heidi remembers that:

the uncertain and awkward moments I experienced in Cuajimoloyas and Santo Tomás making art and going into classrooms, where I didn’t know the cultural norms, gave me a sense of confidence. I went to school some days feeling awful but I still taught because I had to do it. The students were right there. (ITEM participant, 2016)

Ingold (2015) talks about doing as “an act to which you submit: you do not order it; rather it falls to you. You were perhaps surprised to discover capacities of perception and action you never knew you had” (p. 145). Participating in teaching away from home, in an international setting, provides many opportunities to discover capacities we didn’t know we had. I suggest that presenting wayfaring as a lens through which to view one’s teacher and human-becoming could encourage teacher candidates to select and maximize the experience of an international program and, could offer practicing teachers a way to welcome and move with the uncertainty inherent in today’s world and in classrooms.

In writing and researching I wayfare and while, teach and become, always moving and entangling. Knots loosen and tighten, allowing more or less space to roam, offering slack or tension on which to balance. I move more freely when attuned to the pulls and tugs of life’s vitality. This attentiveness comes at the price of vulnerability but “its reward is an understanding, founded on immediate experience, that goes beyond knowledge” (Ingold, 2015, p. 137).
Chapter 10.

Wayfaring Continued

Genuine phenomenological research is not easy. The realization that phenomenology is the pursuit of insight into the phenomenality of lived experience should strike fear in the heart of anyone who hopes to practice it. Yet, the sheer satisfaction of experiencing moments of meaningfulness is worth the effort. (van Manen, 2017, p. 779)

Wayfaring, a phenomenology of movement, does not attempt to find a destination, a place to plant a flag, or to say I have arrived but rather offers an invitation to continue moving, to experience movement, to inhabit the relationality inherent in moving, perhaps from discomfort to comfort and back again and again. Wayfarers are inquirers and “inquiry makes us vulnerable and open to experiencing what is going on around us and to how our experience gathers up in the world. It helps us become who we are, alert beings, ready to venture into the world” (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 118). I have indeed experienced moments of fear and moments of satisfaction as van Manen states in the quote above. I am cautious about my interpretations and their potential implications and I am deeply satisfied with the moments along the way that continue to inspire onward movement in the company of others.

This chapter, traditionally the conclusion, has been most challenging and at times uncomfortable to write, as wayfaring cannot be concluded. I am not finished, nor can this project ever be, as every experience along the meshwork is entangled with the next. Beamer (2017) reminds me that “hermeneutics takes the risk of embracing the coming of what we cannot see coming” (p. 4). What I am able to embrace just now are entanglements of life, personal and professional, current and historical, that suggest lines of movement on which pedagogies of practices may germinate, root and sprout rhizomatically. Following, I offer three such lines: implications for teacher education, the becoming of ITEM, and a word about reciprocity. While I will not conclude this chapter, I will finish this dissertation with a pause and an afterword.
10.1. Implications for Teacher Education

What are the practical implications of a wayfaring approach to education? Two key ideas have emerged: 1) the importance of a relational view over a technical view of the teaching profession, and 2) the potential formativity of leaning into the discomfort of relationality. I suggest that the strength of ITEM lies in its ability to facilitate the second idea and that this in turn can inform the ways we attend to the first. Discomforting experiences in an alien world allow us to feel what not being able to relate is like. The visceral understanding of Otherness frustrates our ability to relate and therefore to teach or learn. ITEM participants are moved away from any coded notions of teacher and student roles, as their technical skills are less effective in an unfamiliar context that doesn’t adhere to the rules of their home worlds. Such discomfort then calls beginning teachers to lean into discomfort in ways that can shepherd their teacher becoming. While ITEM provides this environment by the very nature of being away from home, how might teacher education be more broadly influenced?

Curriculum that inspires teachers and students to become at home in a world not yet imagined must be higher on the educational agenda than skill mastery and feeding the local and global economies. Faculties of Education at universities need to lead all departments in the conversation about what it means to be an educated citizen and then model and promote the living and teaching practices that facilitate the becoming of those citizens. Practicing teachers need the kind of collaborative professional development that facilitates vital contact with each other and ideas, time to while about what matters, and opens the space for generative processes to reveal something new. If we wish to live sustainably and in harmony with other humans and other than human beings, we are going to have to do something differently. While I don’t advocate for the elimination of disciplines, curriculum, or learning standards, I do advocate increasingly relational frameworks to both organize the system, the curriculum, and the buildings in which formal schooling operates. As Jason alluded to in his department head meeting, when he spoke of “tired and jaded” teachers in Chapter Six, we must not fall prey to the false assurances of bureaucratization that with “the right standardized procedures…teachers’ and students’ futures will finally be secured” (Jardine, 2012, p. 3).

This study suggests an approach to teacher education and classroom practice that favours ways of being over ways of doing. This is not to suggest that curriculum
knowledge and teaching methodologies are unnecessary or that learning in schools ought to be aimless wandering. Quite the opposite is true. Wayfaring is a purposeful, highly engaged and relational way of being that allows us to “get our noses out of the map, look up, and actively engage the world as it unfolds along the path” (Connell, 2008, p. 10).

An international teaching practicum offers experiences that cannot be collected at home. There is a certain attention to the life world that develops when one feels disoriented. Knots gathered in unfamiliar territory are unique and the entanglements come home with us to contribute to our repertoire, our on-going becoming. ITEM participants in this project spoke about overcoming discomfort in ways that allowed them to come home and say, well if I did that, surely I can do this. “To find one’s way is to advance along a line of growth, in a world which is never quite the same from one moment to the next, and whose future configuration can never be fully known” (Ingold, 2000, p. 242). As shown in the stories of recent ITEM participants and long time graduates, over time vistas have expanded, horizons have become more distant, and teachers can afford to discard the rhetoric and indeed, work effectively with the curriculum, and teach more relationally. In wayfaring, we establish deep connections, as we inhabit our spaces, our relationships, our journeys, and ourselves. We can be alive in it all. This line of movement invites us to consider the impact of international placements more deeply.

10.2. The Becoming of ITEM

International education and understanding is about standing under that sky of continual change appreciating the spontaneity and dynamics of life and learning. It’s about welcoming new encounters, being grateful for the experiences we’ve shared with others from different backgrounds and savouring those times we’ve spent together. Many of these small moments come and go, we can never hold onto them but we can always allow them to shape us into more welcoming, understanding people. (Jason, ITEM graduate 2002)

The International Teacher Education Module at Simon Fraser University has been an option for beginning teachers since 1996. In its time, teachers have travelled to Mexico, Trinidad & Tobago, Panama, China, and India to complete the short practicum portion (Education 401/2) of the Professional Development Program (PDP). While the program operates slightly differently in each country (e.g. public or private school
placements, homestays or dormitories), its over-arching goals are the same and its structure and syllabus have remained largely unchanged. This project has shown that the unique characteristics of an international teaching placement have an undeniably positive and lasting impact on the kind of people and teachers its participants come to be. One could argue this has been especially true in Oaxaca where, for the past five years, the Faculty Associate has been a local educator and citizen.

In the beginning years, ITEM required that students take a course entitled Education 370: International and Intercultural Education. The course was designed to examine the relationships between culture, learning and schooling from an intercultural orientation and to examine contemporary issues in teacher education from an international perspective. At this time, there are no special required courses for ITEMites beyond those mandated for all beginning teachers completing the PDP. It is worth revisiting this, as one of the critiques ITEM has received is that its participants enter the program without any cultural knowledge of the countries they are visiting beyond a short workshop on cultural sensitivity. Given that the PDP has recently been expanded from a three to a four-semester course there may be a place for ITEM participants to complete coursework that is specific to an international placement, including an introduction to wayfaring as a framework for their experiences. As this dissertation is being written there is some conversation suggesting shortening the time ITEMites spend away. There is likely no perfect length of time for transformative experiences to root and for rhizomes to spread, though I suspect more, rather than less, time is needed for beginning teachers to “empathize with the very distant other, [and] recognize [themselves] as implicated in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront” (Boler, 1997, p. 257).

Several participants in this study lamented the fact that their local long practicum left little space to contemplate or implement what they had learned in Oaxaca.

I could have touched more on [the Oaxacan experience] in my long practicum. I really wanted to explore what I did in Oaxaca and present it in the classroom but I was so stressed by the long practicum. Just getting through, being able to be a teacher in the classroom was already enough for me. My mindset was I have to get through this

16The detailed course outline can be found here: http://docushare.sfu.ca/dsweb/Get/Document-515094/2003-3%202004-1%202004-2% Scholefield.pdf
Caught up in the criteria for certification and working with local school associates who barely recognized their international practicum left them longing for on-going conversation to fully process its impact. This speaks to the value of a specialized course that runs the duration of the PDP for ITEM participants. It also suggests that an experience could be designed for local School Associates who will be receiving ITEM students for their long practicum. A series of workshops could be crafted to give them a feel for an international placement and its impact on their incoming students could be of benefit. Inviting current participants and graduates of ITEM, along with their Faculty Associates, to host the workshops could also strengthen the belief that beginning teachers from an international placement have something to offer their mentors. Thinking even more ideally, an exchange program specifically for School Associates would offer opportunities for mentor teachers to learn about and share each others’ cultural and pedagogical practices as they wayfare into each others’ topographies.

Wayfaring as a facilitation framework offers a way of moving along in teacher education programs with a focus on the relational journey. It encourages us to attune to our environment, to consider what and who came before this place in which we find ourselves at a given moment. Wayfaring encourages continuing the journey while being open to detours. It invites us to walk together. It could be the hermeneutic exemplar of “action called upon for the achievement of some moral good” (Beamer, 2017. p. 2).

10.3. Reciprocity

I tried to give back but there is no possible way I can as much for them as they did for me. It’s difficult. (Colin, ITEM participant 2016)

One of the oft-mentioned outcomes that international programs propose to achieve is reciprocity, generally described as mutually beneficial relationships. Despite the best intentions of these programs, and the increasing interest in the internationalization of education, there is little documented evidence to show that international programs and activities realize this goal. I propose three reasons for this lack of evidence: (1) reciprocity that moves beyond a definition of equal exchange is difficult to articulate and measure; (2) while reciprocity is stated as a desired outcome, it
has yet to be made the sole purpose of international interactions; and (3) reciprocity needs to be viewed as a verb rather than a noun if it is to be enlivened and enacted.

Fashay asks, “what value lies in transformations of the self if they end there, if selves do not go on reciprocally to transform others and the world” (2012, p. 13)? There is an appealing Deleuzian (1987) gesture toward rhizomatic connections and becomings here. Education is not something started and finished, but an on-going journey, or wayfaring (Ingold, 2013) committed to opening space for unpredicted yet fecund happenings. Reciprocity can be taken up in this same way.

Dynamic reciprocity, as a relational, life-affording phenomenon, needs space and time to emerge and must be given the “free space of possibility … so that we might be adventurous and not fall prey to the false assurances of a bureaucratized system of education” (Jardine, 2012, p. 3). It is with space and time and in attuned conversation; words, postures, and gestures, that many ways of knowing and doing can take rhizomatic root and evolve pedagogy “that links my well-being to the well-being of the fields I inhabit, explore, and transform in my living (Jardine, 2012, p. 19).

Smith offers a depth to reciprocity that draws us beyond exchange and to the relational. He says, “reciprocity superficially characterizes these moments of connection as tactful couplings, which maintain the integrity of the persons and things involved. But beneath the surface, more viscerally, politeness, acceptance, tolerance, understanding and appreciation give way to intimate contact with another” (2014, p. 236).

This supports a move toward dynamic reciprocity at the forefront of international teacher education programs. Miller (2009) says, “if we approach the study of other cultures from the standpoint of a set of inherited meanings, stylistic or historical, categories, we will fail to respond to what the objects from those cultures are trying to tell us” (p. 11). I would like to say: if we approach the study of a pedagogy of internationalization from the standpoint of a set of inherited meanings, stylistic or historical categories, we will fail to respond to the arterial spaces where reciprocity lives, and to what those spaces are trying to teach us about each other and ourselves. To venture into these spaces requires an awareness of how they are animated through our presence and the very manner of being present to others. “We are always moving but if we move in patience, it could bring us much closer to the truth than hardened strength
and resilience ever could” (Beamer, 2017, p. 4). The truth is that ultimately we can be here for one another, not in a two-way exchange, but in intimate contact like Maureen and Jorge. In that decisive moment, viewed in the golden hour, there was an intertwining, a knotting of beings that moved with them and beyond them. This patient movement may have significant implications for current and prospective international teacher education models. The focus is neither to write a recipe for achieving reciprocity nor to provide a one size fits all international teacher education model, but rather to open conversation, deepen dialogue, come to feel the motions of meaningful exchange and thus trace the potential pathways to shared practices that make the most of the creative meshwork that is teaching and learning.

10.4. Pausing for Now

Hermeneutics is not linked to anonymously amassing knowledge (the knowledge pursuit of the natural sciences), but is necessarily about “self-formation” (German – Bildung) – I myself become someone as a result of the way I make through the world and through my forming life. (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 187)

This project is one of phenomenological inquiry. Along the way I have returned to the question: What is it like to live and teach and in a country not your own? Conversations with current and graduated participants of ITEM presented discomfort as an informative and transformative feeling and wayfaring was offered as a phenomenology of movement to welcome discomfort. The study did not search for, nor attempt to measure, predetermined qualities like intercultural competence; therefore it cannot be replicated and, indeed, similar conversations with different ITEM participants may give rise to different phenomena. Given participant stories told here and those published in Souther (2008) and in Smith & Almarza (2009) with similar themes, it is reasonable to say there is validity and reliability in the sense that a true phenomenon has been explored. My experiences and my writing “intersect others’ experiences so that it is recognizable” (Moules & Estefan, 2018, p 3).

Conversations with colleagues – principals, teachers, teacher educators – student teachers, and friends and family who are not educators but have participated in world travel or international service learning projects are animated, positive and excited. Bodies rise on toes, torsos lean in, and eyes light up. It is common to hear that international experiences have been mind opening, confidence inspiring, and even life
changing. Comments like: best thing I ever did, I see the world with a different lens, my way is not the only way – are many. I have yet to meet anyone who has determined that it wasn’t worth it.

Certainly, as I have spent time with beginning teachers in international placements, even when the experience has been uncomfortable, all indicators point to positive personal and professional outcomes in the end. Several scholars (Willard-Holt, 2001; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Cushner, 2007; Marx & Moss, 2011; Maynes & Julien-Schultz, 2012; Miller & Gonzalez, 2016) have written extensively about the qualities nurtured through international education experiences for pre-service teachers and “there is little controversy surrounding the value of cross-cultural experiences” (Willard-Holt, p. 505). Comments from interviews with student teachers participating in ITEM Oaxaca in 2015-16 could easily be listed under each of the four categories of cross-cultural benefits outlined by Wilson (1993) in Willard-Holt, p. 506). These are: substantive knowledge of other cultures, world issues and global dynamics; open-minded and empathetic perceptual understanding of people of other cultures without stereotypes; personal growth in areas such as self-confidence and independence; and the propensity to make interpersonal connections with people of other cultures, both in the host country and after returning home. However, a phenomenological inquiry does not seek to categorize or even theorize but rather to show what an experience is like (van Manen, 2014).

This study has shown that we are compelled to face ourselves when faced with the Other and a teaching practicum in an international setting offers many opportunities to see ourselves reflected in each other. In doing so we feel what it is like to be Othered and this in turn draws our “attention to the life world, the world as lived, the living world” (Seidel & Jardine, 2016, p. 185). In order to navigate our discomfort we must attune to our environment and the people in it so that we might discover our place in relation with others. As educators our students face us each day with all of who they are. An international placement can be wonderfully discomforting and a supportive landscape for exploring who we are and who we would like to be as people and as teachers. In unfamiliar territory, disoriented and dislocated we are compelled to respond, to move. With the support of capable mentors who offer safe spaces for the tender spots, deep engagement is the most likely result. We pay attention to what an experience feels like and when it faces us again, in the eyes of our students, we have ways to move with and respond to discomfort.
For those who wish to live and teach deeply, and in relationship, wayfaring can be a conceptual framework. Wayfarers are purposeful inquirers with a curious mindset. We often live in uncertainty and can do so because we know what it feels like to trust others and ourselves. We have discovered that we must develop the necessary “wisdom to escape ourselves…[to] break our reflection in the water” and to lean into our discomfort to be “a bit awoken and more alert” (Seidel & Jardine, 2016, p. 184). It strikes me that of the nine First People’s Principles of Learning, two are particularly relevant to this hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry: learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational; and learning involves patience and time (FNESC, n.d.). Within these principles is the understanding that life is a holistic and interconnected endeavour and so is learning. The traditional Western model of fragmented disciplines and separation of mind, body and heart does not support a relational model. Also understood is that deep learning happens in a collaborative and supportive context when one is ready for the learning. Like developing photographs, multiple views over time offer new perspectives and invite new ways of being.

Wayfarers understand that movement along the meshwork is where the good life is and to engage in truly pedagogical relationships with children we are compelled to respond ethically, tactfully, and with great care. We know that a pedagogical moment, whatever its real or perceived duration, contains the past, present and future and may indeed invite us along multiple paths over the course of a lifetime. We re invited “to live life more graciously, more deeply, more slowly, more compassionately. With more breath” (Seidel & Jardine, 2014, p. 7). My commitment to wayfaring and phenomenology has rejuvenated my livelihood and my practices as a traveller, educator, and researcher.
Chapter 11.

Afterword

And the life of every being, as it unfolds, contributes at once to the progeneration of the future and a regeneration of the past. (Ingold, 2000, p. 143)

“What is REAL?” asked the Rabbit one day….“Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?”

“Real isn’t how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”

“Does it hurt?” asked the Rabbit.

“Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are Real you don’t mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,” he asked, “or bit by bit?”

“It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept…."

From The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Bianco (1922)
References


Appendix A.

Goals of the Professional Development Program at Simon Fraser University

Details about each goal may be found at https://www.sfu.ca/education/teachersed/programs/pdp/goals/10-goals.html

1. The development of a clear, coherent and justified view of education

2. The development of a clear commitment to lifelong and lifewide learning

3. The development of a clear commitment to uphold the principles that should govern a democratic and pluralistic community

4. The development of a clear commitment to maintain ethical and functional working relationships with all members of the educational community

5. The development of knowledge about curricular content, educational theory and effective practice

6. The development of the clear commitment to respect and celebrate students

7. The development of the ability to create a caring, cohesive community of learners

8. The development of the ability to create opportunities for learning

9. The development of the ability to blend theory and practice in well-organized ways

10. The development of the ability to use assessment and evaluation practices in a thoughtful and ethical manner
Appendix B.

Interview Questions

Guiding Questions for Student Teachers of ITEM (Oaxaca)

1. What is it like to live and teach in a country not your own?
2. Imagine walking through your school in Oaxaca. What was that like (sights, sounds, smells, interactions, atmosphere)? Now imagine walking through your current school. What is that like?
3. Recall a significant experience in Oaxaca, one that you believe has changed you. You may wish to close your eyes. What is happening in the scene? Describe what you see, hear, smell, feel, taste. At what moment did you realize this was a significant experience – during, after, how long after? What is the change in you? Focus on this change and describe how it impacts your life, your teaching, your way of being in the world?
4. What are some ways the “cultural shocks” (e.g. language, Day of the Dead, noisy classrooms, visit to Santo Tomás) experienced in Oaxaca allow you to appreciate, acknowledge, respect, and value the student diversity encountered at home?
5. In our conversation with Dr. Smith in Oaxaca, there was a group expression that personal and professional gains were made due to the uniqueness of an international experience. Describe a situation that exemplifies this for you.
6. What experiences and/or learning in Oaxaca do you see as being transferrable, transformative or informing pedagogy regardless of context or setting?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Guiding Questions for Graduates of ITEM (Oaxaca)

1. Your international teacher education program was a number of years ago. Recall a significant experience in Oaxaca, one that changed you or impacted you in a significant way. You may wish to close your eyes. What is happening in the scene? Describe what you see, hear, smell, feel, taste.
2. At what moment did you realize this was a significant experience – during, after, how long after?
3. Focus on this change and describe how it impacts your life, your teaching, and your way of being in the world?

4. What are some of the qualities of the significant international encounters you experienced that inform your evolving pedagogy? What did an international experience offer you that has been long-lasting?

5. Is there anything else you would like to share?

**Guiding Questions for Faculty Associates (Local and Oaxacan)**

1. What led you to work with an International Teacher Education Program?

2. Describe a situation when you knew that an international context offered something special for beginning teachers. Where were you? Who was there? What happened?

3. In your experience, what is unique to an international teacher education program in terms of developing beginning teachers?

4. How has working in an international program impacted your evolving practice as an educator? What have you learned?

5. What suggestions would you make to improve the chances of graduating reflective, critical teachers who see themselves as agents of change for a more just world?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share?