

**Professional Identity Development:
Life Positioning Analyses of
Foreign-Trained Teachers**

by

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Abstract

As a multicultural country, Canada offers an inclusive society where ethnic differences should not pose barriers. Canada's immigration policies seek to cultivate economic prosperity and sociocultural diversity. Economically, the success of Canada's immigration policy is intrinsically tied to employment while, socially, there is an obligation that the skills, abilities and diversity brought by immigrants be embraced.

British Columbia's provincial government acknowledges that changing demographics are key challenges to education. Demographic changes in the student population in many school districts in BC have seen some groups, previously minorities in BC, now comprising the majority of the student population. At present, there is considerable discrepancy between the ethnic diversity of the student population and the number of teachers from comparable ethnic backgrounds. A divide currently exists: teachers reflect values that define the dominant group, however the students they are teaching reflect a diversity of cultural backgrounds.

Employing teachers of diverse ethnic backgrounds is a social, moral, and ethical imperative in education. When children of various ethnicities do not see their experiences reflected in their educational settings, they can become marginalized. Further, teachers of various ethnicities can provide role models for ethnically diverse students and act as agents for social change. One method of enhancing the ethnic diversity of the teaching force is through employing foreign-trained teachers. However, employment of foreign-trained teachers has not kept pace with the changing demographics in the student population. Incorporating foreign-trained teachers within the teaching profession in BC meets Canada's economic goals, as underemployment of an immigrant workforce has economic, social, and moral repercussions.

Foreign-trained teachers encounter challenges negotiating their professional identity in the context of Canadian classrooms. Professional identity development for foreign-trained teachers incorporates both their personal histories and their integration into the sociocultural context and discourse of the teaching profession in Canada. Through exploring the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers this research offers insight into their experiences in repositioning themselves in BC classrooms. With the narrative analysis framework proposed by Jack Martin (2011), Life Positioning Analysis, this research provides an appreciation for the role of others in facilitating the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers.

Keywords: professional identity; foreign-trained teachers; position exchange; narrative psychology; Mead

*“I can't go back to yesterday
because I was a different person then.”
— Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland**

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List of Abbreviations

PDP	Professional Development Program
PQP	Professional Qualification Program
BCCT	British Columbia College of Teachers
TOC	Teacher on Call
DST	Dialogical Self Theory
PT	Positioning Theory
PET	Position Exchange Theory
LPA	Life Positioning Analysis
BC	British Columbia
K-12	Kindergarten to Grade 12

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Problem

The demographic composition of Canada's population has changed dramatically over the past few decades. Similar trends exist throughout developed nations as birth rates decrease, life expectancies increase, and aging workforces require reliance on immigration for labour force growth and viable economic tax bases (Harvey & Houle, 2006; McNamara & Basit, 2004; Zhao, 2010). It is estimated that the demographic shift in Canada by 2017 will reflect that "one person out of five would have a visible minority identity in Canada" (Harvey & Houle, 2006, p. 30). Nearly 75% of all immigrants to Canada settle in three cities: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver (Harvey & Houle, 2006, p. 18). In many Canadian urban communities, the term 'minority' has in essence become a misnomer, as visible ethnic minority populations now outnumber a traditionally white majority.

The effects of globalization, where human activity is no longer constrained by geographical boundaries, are both economic and social. Economically, the success of Canada's immigration policy is intrinsically tied to employment as the significance of underutilization of an immigrant workforce is estimated to cost \$2 billion annually (Reitz, 2005, p. 3). Socially, there is an obligation that the skills, abilities and diversity brought by immigrants be valued and incorporated as "in any society, the correlation between ethnic or racial status and economic success over extended periods of time is bound to become divisive and to affect intergroup relations" (Reitz, 2005, p. 4). Failure to incorporate an immigrant workforce not only affects economic success, but potentially affects intergroup relations, presenting a divisive force in Canadian society. As have other provincial governments, the British Columbia government has noted the social benefits of immigration when communities are welcoming and inclusive in creating "an increased sense of cohesiveness and belonging" where "safety and security are enhanced, and there is greater and more diverse involvement with the institutions and processes of community life" (Welcome BC, para. 2). The Ministry of Education of BC has recently presented new reform initiatives through BC's Education Plan (2011) which

highlights that globalization and changing demographics are key challenges to education in BC.

Increasing globalization extends cultural contrasts in societies offering, on the one hand, challenges to local conventions and on the other, new opportunities and possibilities for different perspective taking. Individuals leaving localized conventions as a result of immigration encounter new sociocultural perspectives that challenge previous self conceptions. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) note that “never in the history of humankind have global connections had such a broad reach and deep impact on the selves and identities of an increasing number of people” (p. 21). Immigrant populations encounter uncertainty in their conceptions of self and identity as “uncertainty is typical of a globalizing world in which selves and identities are shifting between global and local positions” (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010, p. 22). Identity development, then, is a key social factor in regard to incorporating immigrant populations into the Canadian context.

Further, beyond economic and social factors, it is argued here that there is a moral and ethical imperative that accompanies Canada’s immigration policy. Although Canada’s three tiered immigration system sees nearly two-thirds of immigrants entering under the category of skilled workers, for professionals with post-secondary educations, employment prospects in many sectors remain bleak (Reitz, 2005, p. 5). Reitz (2005) states that ultimately “the success of Canada’s immigration policy depends on the presence of one essential feature in the emerging global labour market; namely, institutions that link workers to jobs and provide for the international transferability of skills” (p. 8). Individuals immigrating to Canada as professionals, encouraged by Canada’s immigration policy, would have expectations that their skills, educational backgrounds, and previous work experiences are valued and incorporated into the Canadian labour market.

However, despite increasing skill levels and educational backgrounds, immigrants have experienced a continued trend of declining earnings and employment (Walton-Roberts, 2005, p. 13). By the turn of the millennium, the earnings of immigrants arriving in Canada “were less than those of previous comparable cohorts of immigrants going back to 1980” (Reitz, 2005, p. 5). Pendakur and Pendakur (2011) acknowledge

that “even as the proportion of Canadian-born visible minority workers has more than doubled over the past 15 years, earnings disparity is largely unchanged” (p. 307). Thus, the trend in underemployment of an immigrant workforce in Canada has been, and continues to be, problematic.

Regardless of increasing skill levels and educational backgrounds, employment levels for immigrant professionals are significantly lower than for the native workforce (World Migration Report, 2010, p. 123). This employment differential is even more extreme for immigrant teachers (Statistics Canada, 2006a). Employment and earning trends for immigrants to Canada contradict Canada’s Multiculturalism Act (1985) which declares that the Canadian government’s role is to “ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity” (3:1:e). Employment statistics for immigrant workers, then, contradict the claims of Canada’s immigration policy in seeking to incorporate immigrant workers in the country’s workforce.

Fundamentally it is unethical to encourage immigration into a marketplace that fails to incorporate immigrant workers, undervalues immigrants’ contributions and discriminates against their inclusion (Schmidt, 2010a; Schmidt, 2010b; Schmidt, Young, & Mandzuk, 2010; Xu, 1999). Canada encourages immigration whether labour shortages exist or not. Schmidt (2010b) and Schmidt, Young and Mandzuk (2010) have noted that among professional categories, immigrant teachers are most affected by labour shortages in Canada. Schmidt (2010b) exhorts that immigrant teachers “face particular challenges to their integration not shared by other professionals, such as internationally educated nurses or engineers, who presently benefit from labour shortages in their fields” (p. 236). Furthermore, immigrant teachers face discrimination and racial barriers to employment at systemic, social and general levels (Phillion, 2003). Presently, immigration policies have resulted in an increase in the ethnic diversity of the student population in schools in Canada, without a comparable increase in ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce.

This research considers recent immigration and demographic changes in Canada, and specifically in the Greater Vancouver region of the province of British Columbia where most immigrants to BC settle. The discussion herein will consider the

barriers faced by foreign-trained teachers in working or seeking employment as teachers of various ethnic backgrounds in the five largest school districts in BC where there is a significant disproportion between the numbers of students of diverse ethnic backgrounds in classrooms and the percentage of teachers of diverse ethnic backgrounds they encounter. In particular, this research seeks to understand how professional identity for foreign-trained teachers, a key social factor in regard to their incorporation into the workforce, is affected by work experiences in British Columbia K-12 schools.

1.2. Immigration and Demographics

In a global overview of worldwide migration trends, the World Migration Report (2010) notes that Canada, at 7.2 million, ranks fifth among countries with the largest foreign-born population (p. 111). Over the last century Canada's immigrant population has reflected between 15% and 22% of the national population, and in 2001 39% of the population was comprised of first- or second-generation immigrants, with current estimates that one in five Canadians is an immigrant (Trends in Immigration, p. 3). According to the 2011 National Household Survey, Canada has the highest proportion of foreign-born population at 20.6% among the eight wealthiest countries (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Immigration has been an important aspect of Canadian economic and national history and current trends show no abatement to the influx of immigrants; indeed, "given today's below-replacement fertility rates, within 25 years immigration will be the only source of net population growth factor, as deaths will outnumber births" (Trends in Immigration, p. 2). Canada's immigration policy seeks to advance global migration and draw "the best from the world to help build a nation that is economically, socially and culturally prosperous" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010, p. 1). The Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2010) agreement states that Canada and British Columbia share a mutual interest in "maximizing the contribution of immigration to the achievement of the social, demographic and economic goals of both Canada and British Columbia (1:10:a). However, as has been noted, employment levels for immigrant professionals are significantly lower than those for the native workforce.

Over the past decade, British Columbia has consistently been the province with the third highest numbers of immigrant landings, accounting for 15%-20% of total Canadian immigration—following Ontario with over 40% and Quebec with fewer than 20%, only slightly higher than British Columbia (BC Stats, 2011b). For British Columbia, the majority of immigrant settlement has been in the Greater Vancouver region as 76% of immigrants in 2009-2010 settled in this area; 68% of immigrants to BC over the past five years have located in Greater Vancouver (BC Stats, 2011c). Furthermore, BC stands as the third most likely province for migration within Canada, following Ontario and Alberta, where immigrants after arriving in Canada chose to move between provinces (BC Stats, 2011c). These migration numbers do not reflect immigrant migration after Canadian landing. As well, these statistics do not include refugees who have also located in the Greater Vancouver area, with refugees accounting for 4.8% of all newcomers to the province (Long, 2010, p. 1).

Immigration to British Columbia is not only a consistent choice, but increasingly immigrants are choosing to locate in the Greater Vancouver area wherein the five largest school districts are located: Vancouver, Surrey, Coquitlam, Burnaby, and Richmond. This diversity is reflected in the profile of communities with the five largest school districts in the province of BC, as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Distribution of Visible Minorities

School District	Percentage of Visible Minorities	
	East Asian	South Asian
Vancouver	57.7	11.1
Surrey	11.2	59.6
Richmond	67.0	12.3
Burnaby	54.6	15.1
Coquitlam	44.6	9.5

Note. Data retrieved from BC Stats, 2006a, 2006b, 2006d, 2006e, 2006f.

A report prepared by BC Stats (2012) notes that of the 30,768 immigrant landings to the Vancouver area in that year, 28% were from East Asia, 11% were from Europe and 16% were from India (BC Stats, 2011b). East Asian (denoting individuals from China and the Mainland) and South Asian (denoting individuals emigrating from India) make up the two largest groups of visible minorities among immigrants.

Classrooms in BC's five largest school districts are microcosms representing the ethnic diversity of BC communities. In a National Household Survey completed in 2011, the immigrant population in Vancouver accounted for 40% of Vancouver's total population. However, the percentage of teachers within these same school districts of similar ethnic backgrounds is not reflective of the student population. Of the total population of teachers in the Greater Vancouver region, according to 2006 Census data, 19.4% were visible minorities; of this 8.8% were Chinese and 4.3% were South Asian (Statistics Canada, 2006a). At the same time, of foreign-trained teachers, less than 20% secure employment in Canada as teachers as opposed to 62% of teachers trained in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006b).

Although efforts to attract skilled workers to Canada were enacted in 1993, a comparable rise in employment levels has not been commensurate.

In 1993, the selection system for immigrants to Canada was modified to attract more highly educated immigrants, as well as more in the economic "skilled" class. As a result, among new immigrants aged 15 and older, the proportion with university degrees rose from 17% in 1992 to 45% in 2004. The share in the economic skilled immigrant class increased from 29% to 51%.
(*The Daily*, 2007)

Reitz (2005) reiterates that "despite rising skill and education levels" there have not been comparable gains in the employment of immigrant professionals (p. 3). The largest employment category for immigrants is in the sales and service industry. Although immigrants are arriving from their country of origin with university degrees and training in a professional field, they are most likely to secure employment in areas outside of their professional training. The training and skills brought by immigrants from their countries of origin are not being valued in the Canadian context; contradicting the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Agreement (2010) which calls for maximizing the contributions of an immigrant workforce.

Thus while the portability of internationally obtained professional and educational credentials is a concern for immigrant acceptance on application to Canada, it is much more so for subsequent employment. In fact, immigrants face "higher levels of unemployment than native workforces" (World Migration Report, 2010, p. 123). Immigrants with a university degree having been in BC less than five years had a full

time employment rate of 53.5%, with those living in BC from five to ten years having an employment rate of 66.3%, and immigrants established in BC for more than 10 years having an employment rate of 68.4%; all rates are lower than Canadian-born university degree holders at 74.8% (BC Stats, 2011a, p. 3).

Teaching represents “the largest professional group in the labour force in Canada” (Canadian Teacher’s Federation, 2006, p. 3), and the “fourth largest profession among Canadian immigrants” (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009, p. 602). However immigrants whose occupations are in education are three times less likely to be employed in their matching profession; match rates are indications of the employment levels of professional immigrants in Canada as commensurate with their level of employment in their country of origin (BC Stats, 2011d; Statistics Canada, 2006b). Ryan, Pollock, and Antonelli (2009) assert that immigrant teachers face glass ceilings as the competition for employment in the Canadian market is unfair, “occurs on unequal ground and routinely favours white, English-speaking, native-born Canadians over immigrant teachers of colour” (p. 608). Across Canada, visible minorities are underrepresented in the teaching profession with 3.7% of East Asian and 2.9% of South Asian ethnic origin (Canadian Teacher’s Federation, 2006, p. 4). Teaching, then, is a profession of particular concern for immigrant employment.

Teaching is a predominantly female profession; “elementary and secondary teachers are mostly women, accounting for 65% of full-time teachers in 1999/2000” (Canadian Teacher’s Federation, 2006, p. 3). Unemployment rates for immigrant women in BC have risen over the past few years to 8.9% in 2010, whereas unemployment rates for Canadian-born women have decreased to 5.2% over the same period. As well, recent female immigrants have a “labour force participation rate of 60.9% - 25.6% lower than their male counterparts” (BC Stats, 2011a, p. 2). Unemployment rates for immigrant women highlight a pervasive trend to delegitimize their value in BC below both those of immigrant men, and of Canadian-born women. Declining employment for immigrant professionals then is very likely to adversely affect employment rates for female immigrant teachers in the Greater Vancouver region.

In a study completed in 2000, Echols and Grimmatt determined that in metropolitan and urban districts there was a shift toward accepting applicants

representing East Asian and South Asian demographics however, although “a shift in the number of applications is evident, no districts reported tracking the relationship between ethnicity of applicants and actual hiring” (p. 3). Regardless of the increase in applicants from diverse ethnic backgrounds, there has not been a comparable increase in hiring teachers with comparable ethnic backgrounds. Despite the increase in student ethnic diversity in classrooms, the “proportion of ‘visible minority’ teachers in the teacher workforce declined between 2001 and 2006,” with the largest decline in the Vancouver area (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 597).

1.3. Overview

The ethnic diversity within the student population in British Columbia’s classrooms has been enhanced by immigration policies that have served to cultivate the economic prosperity and sociocultural diversity of Canadian society and confront historically dominant norms. The demographic changes in the student populations in the five largest school districts in BC find East Asian and South Asian ethnic groups, previously minorities in BC, representing the majority of the student population. However, East Asian and South Asian teachers employed in these districts are still very much a minority population among a primarily Caucasian teaching force. One method of enhancing the ethnic diversity of the teaching force is through employment of foreign-trained teachers. However, employment of foreign-trained teachers has neither kept pace with changing demographics within the student population, nor has met levels of employment for Canadian-born and trained teachers. In essence, the ‘face’ of teachers in BC has not changed to reflect the ‘face’ of the students in front of them.

Foreign-trained teachers entering BC classrooms encounter new sociocultural contexts that pose challenges for previously held perspectives and professional identity. This research sought to understand the journey of foreign-trained teachers as they develop their professional identities in adjusting to teaching experiences within BC classrooms. This research will facilitate greater understanding within the profession of the obstacles foreign-trained teachers face, inform foreign-trained teacher education programs, and provide a base of knowledge to support future foreign-trained teachers on their path through recertification and employment in BC.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

Immigrant teachers with training, education and experience received in their country of origin face considerable obstacles in their attempts to reposition themselves professionally in Canada. Seeking certification in Canada, educational upgrading, and new professional positioning challenge previously held conceptions of professional identity (Britzman, 2003; Myles, Cheng, & Wang, 2006). This research considered what is currently understood as challenges to professional identity development for foreign-trained teachers.

This research explores the conception of professional identity from a sociocultural perspective in considering the theoretical underpinnings of G.H. Mead through an analysis of neo-Meadian theories: Dialogical Self Theory, Positioning Theory, and Position Exchange Theory. Life Positioning Analysis, as presented by Martin (2011) is the methodological framework used to analyze foreign-trained teachers' narrative accounts. LPA is an effective method through which to analyze the experiences of foreign-trained teachers as LPA provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding the experiences of foreign-trained teachers as they negotiate new perspectives through repositioning in the sociocultural context of BC's school system.

As the ethnicity of the student population in BC increasingly diversifies, an understanding of the journeys of foreign-trained teachers, non-representative of white Anglo-Saxon backgrounds predominant within the teaching profession, is helpful in illuminating the barriers that may currently deter their incorporation within the teaching force. An understanding of the barriers faced by foreign-trained teachers in repositioning in BC classrooms can facilitate rectifying the systemic, social, and general obstacles they face (Phillion, 2003). This research addresses the disparity that exists: the ethnic background of teachers employed in the five largest school districts in BC is simply not reflective of the student population.

1.5. Research Questions

This research sought to understand the development of professional identity among foreign-trained teachers in repositioning within BC classrooms. Through the use of a qualitative design, semi-structured interviews analyzed through the LPA framework,

this research investigated the professional identity development of a sample of foreign-trained teachers on a continuum of employment experiences: foreign-trained teachers who may be seeking certification and employment, have had experience in BC classrooms, or who are presently employed within the five largest school districts in British Columbia.

This research primarily explores the question, How is a foreign-trained teacher's sense of professional identity affected by work experiences in British Columbia's K-12 schools? Furthermore, through narrative accounts considered with Martin's (2011) Life Positioning Analysis, this research explored the experiences of foreign-trained teachers in negotiating the recertification process, asking the following questions: What are the circumstances that underlie foreign-trained teachers' pursuit of employment as a teacher in BC? What are foreign-trained teachers' perceptions of the issues affecting professional identity development through their integration into the BC K-12 school system? How do foreign-trained teachers redefine themselves as professionals when experiencing teaching in BC classrooms? What is the role of significant others in facilitating or hindering professional identity development? What are the sociocultural challenges to professional identity development faced by foreign-trained teachers? What are the commonalities and differences in professional identity development related to demographic and personal histories?

1.5.1. *Significance of the Study*

This research provides an understanding of how foreign-trained teachers negotiate professional identity when faced with adjusting to the sociocultural contexts of BC's K-12 classrooms. Considerable discrepancy between the ethnic diversity of the student population in BC classrooms and the number of teachers from comparable ethnic backgrounds supports the importance of research that may facilitate foreign-trained teachers in pursuing employment in BC. As research by Duchesne and Stitou (2011) has noted, a core challenge faced by foreign-trained teachers in adapting to teaching in Canada is the negotiation of professional identity.

Research on the challenges foreign-trained teachers face in negotiating professional identity when repositioning in the context of BC classrooms can serve to enhance foreign-trained teacher education programs. The findings can both inform

instructional methods for foreign-trained teachers and serve to guide the individual journeys of foreign-trained teachers as they become familiar with the cultural context of BC classrooms. Foreign-trained teachers need to be “conscious that culture is a critical issue in his or her new educational encounter” (Hutchison, 2005, p. 55). An appreciation for the challenges confronting teachers as they negotiate their professional identities between dual cultures can serve to offer a common dialogue that can be both instructive and supportive. Furthermore, this research will add to the existing literature regarding the barriers and affordances to immigrant professionals, while specifically providing an understanding of foreign-trained teachers’ experiences in the lower mainland of BC.

This research is further significant as the first application of the narrative method Life Positioning Analysis (LPA) beyond Martin’s (2011) single case study exemplar. As will be discussed in section 3.4, LPA offers a method of analysis of individual life stories, presenting an interpretation of an individual’s experiences in integrating past and present perspectives. LPA, as a methodological framework, is uniquely suited to research regarding the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers as a result of its underlying theoretical basis in Position Exchange Theory. The premises of PET are fundamental to an understanding of identity as a developmental, socially mediated construct. As Martin (2011) underscores:

1. PET is unique in its consistent emphasis on the evolutionary, developmental, and transformative primacy of concrete positioning within actual physical and sociocultural contexts as an initial basis for the unfolding of the psychological lives of persons
 2. PET and LPA understand and use direct experiences with particular, significant others as a primary means through which individuals enter into generalized others, understood as the practices, conventions, perspectives, and traditions that typify particular sociocultural niches.
- (p. 2)

LPA offers a significant methodological framework for this research. Through the application of LPA, this research analyzes the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers, formed through cumulative histories of social interactivity and negotiated through repositioning in new sociocultural contexts.

LPA is intended to offer a rich interpretation of a single case by extrapolating information from multiple sources. However, the present research deviates from the

intentions of LPA in neither incorporating data from multiple sources, nor in focussing on a single individual case. The current research uses information gleaned directly from interview data from 12 participants. Conclusions reflect and summarize the repositioning experiences of 12 foreign-trained teachers to inform current practices found to pose barriers to the incorporation of foreign-trained teachers in BC classrooms. In modifying the intended application of LPA, by combining several individual life experiences, this research sought to provide a more general understanding of the life positioning experiences of foreign-trained teachers who seek repositioning in BC classrooms.

1.5.2. *Scope of the Study*

This research accessed foreign-trained teachers along a continuum of experience levels. Participants were drawn from professional development programs offered by a medium-sized university and designed to provide an educational program that leads to teacher certification within the BC K-12 school system. Participants were drawn from two separate programs: Professional Qualification Program (PQP), and Professional Development Program (PDP). The intent of the research was not for program assessment purposes, but to draw participants from differing programs to allow for the incorporation of a broader base of experience.

To extend the exploration of the research questions beyond initial practicum experiences within BC K-12 classrooms, foreign-trained teachers having attained recertification and currently seeking employment were contacted, those having completed the program in past and are not presently employed as teachers, as well as foreign-trained teachers who are presently employed in the five largest school districts in BC. This continuum of experience levels provided an extended perspective of the challenges faced by foreign-trained teachers as they negotiate their work experiences. As well, accessing data across varying degrees of work experience provided an emergent understanding of the development of professional identity along a continuum of experience within BC schools.

Further, the scope of this study may extend to research interests in the areas of qualitative methodology and neo-Meadian theories through the modified application of Martin's (2011) methodological framework, LPA, used herein. This research has extended the initial application of Martin's (2011) LPA single case study in using LPA

across several individual life positioning experiences. Modifying the application of LPA to multiple cases allowed for the construction of a common thematic analysis of positions and perspectives. Interview data was coded with reference to the phases of LPA in considering the perspectives of particular others and relevant generalized others, and a review of the positions and perspectives occupied and exchanged at different life phases (Martin, 2011). Coding facilitated the identification of common themes; barriers to the repositioning experiences of the twelve participants. As such, this research provides an innovative application of Martin's (2011) methodological framework, LPA.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Establishing Terminology

Concerns are being raised in literature across many countries regarding the inequity between visible minority student populations and concurrently the number of visible minority teachers (Garcia, Beatriz Arias, Harris Murri, & Serna, 2010; Longview Foundation, 2008; McNamara & Basit, 2004; Santoro, 2007). Although, at present, studies of the experiences of foreign-trained teachers encompass a relatively small field, the discipline is already fraught with discrepancies in terminology. Different terms have been used to refer to teachers who immigrate with professional training and/or experience from their countries of origin.

Within the literature originating from the United States, Su (1997) and Galindo (1996) use the term “minority teachers,” while Quijano and Rios (2000) refer to “ethnic minority teachers.” Research from Australia uses the terms “ethnic minority teachers” (Santoro, 2007), and “overseas trained teachers” (Cruickshank, 2004). Research in Britain refers to “ethnic minorities” (Carrington & Tomlin, 2000), and “ethnic minority teachers” or “newly qualified teachers” (McNamara & Basit, 2004).

Within Canadian based research the variations in terminology continue: Walsh (2007) refers to “minority teachers” and Walsh and Brigham (2007) to “internationally educated teachers.” Phillion (2003) refers to “foreign accredited teachers,” Mawhinney and Xu (1997) to “foreign-trained teachers,” and Myles, Cheng, and Wang (2006) to “foreign-trained immigrant teachers.” Bascia (1996), with Thiessen and Goodson, use the term “racial minority immigrant teachers” while Beyon [sic] and Toohey (1992) use “visible minority teachers.” Beynon, Ilieva, and Dichupa (2001) refer to “teachers of minority backgrounds” in their study regarding teachers of Chinese ancestry, and Beynon, Ilieva, and Dichupa (2004) refer to “immigrant teachers.” Clea Schmidt throughout her writings in 2010 on the integration experiences of teachers immigrating to Canada with training and/or experience in their country of origin consistently uses the term “internationally educated teachers” (IETs). Deters (2011) adopts the term IET as well in her recent book detailing case studies of 33 internationally educated teachers.

For the purposes of simplicity and consistency, this paper will use the term foreign-trained teachers. The use of the term foreign-trained teachers herein encapsulates professional immigrant teachers who have credentials, educational training, and experience originating from their country of origin. Country of origin is clearly stated here as globalization often results in further migration; individuals may not settle where landing, nor may arrive directly from their country of origin, thus the term “overseas educated” can be insufficiently precise. As education, as well as people, have become globalized, even Canadian-born teachers can receive an international education online while never leaving their Canadian residence, therefore the term IET, without being consistently clarified in context, can be misleading. Further, the term “ethnic” can provoke a circuitous discussion in definition and so will not be used. In a study of the effect of language on identity, Kalbach and Pigott (2005) found that the emergence of Canadian as an ethnic origin challenged the perspective that ethnicity is defined by ancestral heritage and confirms that ethnicity is socially constructed. Finally, in hesitating to add to what has already been suggested herein as a misnomer, the terms minority and ethnic minority will be used sparingly when referring to foreign-trained teachers, unless in specific reference to literature wherein these terms are used.

2.2. Rationale for Employing Foreign-trained Teachers

There is considerable discrepancy between the ethnic diversity of the student population in BC classrooms and the number of teachers from comparable ethnic backgrounds. Garcia, Beatriz Arias, Harris Murri, and Serna (2010) contend that “teachers who are ready to handle this demographic reality are no longer a luxury but a necessity” (p. 135). To meet the needs of students within ethnically diverse classrooms, the teaching profession should embrace an ethnically diverse professional population, “however, relatively few teachers are drawn from the ranks of Canada’s recent immigrant, visible minority, and aboriginal communities, even though these groups provide an increasing proportion of Canada’s students” (Xu, 1999, p. 47). As Schmidt (2010a) has suggested, “an important strategy for responding more effectively to the needs of diverse learners and combating racism in school systems involves diversifying the teaching force to better reflect the backgrounds, worldviews, cultures, and languages of the students” (p. 2). Incorporating foreign-trained teachers into BC classrooms is a

“deliberate attempt to transform what historically has been an overwhelmingly white teaching population” (Bascia, 1996a, p. 2). Thus, increasing ethnic diversity within the teaching profession through facilitating the employment of foreign-trained teachers is essential to challenging historical dominant ideological values pervasive in public education.

2.2.1. Social, Moral and Ethical Imperative

Education for many immigrants offers the ability for their children to achieve equal opportunities to those afforded to the dominant group. However, assimilation into the dominant ideological frame of schools, as historically providing a white Anglo-Saxon perspective, proves problematic for the maintenance of ethnic identity. Schools are seen as “levellers and homogenizers” that tend “to destroy minority cultures” (Vogel & Elsasser, 1981, p. 72). Culture becomes the construct that exemplifies the chasm between ethnic differences and dominant norms. An influx of immigrants serves to challenge the cultural values and social norms that define dominant group values. Villegas and Lucas (2002) remark that schools are microcosms of the larger social order; “as institutions of society, schools mirror the culture, language, and values of those in power” (p. xvii). Villegas and Lucas (2002) acknowledge that “the ways of talking, interacting, thinking, and behaving of the dominant group are the unacknowledged norm in teaching and evaluation practices” (p. xvii). Schools in BC are “settings which presently privilege the values, practices and discourses of the dominant Anglo-European Canadian society” (Beynon et al., 2001, p. 133). This is the divide that currently exists in the five largest school districts in BC; teachers reflect values that define the dominant group, however the students they are teaching encompass a diversity of cultural backgrounds.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) allege that culturally responsive teaching requires teachers who understand the cultural backgrounds of their students. This is “predicated on beliefs that racial minority and immigrant teachers’ own experiences and sociocultural locations will improve the quality of educational experiences for racial minority and immigrant students” (Bascia, 1996a, p. 2). Learning is most effective when it occurs in socioculturally meaningful contexts, however, “such meaningful contexts have been notoriously inaccessible to linguistically and culturally diverse children” (Garcia et al.,

2010, p. 138). Villegas and Lucas suggest that teachers from similar cultural backgrounds can meet student needs that are beyond curricular goals in creating social and emotional connections.

Noddings (1992) contends that the role of schools is no longer to simply impart curricular content through instruction in traditional subjects, but that schools also have a moral purpose in producing “people who would live non-violently with each other, sensitively and in harmony with the natural environment, reflectively and serenely with themselves” (p. 12). To develop a culture of care in schools is to “recognize multiple identities” (Noddings, 1992, p. 173). Noddings’ (1992) premise, that schools have a responsibility for fostering caring relationships, is echoed with Kidder’s (2006) call for education that incorporates moral courage. Kidder (2006) asserts that schools need to foster universal values of honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, and compassion and this is best achieved through teachers’ “active mentoring and real-life exemplification” (p. 237). In an increasingly globalizing world, the task of education in the “coming decades should be the development, strengthening and transformation of the world in the spirit of this emerging political meta culture of co-existence and co-operation” (Feuerverger, 1997, p. 39). Globalization has expanded the role of teachers; teachers need to understand and value linguistic and cultural diversity in meeting the needs of students.

In a further discussion of the challenges globalization brings to education, Zhao (2010) concludes that teachers “need to be sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences, experiences of migrating, and students’ life experiences and living conditions” (p. 427). Kincheloe (2008) bemoans a “one size fits all” pedagogy that “ignore(s) the complexity of the profound diversity of school conditions and student backgrounds” (p. 8). If, as Britzman (2007) argues, “our sense of self and our sense of the world is profoundly affected by having to grow up in school,” (p. 2) it is socially, morally, and ethically imperative to integrate foreign-trained teachers into our schools. As “immigration is a key part of Canada’s strategy to build a sustainable, worldclass economy,” (Lochhead & Mackenzie, 2005, p. 106), then our schools need to meet the needs of immigrant populations in a globalized world.

2.2.2. Foreign-Trained Teachers as Role Models

Schmidt and Block (2010) state that within the multifaceted rationale for integrating foreign-trained teachers is the reality that “children from immigrant backgrounds need role models and advocates within the system who can speak their first languages and relate to their circumstances of navigating their way in a new country, language, and culture” (p. 4). Bascia (1996c) notes that foreign-trained teachers hold an inherent advocacy role on behalf of minority students. Consequently there is need for a larger pool of teachers of various ethnic backgrounds “to provide role models who either share students’ particular racial and ethnic characteristics or can provide empathy by virtue of similar life experiences” (p. 171). Walsh and Brigham (2007) echo these concerns in stating that “a more diverse teaching population has the potential to provide different perspectives and role models as well as educative possibilities for all students, staff, and community members” (p. 12).

According to Schmidt and Block (2010), there is concern that

when children are not given the chance to see and hear themselves reflected in their educational settings, they can become marginalized within a school system that privileges certain ways of knowing and being that tend to reflect white, European, Anglo-centric norms in Western contexts. (p. 4)

Just as research has looked at the marginalization of professional adult immigrants (Preston & Man, 1999; Tastsoglou & Jaya, 2011), research has concluded that to avoid marginalization of minority children, minority role models in the educational experiences of minority youth are crucial (Toohey, Kishor, & Beynon, 1998; Schmidt, 2010a; Schmidt & Block, 2010). There is no doubt that “having minority teachers would definitely help minority students in adapting to Canadian culture” (Beynon & Toohey, 1995, p. 435).

With the ethnic diversity of students in BC’s five largest school districts, both in public K-12 schools and the post-secondary institutions that are proximal to these districts, it would be expected that ethnic minorities presently within BC would fill teacher education programs. However, Toohey, Kishor, and Beynon (1998) found that the “two most populous visible minority groups in British Columbia were enrolled in university in rates proportional to their representation in the population, but their teacher education

participation rates were relatively low” (Toohey et al., 1998, p. 57). Through research questionnaires administered to 1,595 Grade 10 students, Toohey et al. (1998) found that minority youth did not have positive perceptions of teaching as a career. Factors affecting these perceptions were parental influences and perceptions of teaching as a career that offers neither prestige nor high extrinsic reward. Toohey et al. (1998) further surmise that without encountering teachers of similar ethnic background as role models, minority students are deterred from considering teaching as a viable career choice.

These findings confirmed earlier results from research with university students attending two universities in the Greater Vancouver region where underrepresentation of minorities in teacher education programs and a lack of aspirations of teaching as a career choice for university students was evidently based on the influences of parents, families, and ethnic group stereotypes of teaching as low in prestige and/or income (Beyon [sic] & Toohey, 1992). Noting that minority role models are important in the educational experiences of minority youth, Beynon et al. (2001) conducted 25 ethnographic interviews with teachers of Chinese ancestry with results reinforcing commonly held stereotypes that members of the Chinese community “perceive teaching as neither sufficiently prestigious nor lucrative to consider worth pursuing” (p. 139). These findings are further supported by research in England where Basit (2004) found that “fear of racism, gender stereotypes and negative perceptions of the status of teaching as low” contributed to education being a subject that students of minority ethnic backgrounds were least likely to study (pp. 97-98).

As the above research suggests, visible minorities in BC do not seem to have positive perceptions of teaching as a viable career. Integrating foreign-trained teachers could serve to provide positive role models for students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, contact and communication between foreign-trained teachers and parents of diverse ethnicities may serve to dissuade negative stereotypes and move toward changing negative perceptions of the teaching profession for various ethnic groups.

2.2.3. *Foreign-Trained Teachers as Social Agents*

The diverse student population, resulting from globalization and the increasing interconnectedness of global concerns, demands teachers who have “global

competence.” Zhao (2010) defines this as the skills, abilities, attitudes, and understanding of other cultures. Zhao (2010) argues that to raise students to be global citizens requires a “new generation of teachers who are able to act as global citizens, understand the global system, and deliver a globally oriented education” (p. 429). Kincheloe (2008) calls for a critical and complex pedagogy that challenges injustice and moves to social reform in areas of “racism, sexism, homophobia, class bias, religious intolerance” (p. 239). Engaging all students in learning, and promoting a global world where diversity is embraced, hegemonic views are subverted, and oppression is thwarted is key to our “evolving criticality” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 193). Kincheloe (2008) argues that for education to significantly challenge students we need “educators who are concerned with improving student thinking skills, who attempt to connect schooling with life, who value the knowledge that students bring with them to school, who take seriously the cultivation of civic courage and citizenship” (p. 48).

However, from a case study of teacher candidates from three ethnic groups (Su, 1997), it is clear that there is an inability for white teachers to meet these challenges. Su (1997) found that teachers from visible minority groups were “committed to improving and transforming the society” while “none of the white students mentioned these concerns when they described the necessary qualities of a good teacher” (p. 329). Su’s (1997) study provides evidence that minority candidates are more cognizant of inequalities in schools and society and are “more ready to engage in change and reform than the white students” (p. 337). Furthermore, white students’ perspectives of social change were fundamentally different than those of minority students’; white students interpreted the term change in reference to curriculum, while minority students saw a need for social justice and were prepared to act as social change agents in their teaching roles (Su, 1997, p. 337). Feuerverger (1997) discerned that minority Heritage language teachers in Ontario “indicate their deep commitment to the notion of a society whose schools are devoted to social diversity and egalitarianism” (p. 49).

In a qualitative study of the experiences of Indigenous teachers and ethnic minority teachers in Australian schools, Santoro (2007) found that “teachers who are ‘other’ to the ‘mainstream’ have a strong commitment to principles of social justice and the education of students who, like themselves, are not members of the hegemonic ‘mainstream’” (p. 83). Santoro (2007) determined that pedagogy was strongly influenced

by ethnic background, as ethnic minority teachers' positioning not only shaped their own identities but constructed and shaped those of their students (p. 92).

In a study of the perspectives of six Canadian racial and ethnocultural minority immigrant teachers, Bascia (1996a; 1996b) notes that immigrant and ethnic minority teachers hold a particular responsibility for minority and immigrant students that makes "them especially knowledgeable about the context and consequences of equity policies and practices" (p. 10). The experiences of foreign-trained teachers make them attuned to concerns for social inequity and discrimination, and thus uniquely suited to foster social change. Britzman (2003) has noted that foreign-trained teachers entering "teacher education are often seen and see themselves as social change agents, as critical, and as ready to change school culture and its curriculum" (p. 5).

This is not to say that Canadian-born and trained teachers cannot come to understand the experiences and cultures of their students and act as agents for change, however, without the opportunity to be exposed to foreign-trained colleagues, mainstream teachers may not have the opportunity to learn from their colleagues. As noted by Toohey et al. (1998), "for the majority Anglo European population of student teachers who will be teaching in multi-racial and multiethnic schools it is imperative also that they begin to learn with and from minority student teachers" (p. 70). Since teacher education programs consist of relatively short periods of time, educational programs focussed on acceptance, diversity, and cultural awareness "have limited effectiveness in promoting significant or lasting changes" (Schmidt, 2010b, p. 246; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). It is only through diversifying the teaching force by integrating foreign-trained teachers into BC schools that long term, enduring change in policies and practice will occur. In order to implement multiracial and anti-racist curricula, foreign-trained teachers need to work "with mainstream colleagues and minority and mainstream students as key agents in this curriculum co-development process" (Beynon et al., 2001, p. 148).

Beyond the capacity for foreign-trained teachers to act as social change agents, they act as mentors and role models for the students they teach and for the staff with whom they work. Foreign-trained teachers offer diverse perspectives and alternate attitudes from mainstream views to counteract the monolithic culture that currently exists in BC schools. Foreign-trained teachers can enrich the experiences of students, staff,

and parents, and can expand current mainstream views of the nature of education (Phillion, 2003; Walsh, 2007).

2.3. Professional Identity

Foreign-trained teachers entering BC classrooms face new sociocultural contexts that pose challenges for previously held perspectives and professional identity. However, there is little understanding of how foreign-trained teachers negotiate a sense of professional identity, determining who they will be, within the context of BC classrooms. As research has shown, which will be addressed further in this paper, identity development is a key aspect for foreign-trained teachers in their professional repositioning efforts. Thus, further understanding of how foreign-trained teachers of ethnic backgrounds negotiate differing perspectives in new contexts may serve to facilitate their integration into the teaching workforce (Beynon, Ilieva, & Dichupa, 2001; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011; Deters, 2011).

2.3.1. Terminology: Self, Identity, and Agency

Some discussion on the relation between identity, as a socially constituted process reflective of self, and self, as cognitions and self-understanding formed through social interaction, is necessary to address the common use of both terms as synonymous. The construct of self adopted herein is a moderate stance, set between dichotomous conceptions of self as either immutable and stable, or fractured and inconsistent.

The concept of self is defined by Martin, Sugarman, and Hickinbottom (2009) as “an identifiable, embodied individual human with being, self-understanding (self), and agentic capability” (p. 27). Côté and Levine (2002) refer to self as a “person’s internalized behavioral repertoires (for example, in role enactments during face-to-face interactions) and it can be an object of social experiences” (p. 88). Further, Côté and Levine (2002) posit that “self-concept” is the subjective experience of behavioral repertoires; the subjective experience is wherein agency lies (p. 88). Although individual agency lies bounded, constrained and limited by what has come before and that which comprises what is now, it is, as Martin et al. (2009) acknowledge, “the deliberative,

reflective activity of a human being in framing, choosing, and executing his/her actions in a way that is not fully determined” (p. 29).

Mead (1934) understood the concept of self as developed through ongoing social interaction (p. 50). Meaning is inherently tied to social acts. It is through social acts that the self is able to define itself and identity is reinterpreted; one becomes an object to oneself as a result of social relations with others (Mead, 1934, p. 172). Self, consequently, develops in sociocultural contexts and is an ongoing interpretive process. The individual “assumes the social attitudes of all these other individuals toward himself and toward one another, and integrates himself with that situation or group” (Mead, 1934, p. 322).

Martin et al. (2009) define identity as referring “to those socially constructed and socially meaningful categories that are appropriated and internalized by individuals as descriptive of themselves and/or various groups to which they belong” (p. 27). Individuals are agentic in determining meaning from the categories encountered. The individual “controlled by his being” develops a complete self (Mead, 1934, p. 154). For Côté and Levine (2002) identity is “understood as the sum of second-order reflections on what can be called the first-order reflective experience of self-concept” (p. 88). Agency, for Côté and Levine (2002) is the reflexive consciousness of the self; the ability of the self to reflect on subjective experience and this experience then forms identity (p. 88).

These conceptions consider identity as socially constructed, and deconstructed, meaningful within a consideration of historical and sociocultural roles, and mutable with agentic activity within the world. Martinson and Chu (2003) in a study of Hmong and Somali refugees in the U.S. found that the “immigrants’ ability to forge an identity within a community will depend on their ability to learn about social and economic variables” (p. 222). Sugarman (2005) also interprets identity as arising from social situations and determined by agentic activity:

Our lives are given continuity through a sense of identity, and identity largely is a matter of the extent to which we care about being a certain kind of person. Our identities are shaped by deliberating over what matters to us. And what matters is worked out through accepted interpretations of moral goods and standards. The moral goods of our

cultures and communities provide a framework for individual identity by lending coherence to our purposes and commitments. (p. 797)

Martin et al.'s (2009) conceptualization does not consider it necessary to scrutinize internal processes as identity is entirely a socially emergent process. Côté and Levine (2002), however, follow a psychoanalytic path in determining that identity is formed into tripartite distinctions of social, personal and ego identity. These distinctions are not subscribed to herein. Although identity is considered multifaceted, teasing the facets apart is akin to altering one facet of a diamond, it destroys the whole. Individuals hold multiple inextricably related identities; it is difficult to separate ethnic identity from professional identity as one necessarily affects the other. Xu (1999), in a study of seven foreign-trained teachers seeking professional repositioning in Ontario, determined that professional identity was also linguistically and ethnically defined. Identity, for the purposes of this discussion, represents many facets of the self, and is agentically and differentially expressed dependent upon social positioning and perspective taking.

Prior to globalization, identities were lodged in time and place through languages and cultures, without challenge to local positions. However, through increasing globalization, previously held identities become disunited and shift between local and global positions. As Bhatia (2002) has argued, identities “are not fixed by some core, singular, essential, universal properties. Rather, they are contested, multiple and shifting and are embedded in various cultural and historical practices” (p. 61). Bhatia refers to diasporic communities in the United States when noting that acculturation and identity are “constantly negotiating between past and present, tradition and modernity, and self and other” (p. 57). Bhatia (2002) suggests identity development involves negotiation between past histories, both personal and those shared by communities, and present possibilities, in seeing the self as “situated, negotiated and contested” (p. 73). Bhatia’s dialogical approach aligns with neo-Meadian conceptions of identity development that posit identity development as continually negotiated through social interactivity. For foreign-trained teachers, identity development is a negotiation of the perspectives encountered in their country of origin, the local positions that form personal cumulative histories, with perspectives encountered in new sociocultural contexts.

For Grossberg (1993) identity emerges from a particular position within the “strata of subjectivity,” which then “enables and constrains the possibilities of experience but even more, of representing and legitimating those representations” (p. 99). Agency lies in Grossberg’s strata of subjectivity, for identity is not fully determined by any one position in an individual’s life, but is negotiated throughout life experiences. For the individual, in relation with others, takes the attitudes of others, negotiates social understandings, and acquires positions and perspectives within organized society. Hall (1996) also maintains that identity is constructed within and across discourses and is a manifestation of diverse and varied experiences:

identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation. (p. 4)

Hall (1996) regards identity as non-unified, separated into processes of identification, “multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions” (p. 4). Hall’s perceptions of identity as a fluid construction through life experiences are consistent with Martin’s focus on identity development as a socially emergent process.

Identity, constantly in flux in a globalizing world, emerges from previous experiences and history, and embodies future possibilities. Identity, thus, comprises the whole of a person: their personal history, their present positioning, and their future possibility, constantly renegotiated in the fluidity of repositioning. This journey is significant for foreign-trained teachers who negotiate between professional identities developed in their country of origin and the identity development they undergo when encountering the sociocultural context of BC classrooms.

2.3.2. Professional Identity and Foreign-Trained Teachers

Twiselton (2004), in a longitudinal study involving 47 student teachers in England, found that professional identity is a dynamic aspect of how teachers manage and shape what occurs in their classrooms.

Identity construction is seen as a process that is not purely individualistic but takes place through social interaction and participation in a range of sociocultural groups. Within the professional school context student teachers' understandings and beliefs about their role and what they are trying to achieve will be determined by their understanding of the groups with which they identify. Such understanding can be constructed from both prior and current experience and the interaction and tension between them is the process of identity. (Twiselton, 2004, p. 159)

Professional identity was found to be shaped by social processes, and resultantly to shape social processes. Indeed, teaching is a profession that has "multiple and conflicting meanings that shift with our lived lives, with the theories produced and encountered, with the deep convictions and desires brought to and created in education, with the practices we negotiate, and with the identities we construct" (Britzman, 2003, p. 32). Professional identity development then is further convoluted for foreign-trained teachers as a result of the diversity of perspectives and positions they encounter through their repositioning efforts.

Professional identity development for foreign-trained teachers incorporates both their personal histories and their integration into the sociocultural context and discourse of the teaching profession both in their prior and their current setting. As noted by Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004), professional identity includes personal backgrounds, perceptions of other people, and social images of the teaching profession, and these conceptions "strongly determine the way teachers teach, the way they develop as teachers, and their attitudes toward educational changes" (p. 108). Research on the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers facilitates an understanding of the challenges and barriers faced when foreign-trained teachers reposition themselves professionally in new contexts.

In their study of immigrant teacher experiences within a teacher certification educational program at the University of Ottawa, Duchesne and Stitou (2011) comment on the experiences of foreign-trained teachers as student teachers encountering the context of a Canadian classroom for the first time:

While immigrant students in the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education have generally been successful in the theoretical section of their program, many of them have encountered difficulties when facing

their first practicum in a school setting, in part because they are unfamiliar with Canadian educational policies and practices. The gap between these students' conceptions and those underpinning the Canadian school system may be at the root of these difficulties; indeed, many experience a profound upheaval in their conceptions, values, and initial beliefs about education. (p. 1)

Through a case study approach, Duchesne and Stitou (2011) found that immigrant teachers encounter challenges to their sense of professional identity when faced with the context of a Canadian classroom. Immigrant teachers underwent a transformation that included "questioning their initial conceptions and adopting new conceptions that are better suited to Canadian educational policies and contexts" (Duchesne & Stitou, 2011, p. 6). Duchesne and Stitou (2011) conclude that the immigrant students in the teacher training program faced a shift in perspectives and conceptions of teaching that resulted in the development of professional identities more suited to the Canadian educational system.

In a review of a decade of studies that considered the perceptions and experiences of ethnic minorities and teaching, Quiocho and Rios (2000) found that personal identities are connected to professional identities: "identities are developed in the context of social and cultural experiences with diversity" and that "identities are instrumental in teachers' conceptions of diversity" (p. 494). Quiocho and Rios (2000) conclude that minority group teachers experience marginalization within their professional experiences and this in turn affects their teaching image in attempting to counter social hegemony. The "teachers' social subordination around race, class, gender, and immigration experiences" enabled them to establish empathic relationships with students, and develop pedagogy regarding managing subordination and conflict (Quiocho & Rios, 2000, p. 497).

Due to concern for the discrepancy between the number of Latinos in California schools and the underrepresentation of Latino teachers in these same schools, Galindo (1996) focused on case studies of three Chicano teachers' life stories. With an understanding that past identities affect future definitions of self, Galindo (1996) considered that prior experiences with language, culture, and ethnicity are relevant to current identities. Galindo (1996) states that the teachers in the study developed

bridging identities; identities that incorporated past biographical experiences with their current roles as teachers. Galindo (1996) concluded that “teacher role identity is an occupational identity that involves professional self-definition” and that self-definition “characterizes work styles, abilities, and attitudes, all of which play important roles in establishing an occupational identity” (p. 96). As a result, ethnic, racial, and cultural concerns have bearing on teachers’ professional identity.

Britzman (2003), in *Practice Makes Practice*, details the difficulties foreign-trained teachers may encounter in developing new professional identities. She states that teachers are in a role that is “uncannily familiar and utterly strange” (p. 4), highlighting the struggle to negotiate previously held perspectives and positions with new positioning. Britzman reiterates the social component of identity development: as teachers construct their own professional identities, so do others facilitate this construction. The social process of professional identity development is a negotiation “among what may seem to be conflicting visions, disparaging considerations, and contesting interpretations about social practice and the teacher’s identity is part of the hidden work of learning to teach” (Britzman, 2003, p. 26). Britzman (2003) cautions that adjusting to the role of teacher may mean, “becoming someone you are not” (p. 27). Beynon et al. (2001) argue that Britzman too clearly delineates identity from role, as Britzman states that roles are assigned while identity is socially negotiated (p. 135). Beynon et al. (2001) note that, although not addressed in teacher education programs, issues of race, language and culture figure predominantly in the professional identity development of teachers of Chinese ancestry when placed in teaching roles.

In an extensive longitudinal study of the integration of 33 foreign-trained teachers into the Ontario education system, Deters (2011) reiterates the findings of previous studies discussed herein, in concluding that identity is “socially constructed and mediated” (p. 214). However, Deters often complicates her arguments with a confusing use of terms, equating self with identity:

identity coherence, continuity and validation are necessary for psychological well-being. I argue that it is the human need for psychological well-being that mediates a person’s agency. In other words, a person’s agency and actions serve to reinforce his/her self identity; when self identity is threatened then agency can take the form of resistance in order to preserve one’s self identity. (p. 215)

Deters suggests here that agency preserves identity wherein agency, it has been argued previously, is the ability of humans to develop and adjust identity when encountering new positions and perspectives. Further in her conclusions, Deters contradicts her previous statement in saying that “one’s identity mediates one’s personal agency, and ongoing social interactions continually influence the construction of identity and agency” (p. 221).

In an assessment of the acculturation process encountered by her study participants, Deters notes four constraints: “(a) differences in language and culture, (b) differences in interactions with students and parents, (c) differences in professional beliefs and behaviors, and (d) discrimination” (p. 208); and four affordances: “(a) social support, (b) professional development courses and other material resources, (c) observation and practice, and (d) beliefs and attitudes” (p. 210). Deters’ results align within the categories of barriers faced by foreign-trained teachers as outlined by Phillion (2003) to be discussed hereafter as barriers to the integration of foreign-trained teachers.

2.4. Barriers to Foreign-Trained Teachers

As has already been duly noted, foreign-trained teachers are three times less likely to be employed in their matching profession than are other professional immigrants to Canada (BC Stats, 2011d; Statistics Canada, 2006b).

Canadian employers continue to be skeptical. Like the general public, they believe that immigrants from ‘third-world countries’ hold inferior ‘human capital.’ Employers find immigrants less attractive than Canadian-born and trained job seekers because of their short stay in the country, the lack of Canadian qualifications, their language and communication facilities, and their inability to ‘fit it’.

(Ryan et al., 2009, p. 605)

Foreign-trained teachers seeking professional repositioning in Canada face “unemployment, and extreme underemployment with a resulting loss of income, social status, and self-esteem” (Phillion, 2003, p. 43). Furthermore, they face racism and discrimination for their efforts (Schmidt, 2010b).

In studying the experiences of five visible minority immigrant women seeking teaching certification and employment in Canada, Phillion (2003) demonstrates that immigrant teachers face three levels of obstacles to their integration: systemic, social, and general. These concerns are echoed in other research on the barriers faced by foreign-trained teachers in pursuing professional repositioning in Canada (Lochhead & Mackenzie, 2005; Myles et al., 2006).

2.4.1. Systemic

Phillion (2003) found that foreign-trained teachers face systemic barriers to professional repositioning in Canada. These barriers include difficulties accessing information, recognition and acceptance of teaching credentials received from their country of origin, and requisite educational upgrading. In speaking of the lack of foreign-trained teachers, Ryan et al. (2009) stress that “if Canada is to have a more racially diverse workforce, then those working towards this end will need to acknowledge the systematic nature of the problems associated with this shortage and incorporate this knowledge into any solutions” (p. 609).

In research regarding the practices of Canadian teacher education programs for foreign-trained teachers, Walsh and Brigham (2007) found that foreign-trained teachers encounter systemic barriers in their efforts to obtain Canadian teaching credentials. Due to a lack of knowledge of the Canadian system, difficulty in accessing correct information about certification processes in Canada, and lack of recognition of prior education and teaching experiences, combined with the financial costs related to these efforts, foreign-trained teachers experience extensive barriers to certification (Walsh & Brigham, 2007, p. 12). Phillion (2003) noted that “a large number of immigrant teachers had little access to any information and were bewildered by where to start and what to do” (p. 44).

Beynon et al. (2004) examined the efforts of 28 foreign-trained teachers from diverse backgrounds in pursuing certification in BC through the BC College of Teachers (BCCT). Until January 2012, the BCCT stood as the professional self-regulatory body for licensed educators in British Columbia and was responsible for teacher certification within the province. Beynon et al. (2004) observed that foreign-trained teachers found “engaging with the authoritative discourse of BCCT was a humiliating process that negated their professional identities” (p. 439). Further, foreign-trained teachers find that

their previous teaching experience and educational training obtained in their country of origin are often undervalued or disregarded (Beynon et al., 2004; Myles et al., 2006; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011; Quiocho & Rios, 2000; Walsh & Brigham, 2007).

In a study of 24 Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong and Mainland China to the Greater Toronto area, Preston and Man (1999) discovered that “employers’ demands for Canadian work experience and the reluctance of professional organizations to accredit foreign professionals coupled with some of the women’s limited fluency in English, channel these highly educated and experienced workers into poorly-paid service and manufacturing jobs” (p. 125). Immigrant women seeking professional employment were excluded from doing so due to unfamiliarity with processes for seeking accreditation in their professional fields, as well as through cultural and social norms that applied to job applications and interviews. Preston and Man (1999) noted that these immigrants showed remarkable stoicism when adjusting from their previous professional identities to ones dictated by the “triple burden imposed by gender, immigrant status, and visible minority status” (p. 127) within Canadian society.

Similarly, Walton-Roberts (2005) encountered comparable experiences in the nursing profession in reporting that a foreign-trained nurse was denied volunteer work as she already had qualifications in the field, although these qualifications were not legitimized for a nursing position. Reitz (2005) corroborates these findings, noting that the “utilization of immigrants’ skill is affected by decisions about the local relevance of foreign-acquired credentials, education and experience” (p. 9). Walton-Roberts (2005) concluded that “regardless of where immigrants settle, if their qualifications are devalued, their route to integration, both economic and social, is delayed” (p. 29).

Other barriers to the certification processes were found to be finances, family obligations, language concerns, and time (Beynon et al., 2004; Preston & Man, 1999; Xu, 1999). Once foreign-trained teachers have accessed provincial bodies in regard to certification, they are typically directed to educational upgrading. These post-secondary programs vary in time and financial commitment and there is no compensation for the diverse language competencies held by foreign-trained teachers. As foreign-trained teachers on immigrating to Canada are likely to be underemployed and may be supporting families as well as establishing themselves in new living situations, they are

not likely to have the ability, finances, or time to pursue certification and consequent educational upgrading. Foreign-trained teachers who do pursue educational upgrading feel further marginalized due to their positioning as students, and this marginalization is intensified for “candidates who come from a variety of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds” (Myles et al., p. 236). The path to certification and employment as a teacher in BC is an expensive, time consuming, and emotional undertaking that may not be possible for the majority of foreign-trained teachers who immigrate to Canada.

2.4.2. Social

Foreign-trained teachers face racism and discrimination as well as a lack of acceptance in their professional repositioning efforts (Phillion, 2003). Schmidt (2010b) explains that discrimination faced by foreign-trained teachers is not simply comprised of

problematic and exclusionary attitudes and behaviours adopted by individuals, but as a pervasive systemic quality that serves to maintain the status of dominant groups (in this case, a predominantly White, middle-class, Canadian-born teaching force) and prevent change or the questioning of power. (p. 249)

Quiocho and Rios (2000) found that foreign-trained teachers felt “social subordination around race, class, gender, and immigration experiences” (p. 497). Deters (2011) observed that foreign-trained teachers face “racial discrimination and discrimination of immigrant teachers’ skills because the immigrant teachers’ country of origin was considered a ‘developing’ country, and therefore, the belief that the immigrant teacher’s skills and experience were not on par with a Canadian-educated teacher” (p. 210). Bascia (1996a) perceived that foreign-trained teachers do not experience a separate racial or cultural identity, but a “sense of ‘difference,’ of ‘otherness,’ the consequences of looking different, speaking or acting differently from what native-born Canadians expect of a Canadian, of a teacher in a Canadian school” (p. 7). Mawhinney and Xu (1997) also found that foreign-trained teachers experienced a sense of ‘otherness’ through encountering discriminatory practices in their teaching practica. Santoro (2007) ascertained that ethnic minority teachers in Australian schools experienced feelings of ‘otherness,’ different from Anglo colleagues, as well as not belonging due to ethnicity, social class and place. Bhatia (2002) argues being

positioned as 'other' "accentuates the pain of dislocation and displacement" (p. 66) which serves to further isolate foreign-trained teachers in their repositioning efforts.

The discrimination foreign-trained teachers confront is attributed to both individuals encountered through work experiences, as well as discrimination from the generalized other of the professional teaching community. They encounter perceptions of their abilities being something less or other than the level of Canadian-born/trained teachers. Schmidt (2010a) concludes that the repositioning efforts of foreign-trained teachers are made "more complex when the very education systems these teachers are trying to access fail to value the contributions of educators with languages, cultures, and backgrounds different from those of the mainstream teaching force" (p. 1). The discrimination faced by foreign-trained teachers not only counters Canada's Multiculturalism Act, but contradicts BC's new Education Plan (2011). Noting BC to be the most ethnically diverse province in Canada, BC's Education Plan (2011) alleges that cross-cultural understanding is a key competency to be taught in our schools.

2.4.3. General

Phillion (2003) found that a number of general concerns posed obstacles for the integration of foreign-trained teachers: language fluency, acceptance of foreign accents, and varied previous experiences. Other research substantiates these concerns and provides that foreign-trained teachers experience isolation, inadequate mentoring opportunities, and fundamental shifts in their conceptions of teaching. Kalbach and Pigott (2005) state that "ethnic identity is intrinsically connected with language; language is particularly influential in the development of identity" (p. 15). Yet through their integration efforts, foreign-trained teachers encounter expectations that they be both fluent and without accent. This is somewhat akin, then, to the expectation that foreign-trained teachers lose their ethnic identity in order to integrate into teaching in Canada.

Schmidt et al. (2010) note that "linguistic discrimination remains a formidable barrier for teachers who speak English as an additional language" (p. 449). Foreign-trained teachers face discrimination based on their accents, difficulties with context specific language, and unfamiliarity with idiomatic expressions (Beynon et al., 2001; Cruickshank, 2004; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011; Myles et al., 2006; Phillion, 2003; Walsh & Brigham, 2007; Xu, 1999). In an educational upgrading program at the University of

Ottawa, foreign-trained teachers found they were constantly being questioned about their accents during their practicum experiences (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997). Further, research conducted by Pendakur and Pendakur (2011) notes that immigrants may face earnings differentials related to such things as language or accent penalties, non-recognition of credentials or loss of work related networks (p. 307).

Goodson and Cole (1994) conclude that for foreign-trained teachers “the process of redefining what it means to be a teacher and their developing sense of new professional identity were contextually dependent on their developing notions of professional community” (p. 102). A community of learning, where foreign-trained teachers have opportunities for observation, mentoring, and advocate support are important issues in the integration of foreign-trained teachers. Often foreign-trained teachers feel a sense of alienation, isolation and self-consciousness in their relationships within the teaching community (Feuerverger, 1997; Myles et al., 2006; Santoro, 2007; Walsh & Brigham, 2007). Foreign-trained teachers would be well-served to be placed in nonthreatening mentoring situations (Cruickshank, 2004; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011; Myles et al., 2006; Xu, 1999). Through their research, Quiocho and Rios (2000) call for a “nurturing community of practice” (p. 521) as the “relationship between the cooperating teacher and the minority group student teacher seemed to be vital to the overall quality of field-based experiences” (p. 503). Phillion (2003) regrets the lack of minority teachers engaged in the educational system that can act as role models and advocates for foreign-trained teachers.

Duchesne and Stitou (2011) summarize that foreign-trained teachers contend with a cultural gap that “may involve undergoing a transformation of personal beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors” (p. 3). Foreign-trained teachers bring previous professional experiences from their country of origin, as well as personal experiences of being students within other educational systems as “teachers bring to their work their own idiomatic school biography” (Britzman, 2003, p. 2). Britzman (2003) suggests that teachers face a “contradiction of wanting to become a teacher but not necessarily wanting to step into the role of a cruel authority figure” (p. 4). Britzman’s comment here presents a very Western cultural perspective, and may very well be indicative of her own “idiomatic school biography” rather than the reality of foreign-trained teachers’ experiences. In contrast, research suggests that foreign-trained teachers may

encounter the Canadian classroom experience as more permissive and less authoritarian than those of their past experiences (Deters, 2011; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011; Myles et al., 2006).

Foreign-trained teachers whose backgrounds and professional experiences mirror different systems encounter “challenges both in conceptualizing new expectations and in identifying and demonstrating appropriate professional practices” (Cheng, Myles, & Wang, 2004, p. 103). Duchesne and Stitou (2011) comment that included in this culture gap is the need for foreign-trained teachers to become accustomed to classroom management strategies in the Canadian student-centred educational model, involving a reconceptualization of the role of learners within the classroom as active participants in learning.

Fundamentally crucial to integrating into teaching in Canada is a “personal commitment to learning, inspired (by) a willingness to contend with difficulty” (Bascia, 1996b, p. 80). Deters (2011) comments that attitudes and beliefs, as well as personal dispositions, are affordances as “a positive attitude, an openness to different ways of doing things, and ‘going the extra mile’ were important to successful professional acculturation” (p. 211). Deters (2011) concludes that when foreign-trained teachers’ “beliefs and values about teaching and learning were aligned with Canadian beliefs and values, acculturation was much easier” (p. 211). Heritage language teachers in Feuerverger’s (1997) study determined the necessity of following “the Canadian pedagogical style” (p. 50). Professional pedagogical adjustments for foreign-trained teachers, reflective of professional identity development, may mean adopting “a Canadian teacher style” (Phillion, 2003, p. 43).

2.5. Summary

Immigration patterns in Canada have significantly diversified the populations in Canadian communities, and certainly the student population in the five largest school districts in BC. Despite these changes in student demographics, the teaching force within schools in the Greater Vancouver region fails to reflect the diversity of backgrounds found in the student population. Research has been presented herein to confirm the “need to expand ethno-cultural and racial diversity within the teaching

profession” (Royal Commission on Learning, 1994, p. 69). Further, research has provided evidence that current immigrant populations may not enter teaching as a result of unfavourable perceptions of teaching as a career (Beynon et al., 2001; Beyon [sic] & Toohey, 1992). To enhance the ethnic diversity of teachers working in five largest school districts in BC, school districts should look to facilitate hiring and professional support for foreign-trained teachers. Furthermore, there is a social, moral, and ethical imperative to integrate immigrant professionals into a country that espouses the benefits of a multicultural heritage.

However, as has been argued herein, the experiences of foreign-trained teachers have shown that they face numerous barriers to professional repositioning in BC schools. One of the key issues faced by foreign-trained teachers integrating into teaching in BC is encountering new conceptions of their role as teachers (Duchesne & Stitou, 2011). To facilitate the integration of foreign-trained teachers and their efforts to redefine themselves as professionals in BC classrooms, the teaching community needs to address and rectify barriers at systemic, social, and general levels (Phillion, 2003).

Research regarding the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers, which facilitates an understanding of the barriers they face in repositioning and integrating new perspectives, requires a methodology that is based on a theoretical understanding of identity as fluid in a changing world. The following discussion will consider the theoretical underpinnings of Mead and the applicability of neo-Meadian theories in understanding the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers. Further, Martin’s (2011) narrative methodology, where individuals are seen as embedded in positions and perspectives throughout their life experiences, will be presented as appropriate method for this research as a result of its theoretical basis.

3. Methodology

This research focused on the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers positioning themselves in classrooms in BC. As foreign-trained teachers enter the BC school system, they encounter new sociocultural contexts that pose challenges for previously held perspectives (Duchesne & Stitou, 2011). Previous research regarding the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers has not incorporated a theoretical perspective and methodology that seeks to understand the experiences of foreign-trained teachers in negotiating new perspectives through repositioning in new sociocultural contexts. Nor has any research considered the professional development of foreign-trained teachers in repositioning specifically in BC classrooms.

This chapter is divided into two parts, the first covers theoretical conceptions and the second, the methodological application of theory to research. This discussion considers three recent theories in the conception of self and identity: Dialogical Self Theory (DST), Positioning Theory (PT), and Position Exchange Theory (PET). These theoretical perspectives underlie the qualitative research method used for this research, LPA, in understanding the question, “How is a foreign-trained teacher’s sense of professional identity affected by work experiences in British Columbia K-12 schools?”

These neo-Meadian theories offer an understanding of identity as developed and continually mediated by and within sociocultural contexts. These theories provide a foundation for understanding professional identity development as embedded within activity with generalized others; as presented by George Herbert Mead. Mead’s conception of generalized others will be considered here as pertinent to the qualitative method used, LPA (Martin, 2011), in seeking an understanding of professional identity development through interactivity with significant and general others. Foreign-trained teachers in processes of social interaction interpret the attitudes of others and this integrative process affects professional identity development (Dodds, Lawrence, & Valsiner, 1997).

The following discussion interweaves fundamental conceptions of self as posited by Mead. Mead’s pragmatic sociological approach to understanding the self as

inextricably intertwined in activity within the world is fundamental to understanding the experiences of foreign-trained teachers as they professionally reposition themselves and broker new perspectives. Mead's conception of the generalized other suggests a theoretical premise for how foreign-trained teachers come to develop their professional identity when encountering new sociocultural contexts. The following neo-Meadian theories encapsulate, to varying degrees, and build on Mead's theoretical premises; however, the final consideration of PET provides a developmental approach which is most apt for application to research regarding the identity development of foreign-trained teachers.

Hermans' and Hermans-Konopka's DST (1993, 2002, 2010) concurs that the self ensues from social interactivity and expands on Mead's conceptions of internal positions of "I" and "me." Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (1993) postulate a polyphonic self that serves as a multitude of voices, or "I" positions. While alluding to Mead's consideration of the self arising from interactions with others, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka present a largely inwardly focussed theory. Raggatt (2007) expands upon DST by introducing a consideration of motivations and moral imperatives.

PT, as formulated by Moghaddam, Harré, and Lee (2008a, 2008b) considers dialogical relationships on an intrapersonal, interpersonal, and global scale. PT focusses on the conflicts that arise due to the nature of positions and roles within relationships as well as the rights and duties ascribed to them. PT has been applied to international political relations, specifically post 9/11 (Moghaddam, Harré, & Lee 2008b; Moghaddam & Kavulick, 2008).

PET, primarily as presented by Martin (2006a, 2006b, 2011), encapsulates the core components of the previous two theories while incorporating temporal considerations of personal history. PET emphasizes the dynamic nature of self and identity in relation to sociocultural backgrounds, societal conventions and expectations, and rights and responsibilities. PET "stresses the importance of institutional positioning in an attempt to ground the discursive and psychological positioning and development of individuals within their physical, institutional, and cultural positioning, both individually and communally" (Martin, 2011, p. 2). Thus, PET is most apt in application to research

involving foreign-trained teachers who face changing perspectives within new sociocultural positions.

PET offers a comprehensive neo-Meadian theory, however until recently there has been no methodological framework from which to apply these theoretical underpinnings. Martin (2011) has proposed such a framework. LPA draws on the theoretical assumptions of PET, and fundamentally Mead's theoretical concerns, in its application of a five phase method of analysis (Martin, 2011).

Although Martin (2011) has applied LPA to a specific case study, this method has not yet been used in further research. As noted by Benish-Weisman (2009), "qualitative methods can explore and analyze the diverse, individualistic, constructive context of immigration" (p. 954). Benish-Weisman (2009) further argues that narrative methods are uniquely tied to an understanding of identity, as "events, memories, and feelings are woven into the life story, so that it comes to reflect the teller's identity" (p. 954). It will be argued here that LPA provides a significant theoretical framework that is most appropriate to understanding the perspectives of foreign-trained teachers in positioning themselves within the context of teaching in BC classrooms.

3.1. Theoretical Underpinning

3.1.1. *Dialogical Self Theory*

Hermans' and Hermans-Konopka's (2010) DST proposes a view of self that is widely based on Mead's work in focusing on internal positions of self, yet also offers a somewhat narrow reading of Mead's "generalized other." Incorporating models of self from modern and post-modern orientations, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka conceptualize the self as both unified and multiple. Their theory is predicated on the increasing realities of globalization in our world. As the self encounters a globalizing society, it encounters new external positions that facilitate the emergence of internally positioned voices; these external and internal positions are situated in dialogical relationships. The term "position" refers to "the place where a voice is located in an imaginal space: internal if an individual ascribes it to the inner parts of the self, or belonging to the self's external domain if he/she ascribes it to significant others"

(Dimaggio, Hermans, & Lysaker, 2010, p. 380). The dialogical self develops a repertoire of positions that have fundamental aspects, arising from a globalizing society:

- a. It is populated by an unprecedented density of positions (internal and external ones) that requires the self to organize and reorganize itself
- b. When the individual is increasingly faced with a great diversity of groups and cultures on a global scale, the position repertoire becomes more heterogeneous and laden with differences, oppositions, and contradictions
- c. As a result of the speed and unpredictability of global changes, the repertoire is subjected to increasing changes and receives more “visits” by unexpected positions, and
- d. As a consequence of the increasing range of possible positions, there are larger “position leaps.”

(Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010, p. 33)

DST, as explicated by Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, is fundamentally focussed on the inner subjective and emotional experience of the self; the psychological uncertainties faced in a globalizing world. Although acknowledging Mead’s “generalized other” they imply that this construct is not as valid in today’s globalized heterogeneous world where the self encounters an extensive number of perspectives. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) argue that Mead lived in homogenous times and thus his metaphor of the generalized other “is less relevant to understand the uncertainties typical of a globalizing world where different social rules meet on the interface of different (sub) cultures; collective voices that meet and confront each other as parts of a complex and interconnected world society” (p. 12). This declaration contradicts an earlier reference to Mead’s generalized other where Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (1993) stated that “it is clear that there is not simply one generalized other, but many generalized others, because there are many groups in society. People, therefore, have multiple generalized others and, consequently, multiple selves” (p. 105). Hermans and Hermans-Konopka have evidently adjusted their version of Mead’s “generalized other” in their more recent theoretical development of DST.

This is perhaps a limited reading of Mead’s conception of the generalized other. Granted, Mead may not have had experience with the extent and diversity of today’s globalization trends, but certainly, through his lifetime the United States was challenged with both increased immigration and civil unrest. Mead was born into the US Civil War

and lived through a period of continual unrest with race riots between whites and both African Americans and Native Americans. Furthermore, the Homestead Act of 1872 offered Europeans free plots of land, which led to an influx of immigrants from mostly Western Europe; nearly six million people from Germany, Italy, and Eastern Europe immigrated to the US between 1880 and 1920 (“Aspiration, acculturation, and impact,” n.d.). Although through this same period the Chinese Exclusion Act substantiated discriminatory practices against East Asian immigrants, with several states enacting laws against East Asian ownership of property, certainly the United States saw a great period of influx of immigrants to challenge dominant social roles.

Although Mead’s world may not have been as ethnically diverse as today’s globalized world, which lies as the premise for Hermans’ and Hermans-Konopka’s undermining of the relevance of Mead’s generalized other, it is argued that Mead is being interpreted too narrowly in his conception of the generalized other. As Mead (1934) stated, the “organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called ‘the generalized other’” (p. 154).

Foreign-trained teachers have developed professional identities formed through a cumulative history of taking the perspectives of the community in their country of origin; this includes professional roles, for many of them, within teacher-directed systems. Resultantly, foreign-trained teachers conceptualize their identities within a generalization of the roles within the professional environment from which they emigrated. The professional identities of foreign-trained teachers have been developed through the socially organized roles of teachers within education systems different from those encountered in the BC school system. The generalized other foreign-trained teachers encounter in repositioning in BC classrooms includes taking on new perspectives of themselves as teachers in social roles, in taking on the attitudes of the group—the teaching profession in BC schools. This repositioning experience, as noted by Duchesne and Stitou (2011) can involve questioning previously held perspectives and adopting new conceptions of their role as teachers in adapting to the BC school system.

Furthermore, Mead (1934) extends his conception of the generalized other to include inanimate objects and animals. This extension offers a broader interpretation of

the social organizations from which identity for foreign-trained teachers has been formed.

Any thing—any object or set of objects, whether animate or inanimate, human or animal, or merely physical—toward which he acts, or to which he responds, socially, is an element in what for him is the generalized other; by taking the attitudes of which toward himself he becomes conscious of himself as an object or individual, and thus develops a self or personality. (p. 154)

Participants in this research speak of the role played by Communism in shaping their attitudes. This conceptualization of themselves within communist systems forms how they see themselves; many participants comment on their limitations, their perspectives formed from taking the attitudes of the group within Communist systems in their country of origin. Other participants comment how poverty in their country of origin affected their experiences; they are conscious of themselves as individuals within a group which, due to poverty, held certain attitudes as well as commitments to help others less fortunate. As foreign-trained teachers have taken on the attitudes of the groups to which they belonged in their countries of origin, this perspective taking with generalized others has formed how they see themselves. Repositioning in new sociocultural contexts involves the integration and coordination of new community perspectives within the teaching profession in BC and within new sociocultural contexts.

Mead's extension of the generalized other exemplifies the often convoluted path followed by foreign-trained teachers. Decisions to leave native countries, immigrate to Canada, locate in BC, and pursue certification and employment as a teacher in BC are often influenced by significant others as well as significant factors through which foreign-trained teachers respond. Furthermore, in experiencing professional identity development in new contexts, foreign-trained teachers may take on the attitudes and perceptions of others toward them. Foreign-trained teachers are affected by the social structures from which they emigrated and they have identities negotiated through life experiences with generalized others, the social roles and attitudes of the groups with which they identified in their country of origin. These conceptions of themselves may be challenged by new sociocultural contexts, necessitating negotiating new perspectives arising out of integration into a novel teaching community. It is through these encounters

with generalized others, new group roles formed through social structures, in repositioning themselves as teachers in new contexts that foreign-trained teachers face barriers and affordances to their professional identity development.

In keeping with Mead's conceptualization of self as taking the attitudes of others and thus allowing the self to develop, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) note that the multiplicity of positions that are available in an increasingly heterogeneous world allow for a "coalition of positions" (p. 10). This allows for agentic action on the part of the individual as the self is continually constituted in a dynamic process of positioning and repositioning within a multiplicity of voices. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) state that "when the world becomes more heterogeneous and multiple, the self, as part of this world, also becomes more heterogeneous and multiple" (p. 30).

Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) caution tensions arise between globalization, which offers the potential for a "disorganized and chaotic cacophony of voices (e.g., identity confusion, or adding extra positions to an already crowded repertoire)," and localization, where the self faces a "monological domination by only one voice (e.g., nationalism, fundamentalism, sexism, or terrorism)" (p. 64). Voice is defined as the "motivated, emotional, and agentic starting point of a message that is addressed to any other person or to another part of the self" (Dimaggio, Hermans, & Lysaker, 2010, p. 380). Thus, although DST offers a pluralist focus, a multiplicity of "I" positions that exemplify aspects of globalization and localization, there is a strong centralizing tendency to coordinate and integrate the self. Dimaggio, Hermans, and Lysaker (2010) further postulate that psychological health and social adaptation may rely on a sufficient number of voices, neither too many nor too few, that are in mutual dialogue, able to negotiate among conflicting positions and able to achieve a subordinate position which coordinates disparate positions (p. 383).

DST follows Mead's (1934) famous delineation of self into "I" positions, wherein the "I" "reacts to the self which arises through the taking of the attitudes of others" (p. 174). Hermans and Hermans-Konopka avoid Mead's (1934) dualism of the "me," as "the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes" (p. 175), and the "I" by arguing for a multiplicity of "I" positions. For Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (1993) "meaning emerges from dialogical movements between positions" (p. 165). Hermans

and Hermans-Konopka (2010) propose a theory that is more intrapersonal than Mead had intended as they state that DST “aims at a profound exploration of the experiential richness and emotional qualities of the self in close connection with inner-subjective processes” (p. 11). Sugarman and Sokol (2012), in an analysis of Mead’s theoretical stance, propose that “psychological development proceeds from the situating of individuals in multiple perspectives and a gradually developing ability to become aware of, exchange, and coordinate multiple perspectives within established patterns of social interaction” (p. 9).

Whereas Hermans and Hermans-Konopka focus on the self as not only a social but fundamentally a personal construction, Mead (1934) maintained emphatically that “no individual has a mind which operates simply in itself, in isolation from the social life-process in which it has arisen or out of which it has emerged” (p. 222). DST is centrally focussed on the inner dialogue that comprises the self, often referring to the “landscape of the mind.” For DST the “I” is capable of negotiating among opposing positions, is continually reorganizing and thus capable of novel perspectives, and fluctuates within internal dialogical relationships. The self is structured in an internal narrative of voices as DST “explicitly considers personal positions and social positions (roles) as interconnected elements of the self as a society of mind” (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010, p. 76). The self is further “conceptualized as a polyphonic novel” wherein a multiplicity of authors “may enter into dialogue with each other” (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 1993, pp. 46-47).

For Mead (1938), this inner dialogue is embedded in the social world as “the whole process of thinking is the inner conversation going on between this generalized other and the individual. The perspective of the individual is, therefore, that of the social act—an act which is inclusive of the act of the individual but extends beyond it” (p. 152). Thus, Mead defends a purely social theory of mind as the social world and the self are inextricably intertwined, while Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2006) although describing the “self as multidimensional, relational and embedded in social, political, and cultural contexts,” (p. 1), suggest an intra-individual theory of mind. Unlike Mead’s focus on dynamic social relations, DST focuses on the self as an entity unto its own that enters into internal dialogue. It is this internal dialogue that is the crux of DST.

DST provides a foundation for further theorizing in regard to the development of identity. For the purposes of the current research, Hermans' and Hermans-Konopka's focus on aspects of globalization and localization have bearing in considering the life analyses of foreign-trained teachers. However, unlike Mead's purely social theory, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka's DST, in diverting from Mead in considering a more internalized generalized other, does not provide as extensive a conception of the generalized other. For foreign-trained teachers seeking to reposition themselves in new sociocultural contexts, Mead's generalized other offers an understanding of the significance of activity in the social world, in taking on the perspectives of the community, in the development of professional identity.

Raggatt (2007) extends DST and suggests that two metaphors inherent in DST provide "good heuristic value" for the theory: "First, the self is defined as a *conversation* between voiced positions;" and, "Second, the dialogical self can also be conceptualized as a 'society of mind'" (pp. 356-357). Raggatt, therefore, proposes a dualism within the internal dynamics of personal positioning, Hermans' and Hermans-Konopka's landscape of the mind, and the external dynamics of social positioning.

In extending Hermans' and Hermans-Konopka's DST, Raggatt (2007, 2010a, 2010b) provides a conceptual framework to account for the theory of positioning that he deems underlies DST. Raggatt (2010a) agrees that the dialogical self "is a complex repertoire of voices constituted by inner conflicts, by real and imagined others, and by the voices of the culture which speak through all these parties" (p. 454). Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) offer that there are meta-positions, produced by multiple internal or external positions, that may provide an overriding function. Although this implies a hierarchical structure, there can be multiple meta-positions and these can be dominated by other positions. Raggatt (2010b) questions the ability to stabilize this multiplicity: "there is no singular, continuous, centralizing tendency that can be equated with a fully integrated self" (p. 406). For Raggatt, adopting much of what defines DST, forms of positioning are not only closely linked with DST, but serve to clarify DST. As a result, Raggatt (2007) follows somewhat of a circuitous undertaking, to "use positioning theory as an organizing framework" for DST and to discuss PT "in relation to the dialogical self, and (propose) a classificatory system for organizing various 'forms of positioning'" (p. 358).

Raggatt (2007) defines the dialogical self as “a conversation between voices in the person, and between those voices and others in the outside world; at the same time, the dialogical self is also the histories and stories behind those voices” (p. 356). For research with foreign-trained teachers, Raggatt offers a consideration of personal histories which have bearing on identity development. Furthermore, he deems that the “dynamics involved in a polyphonic conception of self” necessitate movement between positions, and thus “positioning is emergent in the dialogical self” (Raggatt, 2007, p. 358). Raggatt’s framework classifies positions as belonging to expressive, personal, or social domains. Thus, Raggatt sees identity development as ongoing and interactive with positioning in activity in the world.

For foreign-trained teachers, encountering new sociocultural contexts, Raggatt’s proposal echoes Mead’s generalized other and is therefore a valuable perspective in analyzing the life stories of foreign-trained teachers. In the initial expressive form, “Modes of Expression,” the self position is storied, narrative, and incorporates social performance and non-verbal communication (Raggatt, 2007, p. 362). Within the second classification of “Personal Positioning: Dynamic Conflict in the Person,” Raggatt is concerned with contradictions within the self; opposing perspectives within internal voices. Whereas Hermans and Hermans-Konopka are consistent in portraying a multitude of internal voices that may offer differing positions, Raggatt provides a simplistic duality of possible positions (i.e., good vs. bad; happy vs. sad), although he incorporates a conception of morality here where morals and values do not enter Hermans’ and Hermans-Konopka’s theoretical perspective. Raggatt applies his framework of positioning in the example of an individual who may be capable in their job but act immorally. Raggatt, however, assumes that moral positions are universally understood.

In his final classification, “Social Positioning: Social and Cultural Constructions,” Raggatt provides a consideration lacking in Hermans’ and Hermans-Konopka’s DST. Here Raggatt incorporates societal power imbalances, albeit again consistently in terms of dichotomies (i.e., authority and subordination, masculinity and femininity). Raggatt’s consideration of positions of power, class, ethnicity, and gender provide a more comprehensive social-relational theory than that of Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, which is far more intrapersonal in its focus on a multiplicity of “I” positions. For foreign-

trained teachers, seeking employment as minority members of the teaching population, social power imbalances with others can affect professional identity development.

Although Hermans (2002) noted that power and dominance enter into internal dialogical exchange, the voices of some positions in the self are more easily heard and have, in a particular situation, more opportunity for expression and communication than others. In sum, dialogical interchange and dominance are intrinsic features of the dialogical self (Hermans, 2002, p. 148). Mead's "generalized other" fits nicely with Raggatt's form of "Social Positioning," as for Mead (1934) the self was "continually restructuring" (p. 386) in taking attitudes within relationships with others.

Although Raggatt suggests a useful classification of positions, he fundamentally sees the dialogical self as internal conversation. Albeit unlike Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, Raggatt (2007) stresses that this involves "taking different moral or value positions" (p. 364). Raggatt (2007) also further extends DST by stating that not only are we morally attuned, but that

our strivings are also directed towards at least three other fundamental motivational goal states: *affective*—to maximize pleasure and minimize pain; *agentic*—to act in the world as if we were 'independent' beings, to assert ourselves; and *communion*—to find intimacy, attachment and connection with the social world. (p. 365)

Raggatt (2007) alludes to motivational theories here without developing this reasoning much further than concluding "we seem to be using agency and communion to organize our personal dispositional worlds as well as our interpersonal worlds" (p. 366).

Hermans and Hermans-Konopka avoid referring to motivation and goal directed behavior. In Hermans' and Hermans-Konopka's (2010) DST, motivation is relevant in the concept of spacial arrangement in external conversation; allowing for more space when interested in or motivated by another's external position or denying space in a conversation when not interested or motivated by another's position. In internal conversation, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) state that through a multiplicity of "I" positions, the self encounters "many conflicts, contradictions, and oppositions (that) can be reconciled or mitigated by the development of coalitions of positions" (p. 337).

According to Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010), the self negotiates positions and creates coalitions, and “strong coalitions create strong motivations” (p. 337).

For the current research, the life stories of foreign-trained teachers provided an appreciation for the goal directed, motivated behavior of foreign-trained teachers in pursuing employment as teachers in BC. Foreign-trained teachers face barriers to their integration into new sociocultural contexts, and although Hermans and Hermans-Konopka provide an understanding of the impact of globalization and localization, the DST they propose falls short in furnishing theoretical means for an understanding of their motivation to overcome the obstacles they face.

3.1.2. Positioning Theory

PT, as proposed primarily by Moghaddam, Harré and Lee (2008a, 2008b), provides a neo-Median, social theory of self. From a social theoretical perspective, they posit that identity is socially derived through discursive interactions and suggest that PT provides “a framework by which to analytically organize complex and dynamic social interactions” (Moghaddam, Harré, & Lee, 2008a, p. 9). The premise of PT is that analysis of discourse gives meaning to activity, offering “a rigor not obtainable in conventional, speculative analyses of actors’ mental states” (Moghaddam et al., 2008b, p. 284). It is an attempt to fix, in a moment of time and a situational context, the particular meaning of a positioning act. As a result, the meaning of positioning actions can be analyzed at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, and global level.

PT is concerned with an individual’s interpretation of their rights and duties as a result of positioning in time and space. Humans are considered social actors, acting in roles. Moghaddam et al. (2008a) distinguish positions and roles as different, yet complementary. Positions are considered “conventions of speech and action that are labile, contestable and ephemeral” (Moghaddam et al., 2008a, p. 9), unlike roles which are relatively long term; however, “positions can crystallize into roles, and roles can dissolve into positions” (Moghaddam et al., 2008a, p. 13). Individuals hold rights and duties in relation to their positions and these positions hold features of both local context and personal story-lines.

Mead's determination of the development of self within social acts is consistent with PT's consideration of social positions and roles. Mead (1964) stated that the

self arises through its ability to take the attitude of the group to which he belongs—because he can talk to himself in terms of the community to which he belongs and lay upon himself the responsibilities that belong to the community; because he can recognize his own duties as against others—that is what constitutes the self as such. (p. 33)

Like Mead's (1964) self which can "arise only where there is a social process within which this self has had its initiation" (p. 42), PT notes that "in the course of social interaction we may be implicitly positioned as a particular kind of person" (Harré, Moghaddam, Pilkerton Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009, p. 19). For foreign-trained teachers, PT offers an understanding of professional identity as developed within the changing contexts in which foreign-trained teachers are positioned. As a result of changing sociocultural contexts, foreign-trained teachers necessarily mediate their professional identities, determining their sense of professional self through the roles they take in new professional situations.

In PT, the self, through its positions and roles and its corresponding rights and duties, takes on a social identity as "positioning is something which happens in the course of an interaction; as such it is a discursive process" (Harré et al., 2009, p. 10). Mead (1964) also notes the inherent discursive process of the formation of self: "Through the use of language, through the use of the significant symbol, then, the individual does take the attitude of others, especially these common attitudes, so that he finds himself taking the same attitude toward himself that the community takes" (p. 35).

DST postulates that through a series of "I" positions the self is determined through internal dialogical processes, albeit reflective of external dialogical events. DST further suggests, in keeping with a theory of positioning, that there exists a multiplicity of "I" positions. PT aligns more with external discursive processes than internal, avoiding both DST's concern with "I" positions and Mead's distinctions between "I" and "me." PT does note that the pronoun "I" "indexes the content of what is being said with the place of the speaker's body in space and time" and that the "I" "further indexes what the

speaker has said with his or her taking responsibility for what is said” with this aspect of self being “highly mutable and context sensitive” (Harré & Moghaddam, 2008, p. 67).

PT separates poignantly from Hermans’ and Hermans-Konopka’s theoretical perspective, DST, in its focus on moral order; referring to norms in positions and roles that may be specific to cultural settings or the local context of situations. Although Hermans and Hermans-Konopka do not invoke a consideration of moral positions or values, Raggatt’s interpretation of DST sways towards PT here as Raggatt notes that one may position oneself in an immoral act that may be contrary to the morality imposed by a role. In PT, “only one aspect of moral order is invoked explicitly, namely the rights and duties that surround a person’s possibility of acting” (Moghaddam et al., 2008a, p. 13). Rights and duties that arise through positioning acts can become embedded into roles.

For the current research, PT at this point offers too automated an understanding of identity development. Teachers of minority ethnic backgrounds have been found to be committed to social change, not as a result of formally assigned roles with their accompanying rights and duties, but through motivation to improve social situations and overcome social inequities (Bascia, 1996a, 1996b; Britzman, 2003; Feuerverger, 1997; Santoro, 2007; Su, 1997).

PT is in direct opposition to Raggatt’s DST which states that as well as moral considerations, actions are motivated by goal states: affective, agentic, and communion. PT is “independent of considerations of motivation” and is “particularly opposed to explanatory theories of human action that posit motives as causes” (Moghaddam et al., 2008a, p. 10). With its discursive orientation, PT seeks an analysis of meanings of actions that arise from the discourse conventions in a specific time and space, and does not apply concerns of morality beyond an ascription to rights and duties.

As PT “emphasizes the variety of story lines that may be realized in an encounter bounded in space and time” and since “any encounter may realize more than one story line, and the enactment of more than one episode,” conflict is inevitable (Moghaddam et al., 2008a, p. 11). Intrapersonal conflict arises when the beliefs a person has about their rights and duties prove contrary to actions, local conventions of meaning, or with “some

external entity, process or conditions which may be believed to be threatening” (Harré & Moghaddam, 2008, p. 68). As the emphasis of PT is on rights and duties, individuals encounter intrapersonal conflict when they face adjustments to their story lines, the personal history and beliefs that guide their assigned duties and rights and which lie at the core of their selfhood; somewhat akin to dissonance theories. The individual adjusts by redistributing their tacit understanding of their own rights and duties or through reframing their thoughts and actions regarding the moral orders, rights and duties, assigned to other persons, groups, or entities.

Interpersonal conflict occurs when contradictions arise in the meanings assigned to positioning acts. Local repertoires of meaning for social acts can vary as discursive acts and gestures can be ascribed different meanings across situations. Further if inherent patterns of rights and duties are assumed or pre-exist the person who may newly occupy a position, interpersonal conflict regarding duties and rights may occur. PT proposes that the following aspects are inherent in interpersonal encounters:

1. Rights and duties are distributed among people in changing patterns as they engage in performing particular kinds of actions.
2. These patterns are themselves the product of higher-order acts of positioning through which rights and duties to ascribe or resist positioning are distributed.
3. Such actions are the meaningful components of story-lines. Any encounter might develop along more than one story-line, and support more than one story-line evolving simultaneously.
4. The meanings of people’s actions are social acts. The illocutionary force of any human action, if it has one as interpreted by the local community, determines its place in a story-line and is mutually thereby determined. Any action might carry one or more such meaning.

(Harré et al., 2009, pp. 7-8)

Since PT focuses on normative frames of actions, it offers a basis for the current research in a consideration of interpersonal relations within everyday practices. “Positions are clusters of beliefs about how rights and duties are distributed in the course of an episode of personal interaction and the taken-for-granted practices in which most of these beliefs are concretely realized” (Harré et al., 2009, p. 9). People operate within discursive conventions based on their positions and are therefore continually immersed in rights and duties, and “positive or negative, supporting or denying a claim to a right,

demanding or refusing the assignment of a duty” can lead to interpersonal conflict (Harré et al., 2009, p. 9). Changes in positions effect changes in the meaning of actions and resultantly modify story-lines. As a tool for dealing with interpersonal conflict, PT offers interventions that work within discursive practice in facilitating “reshaping storylines to redefine the social meaning of actions and reconfigure arrays of rights and duties” (Moghaddam et al., 2008b, p. 284). As a framework for understanding and intervening in interpersonal conflict, PT offers “the ability to reach into the often unacknowledged background assumptions, beliefs and traditions” (Moghaddam et al., 2008b, p. 285).

PT suggests that although positions and accompanying moral orders shift and change, there exist universal rights; “one such universal is that during times of instability and potential change, priority is given by minority groups to rights and by majority groups to duties” (Moghaddam & Kavulick, 2008, p. 250). Mead spoke of universals in religion and economics, in how universals position dominant groups in society. Mead (1964) stated that “the political expression of this growth of universality in society is signaled in the dominance of one group over other groups” (p. 259). Just as Moghaddam and Kavulick (2008) and Moghaddam et al. (2000) speak of PT in the international political realm, Mead (1964) spoke of the self in relation to a community or society, where “the dominant expression in terms of the self has been, even on the part of a militaristic society, rather that of subjection, of a realization of the self in its superiority to and exploitation of the other” (p. 259). Duty is a term often used in obligation to others, therefore duties are often spoken of in light of positions of less power, whereas rights are typically considered and spoken of as ways of asserting or maintaining power positions.

PT further incorporates the conception of supererogatory duties that arise from convictions of a greater good or duties that have a higher moral order. Supererogatory duties can be shared or individually held (Moghaddam et al., 2000). Mead (1964) referred to duties in both collective and individualist form: “he can talk to himself in terms of the community to which he belongs and lay upon himself the responsibilities that belong to the community: because he can recognize his own duties as against others—that is what constitutes the self as such” (p. 33).

PT differs from Hermans and Hermans-Konopka’s DST in its focus on primarily external discursive positioning and its fundamental conception of rights and duties in

positioning acts. Raggatt's interpretation of DST includes moral positions but focuses on motivation goal states, which PT openly opposes. However, both theories echo Mead's foundational premise that the self arises through relationships with others in taking on the attitudes of others. DST is concerned with a multiplicity of "I" positions that are involved in dialogical relationships where PT is focused on the external positioning of selves and the roles they hold in a given moment and situation; noting that these are ephemeral. More recently, PET has been proposed which, in many ways, closes the gap between the two neo-Meadian theories discussed thus far.

3.1.3. *Position Exchange Theory*

Position Exchange Theory, as developed primarily by Martin (2006a, 2006b, 2012), arises from a Meadian perspective of human development that counters individualist reductionist views—views which account solely for cognitive or neurological components of psychological development. PET, as determined by Martin and Gillespie (2010), sees identity development as a process of acts "in relation to objects and other persons based on our cumulative history of direct, practical experience with them" (p. 256). Martin and Gillespie's theory that individuals relate to new perspectives through the integration and coordination of perspectives within social activity is relevant to research regarding the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers. Further, their focus on an individual's cumulative history having bearing on how perceptions and perspectives are coordinated proposes identity development as both psychological and social through life experiences.

Martin and Gillespie (2010) assert "that it is the positioning and interactivity of the developing individual with others and objects within conventional social practices and processes containing different perspectives that fuels the emergence of selfhood, psychological forms of perspective taking, and agentic self-determination" (p. 258). For foreign-trained teachers involved in dynamic interactions with new perspectives in repositioning as professionals in BC classrooms, development of professional identity arises from a fluid coordination of new possibilities. The ability of foreign-trained teachers' to coordinate multiple perspectives, this research will show, has direct bearing on their success in re-constituting professional identity.

PET counters traditional cognitive perspective taking theory in stating that true positional exchange necessitates experiencing social situations directly (Gillespie & Richardson, 2011, p. 609). PET arises from a pragmatic, holistic account of human development that, as did Mead, sees the emergence of selfhood through activity within the biophysical and sociocultural world. Unlike DST or PT, PET is a developmental accounting of the emergence of personhood (Martin, Sokol, & Elfers, 2008). For the current research with foreign-trained teachers, PET offers the positive theoretical assumptions of DST and PT and is in keeping with Mead's conception of the generalized other; foreign-trained teachers develop professional identities through their ability to distance themselves from their self-perceptions, accumulated through personal histories, and integrate or coordinate the perspectives of others encountered in new contexts.

PET sees our relationship with others as based on our developmental histories embedded in direct experience with others. Foreign-trained teachers seek to reposition themselves, and thus are moving from histories that have formed professional identities through experience with others, personally and professionally. Following Mead's (1964) consideration of the self as "the individual in acting with reference to the environment should, as part of that action, be acting with reference to himself" (p. 95), PET considers that it is within activity with others that the self is distinguished.

Through interacting with others, we come to act toward ourselves as others do, and recognize ourselves as objects of our own activity. In doing so, we differentiate ourselves from others, even as we learn to coordinate with them in increasingly more psychological ways. Eventually, we not only understand the perspectives, action orientations and possibilities, of numerous particular others, but also the broader, more generalized social perspectives that govern the social processes and practices within which we are immersed and participate.

(Martin, 2012, p. 133)

Martin, Sokol, and Elfers (2008) provide a developmental argument that allots that young children begin life pre-linguistically through interactive routine patterns. Through development and gradually increasing linguistic competence, the young child acquires more sophisticated forms of position exchange. Like in PT, Martin (2012) notes that the young child remembers positions, such as "receiver" or "hider," and is able to anticipate future shifts in positions such that "the child effectively is able to 'occupy'

different positions simultaneously – that is, to anticipate the activity of another in one position while personally occupying a closely related, complementary position” (p. 137). “Perspective taking is not so much an ability that emerges, but rather an understanding of the social world that grows gradually” throughout development (Martin & Gillespie, 2010, p. 259). As the child develops, further forms of self-consciousness and perspective taking emerge wherein the individual is increasingly able to “enter more fully into a human social and cultural world, within which they coordinate with others through increasingly complex webs of psychological abstraction, shared reasoning, joint imagination, and transformative creativity” (Martin, 2012, p. 138).

PET suggests that it is through dialogical activity, participation in social activity and conversation, that the increasingly complex individual self becomes able to realize perspectives and possibilities; “position exchange is a mechanism through which perspective taking develops” (Gillespie & Richardson, 2011, p. 614). Through situational episodes, the individual is able to agentially distance him/herself and take on different perspectives. Martin (2012) suggests that this level of social engagement goes beyond PT and DST as it requires agentic commitment to comprehend the perspectives in which other positions are embedded.

In an experiment to assess the effect of position exchange in cooperatives tasks, Gillespie and Richardson (2011) found that the results of position exchange in dyads faced with a communication conflict situation could not “be reduced to stimulating the cognitive process of perspective taking, rather, the effect is almost entirely due to the social process of exchanging social positions” (p. 614). Martin (2012) states that “this kind of cooperative social engagement goes beyond the interactive social positioning, acting, and intersubjective perspective taking of developing individuals, as well as the negotiation and coordination of perspectives that typify our everyday, interpersonal relationships” (p. 138).

In negotiating and interacting with other perspectives it is necessary for the individual to encounter moral concerns, as described in Raggatt’s view of DST. Martin (2006a) neatly and consistently incorporates moral positions as a natural part of perspective taking, as “our selves emerge out of our embodied being in the social world, in a manner that is interactive with the developmental emergence of perspective taking”

(p. 94). Within interpersonal relationships, there necessarily arises conflict that calls for moral and rational agency. Martin (2011) notes that

given the deep embeddedness of different social and personal perspectives within sociocultural traditions and ways of living, when individuals engage with each other across such divides, they necessarily confront challenges and disagreements that entail conflicting considerations and justifications of rights and responsibilities. (p. 5)

As our social experiences become more diversified, so too does our perspective taking ability.

The strength of PET lies in its explication of the developmental trajectory of perspective taking which allows for agentic behavior. Agentic behavior is couched in a deterministic framework only insofar as our positions and perspectives arise from our personal histories and are a reaction to multiple perspectives; from “simultaneously being in one’s own and another’s perspective” (Martin, 2006b, p. 69). Martin and Gillespie (2010) note that “throughout our lives, we act towards, and in relation to objects and other persons based on our cumulative history of direct, practical experience with them” (p. 256). Just as Mead saw a distinguishing feature of the self in its capacity to act toward itself as an object made possible through interactivity with others, PET explicates how this process occurs throughout development as persons live in both “event time” and “psychological time” (Martin, 2011, p. 5). For “it is not only the ability to think through a situation in terms of various perspectives, but also the ability to integrate and coordinate them such that new relevancies emerge” (Martin, 2006a, p. 257).

Fundamentally, PET explicates the self as developing through agentic activity in social relations; “it is not there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity” (Martin, 2006b, p. 68). PET accounts for both a self that is stable, with a personal cumulative history developed through interaction with others, and a fluid self through lifelong identity development as individuals encounter novel positions and negotiate new perspectives. Furthermore, Martin envisions persons as moral agents, echoing Sugarman’s (2005) delineation that “we are constituted by our self interpretations, our self-interpretations are rooted in distinctions of worth, and these

distinctions are incorporated into frameworks of strong evaluation that situate our agency non-contingently in a moral ontology” (p. 798).

3.2. Between Theories

DST, PT, and PET all theorize that the development of the individual self occurs, as Mead determined nearly a century ago, through dynamic interactive involvement with others in a biophysical and sociocultural world. Although the theories differ in subtle ways, they all provide a neo-Meadian understanding of a socially engaged self as opposed to an individualist reductionist view of self contained in a myriad of cognitive and neurological functioning. Although none of these theories deny the role of neurophysical aspects, PET notes that these internal components allow for more complex perspective taking through evolutionary advances. For PET, “it is our worldly activity in coordination with others that leads our evolution and development, and which constantly transforms ourselves and our world” (Martin, 2012, p. 142). Martin does not pose a need for focus on inherent neurological, genetic, or internalized processes as the development of the self arises first and foremost from interactivity with others.

Between the three theories discussed here, there is considerable overlap, and certainly all three reflect essential components of Mead’s pragmatic theory of the development of self within social activity. DST for Hermans and Hermans-Konopka accounts for the development of self through dialogical positions both externally with others and internally with a multiplicity of “I” positions. Raggatt extends DST to a consideration of the moral order of positions and roles individuals take within their social world. Harré and Moghaddam consider positioning on an intrapersonal, interpersonal, and global level, focussing on inherent rights and responsibilities.

Martin’s PET offers a consolidation of the essential aspects of both DST and PT and focusses on the developmental nature of the self. PET notes that “identity development is fundamentally a dialogical process in which perspectives are coordinated with other people” (Martin et al., 2008, p. 305). Thus PET is a more thoroughly encompassing neo-Meadian theory, incorporating aspects of development, agency, and morality. PET offers, as did Mead, a theoretical perspective that “provides

for a unique psychological agency that is socially and culturally constituted, but also, self-interpreting and self-determining” (Sugarman & Sokol, 2012, p. 9).

3.3. Toward a New Methodology

Historically, methods in psychological research have reduced our understanding of the self to a series of objectified behavioural responses or attempted to demystify internal and inherently inaccessible processes. Essentially, methods in psychological research have been built upon theoretical fortresses that served to enforce a dualistic bent toward separating self and society. Recent theorizing discussed herein, relying on the theoretical underpinnings of Mead, have reiterated a conceptualization of the self as developing through worldly interactivity; “interactive experiences within and across social positions involve not only interactions with particular others, but also interactions within social perspectives and roles that form a sociocultural background of conventions, expectations, rights, and responsibilities” (Martin, 2011, p. 2).

Gillespie and Cornish (2009) call for new methodology that credits social interactivity for the development of self. Present psychological methods exemplify a historically individualistic presentation of self and identity and fail to account for dialogical positioning in sociocultural contexts.

Individuals are observed, interviewed, questioned, surveyed, scanned, and tested. Behavioural responses, attitudes, personality measurements, cognitive scores, social circumstances, opinions, habits, affiliations and preferences—all qualities attributed to individuals—are the kinds of phenomena which are considered as viable data. When individualistic assumptions are made, the relations between people or groups, whether intrapsychological or inter-psychological, often become invisible.

(Gillespie & Cornish, 2009, p. 21)

Gillespie and Cornish (2009) considered four methodological approaches commonly used in studying intersubjectivity: comparative self-report, observing behaviour, analysing talk, and ethnographic engagement. Fundamentally, they found each of these methods to fall short in providing a dialogical analysis in which the individual is “empirically manifest as being permeated by social discourses and significant others” (Gillespie & Cornish, 2009, p. 42).

As a result, Gillespie and Cornish argue that a void presently exists in methodological approaches. They call for a methodology that can provide an analysis of the self as arising through social interactivity. Through their discussion, they call for a method wherein “the individual is seen as an intersubjective being woven out of social relations and discourses” (p. 42). However, Gillespie and Cornish (2009) waver from a true Meadian stance when they suggest that a new methodology consider “perspectives within a given individual” (p. 42). For Mead, self arises purely through positioning in social interactivity. Regardless of this slight deviation from Mead, Gillespie and Cornish rightly argue that methods in psychological research have failed to provide an understanding of individual development through social interactivity.

3.4. Life Positioning Analysis

LPA, a methodological framework developed by Martin (2011), answers Gillespie’s and Cornish’s (2009) call for an analysis that “enables us to study the individual within the group (as a self-reflective position within a web of social perspectives) and the group within the individual (as the range of social perspectives refracted through the individual’s subjectivity)” (p. 42). LPA encapsulates the theoretical assumptions of PET. LPA, as a framework to analyze life narratives, “is unique in its emphasis on concrete particulars of interactions with particular others as these are embedded within more general sociophysical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts, positions, practices, and perspectives” (Martin, 2011, p. 15). LPA is uniquely situated as a method of narrative analysis for research regarding the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers as it considers identity as developed through an individual’s history, yet mutable and negotiated through repositioning in new sociocultural contexts.

Foreign-trained teachers, as LPA proposes for all individuals, have developed identities through social interactivity. Foreign-trained teachers have identities that have been developed through social interactivity in their country of origin and through their professional positioning as teachers in these contexts. LPA allows that identity, arising through historical, sociocultural experiences, is challenged by new perspectives. LPA reflects PET’s emphasis on historical development which makes this method well-suited to the present research which, in part, examines participants’ past experiences in their

countries of origin. Foreign-trained teachers have developed professional identities that may be challenged and altered as a result of interactions with others in new sociocultural contexts. Foreign-trained teachers negotiate professional identities through a myriad of sociocultural interactions encountered when positioning themselves in BC classrooms.

The impact on professional identity development for foreign-trained teachers when repositioning in Canadian classrooms has been noted in recent research of the language acquisition experiences of internationally educated teachers pursuing certification and employment in Ontario (Deters, 2011). Deters (2011) noted that a secondary goal of her research was to examine professional integration and issues of identity and agency. Deters' findings from case studies of 33 internationally trained teachers was that identity and agency are socially constructed and she further notes the role of mentorship—what LPA would consider experiences with significant or generalized others. Deters (2011) concludes that through analysis of the professional acculturation process, it was evident that “identity and agency are socially constructed phenomena that are internalized in an individual” (p. 221). Although drawing conclusions on the importance of social interaction in the construction of identity for foreign-trained teachers, Deters here, like Gillespie and Cornish (2009) earlier, deviates from a true interpretation of Mead and from PET in alluding to internal processes. LPA as a method for studying the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers does not speculate on internal processes or mechanisms, but illuminates the inherent relationship between identity development and social perspective taking.

LPA offers a methodological framework in keeping with Mead's premises that self develops through social interactivity. LPA can provide an integrative understanding of the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers as they encounter new perspectives through positioning as teachers in BC classrooms.

Martin applied LPA to an in-depth consideration of the life story of Jim Thorpe, a Native American athlete. Martin relied on biographies, autobiographies, and dissertation materials to provide the background for an illustrative analysis. The purpose of Martin's (2011) analysis was “not to confirm or provide evidential proof of PET, but to illustrate its theoretical scope and efficacy as a means of understanding the lives of persons in context” (p. 6). Martin (2011) details LPA's five phase method of narrative analysis:

1. An identification of particular, influential others (highly significant others with whom a focal person has interacted and exchanged and coordinated positions and perspectives) and relevant generalized others (broader social, cultural traditions, practices, and perspectives that form a background of assumptions, understandings, and ways of relating and living) within the life experience of the focal person;
2. An analysis of positions and perspectives occupied and exchanged with particular and generalized others within different phases of the person's life;
3. A thematic analysis of positioned experiences and perspectives across the different phases of the person's life;
4. An analysis of the manner and kind of integrations the person has achieved across the different positions and perspectives that have defined her or his life experience, with an emphasis on processes of distanciation, intersubjectivity, and identification; and
5. The construction of a life positioning summary that attempts to depict the person's embeddedness within the positions and perspectives of the overall life experience. (pp. 5-6)

In the initial phase of LPA, particular others and relevant generalized others are identified. Firstly, the researcher needs to use specific criteria to facilitate identifying significant others, including considering the “duration and judged importance of contact, nature of the relationship, evidence of revisiting mutual interactions later in life, testimonials of impact, and so forth” (Martin, 2011, p. 6). Since the proposed research will use narrative data received directly from the participant involved, and secondary source materials will not be incorporated, the researcher may need to probe for information regarding significant others and the resulting analysis may rely on the researcher's interpretation of the significance of others. Secondly, the researcher will shift to an analysis of generalized others. For the proposed research, generalized others may include an extensive array of social, personal, and historical contexts. As foreign-trained teachers have moved through cultural contexts, encountering and realizing new perspectives and positions, generalized others are likely to include an extensive diversity of community memberships, some of these being definite social relations, others being more abstract.

In the second phase of analysis, the researcher moves to wider context in “understanding positions and perspectives occupied and exchanged at different life phases” (Martin, 2011, p. 11). Martin's analysis of Jim Thorpe here noted that Thorpe,

as a Native American embedded in a culture of activity, an extraordinarily gifted athlete who excelled in multiple sports, a member of conflicting familial relationships, and being educated in both residential and “white” systems, found himself in ambiguous and often conflicting positions. Within this phase of analysis we encounter the tensions faced as the individual reconciles conflicting perspectives in positional exchanges. For foreign-trained teachers entering the context of BC classrooms, this phase of analysis serves to examine their exchange in positions and the resulting exchange of previously held perspectives.

The third phase of analysis seeks to achieve a thematic analysis of the positions and perspectives through the life narrative. The goal of this phase is “to extract a small number of salient themes from the positions and perspectives that encapsulated” the narrative provided by the research participant (Martin, 2011, p. 12). In this research on the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers, LPAs have been applied to twelve participants’ stories; inevitably the researcher will seek commonalities and differences among themes presented through narrative analyses. Including multiple participants departs from the initial intentions of LPA as an in-depth analysis of a single case. However, through analyzing multiple life stories, overarching themes will be considered as indications of the challenges to professional identity that may be faced commonly by foreign-trained teachers in repositioning themselves professionally in BC.

The fourth phase of analysis serves to illuminate the integration of defining positions and perspectives. PET suggests that “direct experience in different phases and roles within social interactions greatly facilitates integration of the various perspectives associated with those phases and roles” (Martin, 2011, p. 13). However, equally of value in this phase of analysis is a consideration of difficulties and barriers to integration. In the proposed research, this phase of analysis will consider the obstacles foreign-trained teachers encounter as they negotiate their professional identity. Analysis in this phase expects to illustrate patterns of distanciation, intersubjectivity, and identification that permeate the repositioning experiences of foreign-trained teachers (Martin, 2011).

The fifth and final phase of LPA summarizes the life positioning of the participant. For research into the experiences of foreign-trained teachers repositioning themselves in the context and perspectives of employment in BC, the life positioning summation seeks

to provide a coherent understanding of the fluidity of professional identity development. This summation serves to “stress the importance of moving among different positions within sociophysical, sociocultural, and social, psychological space and time” (Martin, 2011, p. 1). Through summarizing the life experiences of foreign-trained teachers the researcher seeks to understand the role of repositioning and perspective taking in the transformation of professional identity.

3.4.1. LPA – Strengths and Weaknesses

Martin presents an engaging framework with which to analyze professional identity development in foreign-trained teachers as they encounter new perspectives through seeking employment in BC classrooms. The LPA framework for narrative analysis allows an understanding of the integration of positions and perspectives, the barriers to integration, and insight into professional identity development through interactivity with significant and generalized others. The inherent strength of LPA is its adherence to a strong theoretical underpinning of the development of identity through “interactive experiences within and across social positions (which) involve not only interactions with particular others, but also interactions within social perspectives and roles that form a sociocultural background of conventions, expectations, rights, and responsibilities” (Martin, 2011, p. 2). Thus, LPA is uniquely suited to the proposed research.

Although Martin notes a weakness of LPA is its relative lack of focus on intrasubjective analysis, LPA echoes PET in its focus on the interactivity of the individual with significant and generalized others. As noted previously, PET departs from DST and PT, as well as from Mead, in its lack of focus on internal positions. Fundamentally the premise of LPA is to offer a framework from which to “entertain the possibility that our psychological lives are constructed from the ways in which we coordinate with the world, a world that is simultaneously sociocultural and biophysical” (Martin, 2011, p. 15). The premise of PET, and consequently LPA, is that understanding the development of identity arises from our agentive actions in positioning ourselves in a biosocial world.

LPA is particularly appropriate for the proposed research due to “its emphasis on concrete particulars of interactions with particular others as these are embedded within more general sociophysical, sociocultural, and institutional contexts, positions, practices,

and perspectives” (Martin, 2011, p. 16). Information received from interviews with foreign-trained teachers solicited an understanding of the role of others in influencing their conceptions of themselves as professionals. Interviews consider with the LPA framework considered the role of significant others in aiding or hindering professional identity development, as well as an understanding of the influence of the general attitudes foreign-trained teachers encounter.

LPA affords the proposed research a framework from which to analyze the narrative life stories of foreign-trained teachers. As Bascia (1996) has noted, “life histories allow us to observe how individuals act within, respond to, and represent their times and places by presenting both individual life stories and analyses of how social patterns shape those lives” (p. 1). LPA offers a method for illuminating professional identity and the psychological self, through a focus on the self as emerging through positioning and interactivity with the perspectives of others. The development of professional identity reflects the emerging self through agentive action in positioning and interactivity.

Unlike Martin’s exemplar, the LPA of Jim Thorpe, which was based on information chosen from an extensive array of biographical and secondary source materials, the current research relies solely on transcribed narrative information received firsthand through a single interview. Without secondary source materials, the interpretations of the researcher come into play to a greater extent. The researcher, through questioning and reiteration throughout the interview process, sought corroboration from each participant that the researcher’s understanding adequately reflected participants’ positions.

Obviously the major weakness of LPA is its infancy. As LPA has not been applied in research apart from Martin’s exemplar, critics would question its replicability and validity. However, as the life history narratives that participants provide are situated in sociophysical and sociocultural moments and produced for an audience, it is unrealistic to assume that the information provided is replicable. As the participant, researcher, and resulting narrative are situated in a moment in time and space, exact replicability is impossible.

Life histories, as a form of narrative inquiry, provide meaning to an individual's story as constructed through sociocultural contexts and reflected through perspectives developed in relation to particular and generalized others. It is a form of narrative "connecting the lives and stories of individuals to the understanding of larger human and social phenomena" (Hatch & Wisniewski, p. 113). Pauline Chin, (as cited in Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995), notes that the life history form of narrative inquiry is distinguished from other methods of qualitative research by its "dialogical, discursive nature" (p. 117). Perspectives are exchanged and memories are mediated by new positions and perspectives, including from the interview situation itself. PET would hold that positions and perspectives that emerge from the interactivity of the interview consequently have bearing on subsequent positioning. The effect of the narrative inquiry is in itself to offer opportunity for repositioning.

As participants construct their personal histories, research can never ascertain historical 'truth'. By collecting stories of foreign-trained teachers' experiences "we can understand the subjective way people experience and construct their immigration and thus narrative 'truth' is determined" (Benish-Weisman, 2009, p. 954). Participants in this research received the summation of their life stories and were given an opportunity to request revisions should aspects of their story not fully reflect their experiences. Although allowing participants to reflect on their life story is ethically sensitive in this research, it deviates from the intention of LPA. Martin's (2011) exemplar, applying LPA to a single case study with multiple sources, functionally does not allow for participant verification of the analysis. However, foreign-trained teachers in this research, using a modified application of LPA, were given copies of their life stories to determine that the researcher's interpretations were reflective of participant experiences. As truthfulness can never fully be determined from subjective experience, this application of a modified LPA is more reflective of the construct of validity, where the analysis provides an authentic understanding of participant experiences.

LPA offers validity in that it seeks to embed the participant within their life history through an understanding of positional exchanges. The LPA is valid only insofar as it reflects as accurately as possible the understandings and perspectives of participants as they engage interactively with significant and generalized others and is reflective of their personal cumulative histories. With LPA, validity is ascertained through provision of an

analysis that represents an understanding of a participant's experiences in integrating perspectives. For the purposes of this research, in applying LPA to multiple cases and in providing an opportunity for participants to review their stories, the final analyses regarding the success or non-success of the participants' integration experiences were separated in Section 5.4. These analyses, defining the manner and kind of integration each participant has achieved in their professional identity development, were not provided to participants in keeping with the intention of LPA. Thus, the issue of validity for LPA and the current research lies with a cogent understanding of the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers through their integrative experiences.

Regardless of the deviation from the initial conceptualization of LPA as a method of analyzing the particular life experiences of an individual case, the present research is an effective use of LPA as a methodological framework. This research extends the initial application of LPA by considering a group of twelve participants in order to understand common themes in experiences. A focus of the present research is on the commonalities experienced by foreign-trained teachers in order to reflect on current findings in literature regarding immigrant teachers, as well as to extrapolate findings to inform current practices in regard to incorporating foreign-trained teachers. Thus, although deviating from the single case study intent of LPA, this research shows that the method is not limited in its application to single case studies.

However, this application of LPA is constrained by the data received through single interviews. Using a variety of relevant information, LPA was anticipated to provide a robust depiction of the life experiences of an individual. The parameters of the current research did not allow for the incorporation of data from sources other than the interview conducted with each participant, yet still offered a limited analysis of life positioning experiences. Certainly, a limitation of LPA would otherwise be that it is only applicable in analyses where copious amounts of secondary source material are available.

Although a modified application of the methodological framework of LPA was used in the current research, the application does not violate the theoretical underpinnings of the method. The theoretical assumptions of PET provide that identity is developed through direct experiences with others. Foreign-trained teachers bring professional identities that have formed through their personal and professional

histories, and are adjusted and integrated through experience with new perspectives and positioning. LPA proved to be a fitting method through which to understand the professional identity development experiences of foreign-trained teachers encountering new perspectives in repositioning in BC classrooms. Further, the modified application of LPA allowed for the consideration of common themes in the professional identity development experiences of foreign-trained teachers.

3.5. Methodological Framework

3.5.1. *Participant Selection*

Participants were selected through two methods of purposeful sampling: homogeneous sampling and snowball sampling. To develop an in-depth exploration of the experiences of foreign-trained teachers in BC, participants were purposefully sampled across a continuum of work experience levels. This continuum of experience levels provided an extended perspective of the challenges faced by foreign-trained teachers as they negotiate their work experiences.

For this research, twelve participants were selected. In an analysis of 560 PhD qualitative studies, Mason (2010) found that the most common sample sizes for qualitative studies ended numerically in zero; with no theoretical reason why these sample sizes were more prevalent. Furthermore, it was noted that saturation was found at a relatively low number for homogeneous groups. Although saturation can be expected at lower participant numbers in homogenous groups, the diversity of personal factors included in this research suggests that homogeneity may be an elusive construct. Foreign-trained teachers completing practica experiences, seeking employment, or employed in the five largest school districts in BC may outwardly pose as a homogeneous group. However, due to the extensive array of backgrounds and personal stories considered, participants differ significantly. Thus, saturation may not be a viable criterion for LPA research; primarily as LPA was intended as a method of analysis of single cases for which saturation is not a relevant consideration.

This research is the first application of LPA beyond Martin's (2011) single case study exemplar. As was discussed in section 3.4, LPA offers a method of analysis of individual life stories, presenting an interpretation of an individual's experiences in

integrating past and present perspectives. LPA is intended to offer a robust interpretation of an individual life story through incorporation of relevant information from multiple sources. However, for the present research, secondary source material, information received other than directly from the participant, was not available. By providing a general interpretation of life positioning experiences through relying on only primary source material, in the form of interview data, this research deviates from the intentions of LPA. Furthermore, this research departs from the solitary case study examined through Martin's (2011) application of LPA by including an interpretation of the experiences of a larger number of participants. In modifying the intended single case application of LPA, this research sought to provide a general understanding of the experiences of foreign-trained teachers who seek repositioning in BC classrooms. It was hoped that findings, as summarized and reflected from the repositioning experiences of a number of foreign-trained teachers, could inform and effect change in current practices found to pose barriers to the incorporation of foreign-trained teachers in BC classrooms.

Due to the in-depth nature of LPA and the rich detail it provides of a participant's life story, too large a sample size would have made the proposed research unwieldy. The sample size of 12 allowed for a sufficient diversity of ethnic backgrounds while offering the opportunity for common themes to be extrapolated from the life positioning experiences of a group of individuals. By applying LPA across a number of cases, findings can inform current practices in incorporating foreign-trained teachers, and provide a more in-depth understanding of the barriers to integration faced by foreign-trained teachers, as well as add to current literature in the field. LPA provides an opportunity to understand the experiences of foreign-trained teachers when encountering new perspectives. Applied here, to a number of cases, LPA offers a summation of integration experiences across a group that can be reflective of the experiences of foreign-trained teachers emigrating to and pursuing recertification in BC, and of their professional identity development through these repositioning efforts.

Through homogeneous sampling, participants for the research were selected from, and contacted through teacher professional development programs offered at a medium-sized university. Specifically, potential participants were contacted through email by the professional development programs office. Potential participants received

information regarding the purpose of the research--the Study Information for Potential Participants form (see Appendix A). Individuals contacted were either completing their practicum experiences through a professional development program, had completed a teacher educational program at this university in past, are currently seeking employment, or have secured employment within the five largest school districts in British Columbia. Individuals interested in participating in the research were requested to contact the researcher directly through email.

Participants who subsequently contacted the researcher were then emailed Pre-Interview Questions (see Appendix B), as well as the Informed Consent Document (see Appendix C). Receipt of this information offered further detail regarding the research purpose, procedures, time involvement, as well as information regarding options for withdrawal from the study.

The Demographic Form (see Appendix D) which requests background and demographic data on aspects of age, gender, first language, race/ethnicity, cultural orientation, country of origin, level of education acquired in the country of origin and/or in BC, length of time living in BC, and accumulated years of teaching experience both outside of and within BC, was also emailed to participants. Participants completed the demographic form on their own and returned it in person to the researcher at the time of the interview, or the researcher and participant completed it together at the outset of the interview.

Purposeful snowball sampling followed initial contacts as participants were asked to recommend participation in the study to other individuals who they believed met the research specifications. Participants who completed an interview were subsequently emailed the Letter of Introduction (see Appendix F) and asked to provide it to any potential research candidates with whom they may be acquainted.

3.5.2. *Participants*

Participants are of adult age, have immigrated to British Columbia, have previous educational experience and/or teaching experience in another country, have pursued teaching certification within BC, which included university upgrading of their foreign teacher education training, and are/were either employed, intend to seek, or are seeking

employment in the five largest school districts in British Columbia. Due to the specialized nature of participant selection and gender disparity in the profession, recruitment did not result in a sample that equally represents both genders and a wide range of ethnic populations. In fact, all participants were female. The disparate representation of gender may be a result of any number of factors: women are more representative of the teaching workforce, more foreign-trained female teachers enter educational recertification programs than do males, females may be more disposed to respond to research requests, or females may feel more inequity in their treatment and may resultantly be more interested in sharing their stories, or any number of other factors not here iterated.

The range of participants' demographic backgrounds can be seen in Table 3.1. As can be discerned from Table 3.1, the average age of participants is 39.9, with a range of 23 years of age. The average length of time participants have been in Canada is 8.5 years, with a range of 17.5 years. All but two of the participants were married women, with two of them being single, not having ever been married. As a group, the twelve participants were proficient in 14 languages besides their proficiency in English. Eight participants were from Eastern European countries, while two were from India, and two from South America. Age was not highly correlated with years of residence in Canada; the oldest individual had the second least number of years in Canada. As shown by these demographics, other than some overlap in country of origin, there was a considerable range in ages, backgrounds, as well as time from immigration. This diversity provided for a rich range of stories and cultural backgrounds from their personal histories.

Table 3.1. Demographic Background of Participants: Personal History

Name	Age	Marital Status	Country of Origin	Ethnicity	First Language	Other Languages	Years in Canada
Serenity	39	M	Bulgaria	Bulgarian	Bulgarian	French	7.0
Valerie	38	M	Kazakhstan	Russian	Russian	German, Latin	9.0
Natalya	33	S	Ukraine	Ukrainian	Ukrainian	Russian	6.0
Diana	42	M	India	South Asian	Hindi	Punjabi	2.5
Valexty	44	M	Bulgaria	Bulgarian	Bulgarian	Russian, Spanish, Macedonian	12.0
Katia	46	M	E. Europe	N/A	N/A	French	13.0
Lisa	55	M	India	Indian	Malayalam	Hindi, Tagalog	4.0
Lina	40	M	Ukraine	Ukrainian	Ukrainian	Russian	8.0
Maros	37	S	Czech Republic	Slovak	Slovakian	N/A	9.5
Lea	33	M	Guyana	Mixed	Creole English	N/A	4.5
Ines	32	M	Argentina	Spanish	Spanish	N/A	7.0
Kay	40	M	Ukraine	Ukrainian	Ukrainian	Russian	20.0

Note. Data retrieved from Demographic Form.

Information regarding the professional history of participants also provides a diversity of backgrounds (see Table 3.2). Most of the participants attended a five-year program of studies at the university level. However, as all of the participants completed their high school education around the grade 10 level, when they sought recertification through the BCCT, often they found that their first two years of university studies were accredited to the high school level. Three of the participants had completed Masters' degrees and these the BCCT equated readily to equivalency for undergraduate degrees. However, one participant completed her Master's degree at a Canadian university, and this credential was not recognized by the BCCT as a Master's degree, but was considered equivalent to the final year of her undergraduate degree as she needed a requisite number of years studying at the post-secondary level.

Table 3.2. Demographic Background of Participants: Professional History

Name	Previous Degree	Teacher Training	Years at University	Years of Exp.	Grade Level Experience	Subjects
Serenity	M.A. Physics	Yes	5.0	2.0	7-8	Physics/Astronomy
Valerie	B.A. Foreign Language	Yes	5.0	7.0	4-8	English/Latin
Nataliya	B.A. Math, Comp. Sci., Physics	Yes	5.0	2.0	10-11	Physics
Diana	M.A. Child Psych.	Yes	6.0	15.0	K-12	Home Economics
Valexy	B. A. Engineering	Yes	5.0	5.0	Adults	Computers
Katia	B.A. French, English Lit..	Yes	5.0	<1.0	K-12	French
Lisa	B.Ed., B.Sci.	Yes	6.0	23.0	5	All Subjects
Lina	B.A. Education	Yes	5.0	11.0	2-11	All Subjects/Foreign Languages
Maros	B.A Education	Yes	4.0	1.0	1	All Subjects
Lea	M. A. Public Administration	No	6.0	7.0	8-10 & University	Home Economics Public Administration
Ines	B.A. Graphic Design	Yes	4.0	3.0	7-9	Graphic Arts
Kay	B.A. Education	Yes	4.0	3.0	1-3	All Academics

Note. Data retrieved from Demographic Form.

The professional history of participants also shows a range of teaching experience with students of varying ages; young children at the kindergarten level through to teaching adults (see Table 3.2.). There were an extensive number of background subject areas of specialization, with Eastern European participants more likely to have a sciences and engineering background. Several participants entered an educational institution specific to teacher training. They felt they received thorough teacher training instruction with a significant investment of time in direct classroom instruction. Consequently, they felt well prepared for employment as teachers in their country of origin. One participant, who did not take a teacher training program, but completed post graduate studies in education, was directed by the BCCT to complete the more extensive teacher training program at a local university that was not specifically for foreign-trained teachers.

Although the participant pool shows diversity in personal and professional backgrounds, the participants in this study comprise, to some extent, a homogeneous

sample: they all had experience with a teacher training program at the same university in Canada, have emigrated from a foreign country, and have experiences in classrooms in at least one of the five largest school districts in BC. Due to the nature of participant selection, only those individuals who had the ability to access a university training program were contacted in regard to participation in this research. Snowball sampling provided two participants who had also attended the same university program of studies. Fundamentally then, this research offers a limited sample; limited by the number of resourceful individuals who were capable of seeking avenues for certification in BC, limited by the individuals who have sought re-education through a university program, and limited by those who chose to participate in the study. Generalizations of findings as representative of cultural, ethnic, political or social backgrounds are unwarranted.

As the intention of LPA is to illuminate the life experiences particular to an individual, generalization is not a concept that applies to this method as Martin (2011) envisioned. The results from a specific case study using LPA was not intended to be representative of other individuals as it is the intent of LPA to reflect the unique experiences of one person through their own particular life experiences. However, as this research departs from the original intention of LPA, through the application of LPA to a number of cases, generalization of findings might be construed through the commonalities found in the repositioning efforts of the participants interviewed for this research. Modifying the intentions of LPA through application to multiple cases allows for some generalization of findings. Although each participant in this research offers a unique story of their professional identity development experiences through repositioning in a new sociocultural context, they share some commonalities that have influenced their perceptions of themselves as professionals. An understanding of the commonalities in these experiences offers insight into the role of others as barriers to the integration of foreign-trained teachers in the BC school system.

3.5.3. *Informed Consent*

After introduction and presentation of research purpose, informed consent was obtained. Informed consent was obtained through methods developed by Groenewald (2004) as participants were notified of the following:

- That they are participating in research
- The purpose of the research
- The procedures of the research
- The risk and benefits of the research
- The voluntary nature of research participation
- The participant's right to stop the research at any time
- The procedures used to protect confidentiality. (p. 10)

Participants were provided with Simon Fraser University ethics consent and information forms as noted on the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C). Participants were assured that participation was entirely voluntary and were given an opportunity to choose a pseudonym to facilitate anonymity at the outset of the interview.

3.5.4. Research Sites

Research sites varied based on participant access, considering aspects of proximity, convenience, and availability. Participants were offered interview locations at three local university campuses; however the researcher was open to meeting the participants at sites of their choosing. Interview sites were determined by the participant. Sites chosen provided the participant a level of comfort, relative privacy, and were quiet enough to allow for audio recording. Two participants were interviewed in their home by their choice.

3.5.5. Data Collection

The first element of data collection was through the acquisition of background and demographic data with the Demographic Form (see Appendix D). Data from this questionnaire informed the interview process and helped to provide background on participants.

Prior to interviews being conducted, participants received a copy of Pre-Interview Questions (see Appendix B). These questions served as a guide for participants, reiterating the purpose of the study. The guide was suggested as an opportunity for participants to tailor their thoughts prior to engaging in the interview. Furthermore, the Pre-Interview Questions offered an opportunity for participants to ascertain firsthand the focus of the study and an opportunity to withdraw from the study should they so choose.

Interviews were scheduled with participants at a time and place of their choosing, convenient to both researcher and participant. Interviews were conversational in format, based on the theoretical assumption of PET in that positioning is a social enterprise. As a result, the researcher assumes that the narrative inquiry occurs through co-constructive interaction. The role of the researcher is inseparable from the narrative in providing influence on narrative patterns and the information shared through the interactivity of roles. As identities are formed through interactivity, participants as well as the researcher are necessarily changed by the dialogical relationship entered into within the interview situation. Through the interview, the researcher guided the interview with intermittent questioning, allowing the interview relationship to unfold naturally as the participants related their stories. Although the researcher attempted to refrain from influencing the narrative, this is inevitable within a dialogical relationship.

3.5.6. Data Analysis

Audiotapes of interviews were transcribed in dialogue format as a direct representation of the verbal exchange. This method of transcription is in keeping with the theoretical assumptions underlying this research regarding the development of identity; a theory that presupposes that identity is developed dialogically and within interactivity with others. As noted by Riessman (2008), “the act of storytelling in dialogue *constitutes* the autobiographical self, that is, how the speaker wants to be known in the interaction” (p. 29). Although efforts were made in transcribing to include representations of linguistic markers, breaks in dialogue, and non-linguistic utterances, there is difficulty in transforming audio and social interchange into text as “much is lost, and key features slip away” (Riessman, 2008, p. 29). Commas were used to represent breaks in speech, and no grammatical corrections were made in the analyses.

The researcher aimed to retell the participants’ experiences “based on reflection and interpretations of the research participant’s story” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 1). The researcher reflected on the first-hand accounts, noting how they answered the overarching research question, “How is a foreign-trained teacher’s sense of professional identity affected by work experience in British Columbia K-12 schools?” Detailed transcribed interview data was coded with reference to the five phases of LPA: a consideration of particular others and relevant generalized others; a review of the

positions and perspectives occupied and exchanged at different life phases; a thematic analysis of position and perspectives across life phases; an integration of defining positions and perspectives; and concluded with a life positioning summary (Martin, 2011).

Throughout the analyses, the researcher incorporated direct quotations in an effort to most accurately represent participant experiences as “verification of qualitative data analysis is best achieved through the reflective interview process and through a reiteration of direct quotations” (Groenewald, 2004, p. 22). Through using direct quotations, the researcher sought trustworthiness of the data analysed. Participants were also offered a copy of their LPA once their stories were transcribed and rewritten in order to verify both the accuracy of the analysis and that privacy was maintained. One participant requested substantial changes to her analysis, where many of her own words were requested removed as well as any reference to her country of origin. The researcher fully complied with changes requested.

3.5.7. Ethical Concerns

Since narrative inquiry requires collecting copious amounts of personal information, protecting participant privacy is a challenging task. Due to the fact that many participants in this study were accessed from two specific programs, every attempt at anonymity was taken. Also, by including participants at varying levels of work experience across five school districts it was expected that some level of anonymity was provided. However, while pseudonyms were used to protect participant identification, information received through the narrative inquiry may be sufficient to identify participants to those who may access the findings. Therefore, participants were offered a copy of their LPA to allow an opportunity for them to check not only the authenticity of the analysis but also to assure, from the participants’ perspectives, that privacy and confidentiality were maintained as best as possible.

Riessman (1993) cautions that issues of validity are “largely irrelevant to narrative studies” (p. 64) as “narratives are laced with social discourses and power relations, which do not remain constant over time” (p. 65). Riessman (1993) does not see any “reason to assume that an individual’s narrative will, or should be, entirely consistent from one setting to the next” (p. 65). Researchers have suggested that rather

than applying the construct of validity to qualitative research, considerations should be given to the trustworthiness of its claims (Haverkamp, 2005; Riessman, 2008). As Riessman (2008) states, “narrative truths are always partial—committed and incomplete” (p. 186). She notes that the trustworthiness of narrative inquiry is best achieved through precise methods, accurate transcription and detailed documentation.

Haverkamp’s concerns with trustworthiness are less focussed on data than on the relationship between researcher and participant. Haverkamp (2005) states that trustworthiness “captures the recognition that participants can be vulnerable and that researchers carry a responsibility to promote their welfare and guard against harm” (p. 146). Throughout interviews, the researcher provided an atmosphere that was conducive to sharing personal lifestories. As interviews provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on their own perceptions of their experiences, the researcher needed to “anticipate vulnerability that may accompany highly emotional experiences” (Haverkamp, 2005, p. 152). As psychological sensitivity is needed for this degree of rapport to be established, the researcher noted to participants, as needed throughout the interviews, opportunities for participant withdrawal from the study, reiteration of limits of confidentiality, and availability of referral resources. As the researcher is a practicing counsellor, the cautions noted by Haverkamp (2005) that researchers who are adept “at creating a sense of connection and engagement” need to hold heightened sensitivity to “issues of power, influence, coercion, and manipulation” (p. 152) remained at the forefront of the researcher’s role in the interview process. As a result, the researcher posed guiding questions intermittently, allowing the narrative to unfold to minimize the impact of the researcher’s role on the participants’ story.

It is essential to note that participants may be placed during the interview process in a power imbalance. As a Caucasian researcher representing a local university, and as an employee of one of the five largest school districts in BC, the researcher may be seen to have, relative to the participants, considerable power--power that may not only reflect employment but educational connections. Therefore, it was essential that participants not fear reprisal, or worry that participation in this study would in any way undermine their program of study or employment success. It was paramount to separate the research purpose from the perception of repercussions to education or employability. The researcher made these claims very clear in information presented

when soliciting participants and through informed consent procedures, as well as when initiating interviews (see Appendix C). As Haverkamp (2005) has noted, each participant must be dealt with as a unique individual positioned in their own time and space, “located in specific situations that require actions based in care, responsibility, and responsiveness to context” (p. 150).

As the researcher is strongly influenced by dominant or mainstream Canadian social values, and holds positions as teacher/counsellor and university representative, it is important to note the perspectives that the researcher brings to the narrative interview. Although steeped in a career that follows a strong focus on ethics of care and ample experience as a counsellor, the researcher is inexperienced in the role of researcher. As an experienced counsellor with a practice that facilitates brief intervention and a cognitive perspective, it was often difficult to resist the urge to want to offer help and to take a problem solving stance, particularly with foreign-trained teachers who are seeking employment. Experienced in cognitive therapeutic techniques, the researcher also needed to avoid selective attention to information received that formulates a plan of action toward goals. Further, the researcher has worked for many years in a system where counselling occurs mostly in brief interactive sessions. Therefore, the researcher was careful to allow participants to direct the timeframe of the interviews, in understanding that it may take time for participants to tell their stories.

The researcher’s questioning throughout the interviews was limited to prompting focus or eliciting further information, allowing participants for the most part to detail their personal histories and to direct the focus of the interview. The researcher is experienced in taking a dominant role and is used to controlling the direction of counselling sessions towards eliciting information that helps the individual change. Taking a contrary perspective with the interviews by not entering a therapeutic relationship and allowing the participant to lead, was critical in diminishing the power imbalance in the interview relationship, and in facilitating the authentic receipt of participant perspectives and personal histories.

Finally, the researcher, as an empathic individual by nature was faced with participants who were openly vulnerable in disclosing personal information. The interview relationship, as an interactive dialogical opportunity, affords a relational

practice wherein perspectives are exchanged. As the participant and researcher enter the interview relationship, perspective taking necessarily occurred and both parties were transformed through the relational aspects of the interview. Being mindful of these sensitive aspects of the interview process, to protect participant wellbeing, the researcher needed to maintain an appreciable degree of professional distance and maintain focus on the goals of the research.

Narratives received from participants were difficult to follow and transcribe. Further, accents and language skills impeded transcription, and every effort was made to reproduce exact responses and these were iterated within their analyses. When participants reviewed their analyses, the researcher was requested to make minor adjustments: one participant corrected that she began teaching through her fourth, not third, year of university; another corrected that her mother and father did not own the afterschool care facility in which they worked. Other than one participant requesting the majority of her own words be removed from the analysis as well as any indication of her country of origin, no other changes were requested by participants. Participants determined that the transcription of their words through their analyses were an accurate representation of their information.

As it was unlikely the participants had any history of previous involvement with research, or were versed on confidentiality and the opportunity to withdraw their participation at any time, participants benefited from a thorough introduction to the research protocol. When provided with documentation regarding the intent of the research and informed consent, participants were offered the opportunity to ask questions and clarify understanding. Furthermore, the researcher checked at the start of interviews for participant understanding of the research purpose and their role in the research, including their opportunity to withdraw at any time.

The focus of the present study was founded on a consideration of research trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is defined by Haverkamp (2005) as “cornerstones of ethical principles, care, and virtuous character” including “recognition of power and an acceptance of responsibility on the part of the researcher” (p. 151). Innate to any qualitative study is the tension between reflecting the voice of the participant while being constrained by the language of discourse reflective of the dominant values espoused by

university research. As a female, white, locally trained teacher/counsellor with English as a first language, these concerns were foremost as the research goal was to reflect the path these professionals have taken. In consideration of the fact that the researcher reflects social values and perspectives of the dominant or mainstream Canadian culture, it was imperative that the researcher be continually aware throughout the research process that the aim of the research was not only to bring benefit, but also, to avoid bringing harm. As noted by Haverkamp (2005), in reflecting on ethical principles, it is not enough to provide benefit to the participant but to take utmost care to avoid harm. The researcher checked with participants throughout the interview process to ascertain their levels of comfort and to determine if they had any concerns with continuing. One participant during the interview took a few minutes to regain composure but insisted on completing the interview.

It is my expectation that this research provides an understanding of professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers. This information allows for greater understanding within the profession of the obstacles encountered by foreign-trained teachers as they negotiate professional identity through integration into the BC K-12 education system. The current research seeks to provide a LPA framework from which to identify key challenges and commonalities faced by foreign-trained teachers in professional repositioning in BC classrooms.

4. Participant Life Positioning Summaries

The following stories offer a glimpse into the life histories of the twelve participants interviewed for this research. Their stories are written within a life positioning framework in an effort to appreciate how professional identities are developed and how they change through repositioning as teachers in the BC school system. Most specifically, these stories acknowledge the effect of particular and generalized others on their professional identity development as teachers.

4.1. Serenity's Story

Serenity emigrated from Bulgaria leaving behind her two brothers and parents; one brother has since immigrated to Canada as well. Today's technology, she states, allows her to stay in contact with her family and she acknowledges that ten years ago that would have been significantly harder. She notes that it was hard leaving her family behind and difficult for her parents having her leave, "it's difficult for both parts, sometime you need somebody, most of the time they need you."

Raised in a house in a village until she was 13, Serenity spent much of her young life working in the large garden that was the mainstay for the family's food; life subsisted in close contact with nature as families were self-sufficient. She then moved to an apartment in the city in order to attend specialized high school, a preparatory stream for entering university. She recalls that "over there after grade seven and eight, children go to specialized schools...if you know you are going to continue with the post-secondary education...they know they have to go through the school in order to get to university." Schools, and consequently students, are streamed into academic, technical, or trades programs, therefore, the schooling system with which she was familiar, and in which she later taught, was neither inclusionary nor diverse.

Much of Serenity's life in Bulgaria was under a Communist political regime; she reflects on communism throughout her story as having the greatest impact on many of her decisions. Life was hard in the village, so parents sought to offer their children an easier life than was their lot; education provided the means to a better life. When moving to the city there were many universities and with students streamed, it was

understood once you completed the academic preparatory school program you would enter university.

in Bulgaria, clearly there are too many universities offering, uh, some kind of diploma but then you cannot find a job and it's not recognized abroad, still it's for social status, if you have good education, so parents, they still want their children to get into university, but then it's hard to find a job and, uh, and when you have a debt, it's hard

Serenity pursued a physics degree with the intention, always, of entering teaching; in looking back, she does not acknowledge that she had any other view of herself other than as a teacher. Serenity found, however, that under the Communist system, even with a university degree, it was hard to find a job, and certainly a challenge to make enough money on which to survive. Being a teacher meant accumulating debt accompanied by a lack of professional status;

it's not well paid, um, it's like three dollars per hour, something, it's just way below the, even the average, um, salary in Bulgaria, so the, the respect toward teachers is, uh, diminishing, people, because you don't make enough money, people don't respect you, as a person anymore

Under a Communist system, Serenity saw little hope for her future as a teacher, for her husband's career, or for their two children's future. Although she had obtained a master's degree in physics and her husband, a bachelor's degree in computer science, job prospects were scarce. Communism offered little hope for bettering their lives so she and her husband looked to emigrating as an answer; even her parents supported their leaving as she states, under communism, everyone was very "realistic about the situation."

when we graduated from university there wasn't jobs, at all, for physicist, or even for computer, ah, computer science which is the specialty of my husband and even if it had it was very difficult to get a job, so, ah, at some point we realize that even if we find something it's gonna be tough for the children when they grow, like get a decent education of anything, or a decent job, and so that's why we moved here

Canada was the logical choice as a destination as immigrating to Europe meant splitting up the family, “you kind of have to split your family and the husband goes first, find a job, so it’s not like its illegal, but you have to wait to gather permission and it takes years until the rest of the family comes,” and the United States does not have the same image abroad as does Canada, “the image of Canada is kind of appealing when you are abroad” although she pragmatically adds, “when you come here you realize people have the same problems and everything.” Immigrating to Canada meant the family stayed intact, and could leave communism behind for greater opportunities; “we applied as a family, so it was easier to move, like, all together,” and she comments, “I wouldn’t have the same possibilities in Bulgaria as here, so I’m a bit realistic about what I could do in Bulgaria.”

Serenity, with her husband and children, first landed in Quebec where they had distant connections with someone who had previously immigrated.

we decided to move to Quebec first, who were there, they're actually from the village where I was born and they, I kind of knew them, because we came to the same elementary school but it was like, 15 years ago, I didn't even remember them, you can say we knew someone 'cause they met us, they helped us, like get familiar, they helped my husband to get a job as a pizza delivery (laughs), ya, we had help

She found life hard in Quebec, although she had studied French in Bulgaria, neither her husband nor her sons knew French. Serenity felt overwhelmed with her need to become proficient in French to the point where she would feel confident enough to teach in that language; she stated that she “gave up completely that I’m going to be a teacher, it’s French.” She questioned her sense of identity as she had always thought of herself as a teacher and the move to Quebec challenged her basic assumptions of her own worth,

there was a time when I didn't think of myself as teacher, you have to adjust, you're, you have to live another life and if, for me, if I have to (pause) dwell on the thing then, I am not a teacher anymore, I wouldn't have been able to survive

The move to Quebec proved problematic, not only for Serenity to establish herself as a teacher, but as the family found Quebec society unwelcoming for immigrants:

we went to Quebec first and it's entirely different part of the world, it is another world, they speak another language, have their, different culture...everything is in French, and uh, they have their battle for independence, and uh, they have a little bit, um, issue with the immigrants and it is harder to find a job

Serenity and her husband decided to leave Quebec; Vancouver seemed to be the obvious destination for three reasons. First, it met their original reasons for leaving Bulgaria. Second, they sought to avoid the harsh winter weather they found in Quebec. Third, they sought to align themselves with a Bulgarian community.

there isn't a lot of provinces to consider if you are, in my view, if you have family, children, you want to move somewhere where there, they will have an education, they can go to a university and for us the choice was either Toronto or Vancouver, we didn't go, didn't want to go north, we were already, we spent two years already in Quebec and we know the winter there, it's beautiful but it's six months, it's a lot of cold and a lot of winter, so definitely the weather was one of the great factors

Their desire to connect with a Bulgarian community also factored into their decision to leave Quebec, "we look for a city where you will find at least a small Bulgarian community, not that isolated, and here they have a small community." Serenity adamantly stated that connection with others from her cultural background was important for her. When reflecting on her cultural background within her country of origin, formalized religion was not a significant factor for her, as under the Communist regime it was forbidden to go to church or to publically worship; although people still felt strongly about their religious orientation and she notes she is Orthodox.

like in general, in Bulgaria, the religion is Christian, Orthodox, Christianity, but it's more of a cultural thing, it plays a crucial role, because it keeps us together, it gives us, um, identity as Bulgarians,

but it's not religion in the sense of deep belief in um, and in following some, um, customs, or, so, it's cultural

Although not affiliated with a particular church here, Serenity notes that connections with the Bulgarian community are a crucial aspect of their successful immigration, in getting established in a new country; "a Bulgarian family, uh, they helped him...they helped my husband find a job, again like its pizza delivery, but still a job right away, and so, and he met with other Bulgarians there, and so the connection expanded." Serenity explains that being in touch with other Bulgarians is "connection, yet, and it's a source of information, actually the way I found out about this College of Teachers and the whole procedure was through, uh, a Bulgarian teacher." Her cultural ties, in addition to teaching, are integral to her sense of identity.

Finding information through community connections enabled Serenity to find the information she needed to pursue teaching in BC; without these connections she would not have been able to pursue continuing her teaching career. The information she found on her own was both confusing and overwhelming, coupled with the tasks to which she needed to attend in order to maintain her life and family in a new sociocultural context.

yes, right now they change the name of this College of Teachers, it is now Teacher Certification Branch of something, which is a lot more, makes sense when you read it, but when you come from another country and you read this College of Teachers, you think you gonna study there, and you go through pages and you find yourself totally lost, so I tried on my own, and I went nowhere, and when you come with a family, two children, you're working right away so you put this somewhere, somewhere behind

With help from a teacher from the Bulgarian community in Vancouver, Serenity was able to negotiate the path to certification in BC.

Her first task was to find volunteer work, this she found extremely difficult as she concurrently needed paid employment. Once she completed the requisite volunteer hours, she was successful in her application to the university training program for teachers from foreign countries required for certification in BC. Serenity acknowledges that entry to this program is a barrier to many foreign-trained teachers seeking

certification; the cost of the program is prohibitive and is not eligible for student loans, “it is a big stumbling block, paying tuition, and not making money through the period” and “a lot of, of people come with their children, so you have, you have expenses.” She completed her first practicum within this program without incident, noting that “if you come as a teacher from another country you know what you going to be, you know what to expect.”

However, her second practicum placement proved to be problematic in that she had difficulty with her school associate and with new curriculum material;

you have to show them right away that, uh, you know the subject so they can trust you and everything, and I didn't do that, because I didn't have the experience, you can't have the confidence if you haven't done it, it's, it shows right away, so I didn't even try to, to pretend

During her second practicum, her husband lost his job and this forced her to take a leave in order to return to employment to support her family. Serenity returned to the program to complete it, including a third practicum placement. She felt her third practicum went very well; while away from the program for the one year period she continued to research and study and this she determines facilitated her increased comfort level with the material.

Serenity does not feel she experienced any culture shock when entering the Canadian school context, however, she poignantly explains how she questioned her professional identity.

what was really different, um, when you come, even if you're not teacher, when you come you, you get yourself in a new situation, you have to start learning how to read people's faces, and, because in Bulgaria, or whatever country it is, you have a bank of names, and faces, and uh, ways of communicating, reactions, you know how to communicate with, with people, what to expect, how to evaluate, think of first meeting or something, and when you get here, everything is blank

She alludes to time playing a crucial role in discovering herself as a teacher again, “when you are totally separated from what you used to do, your mind is, again completely separated, you think of different matters, so physics went to the back of my mind, and math also, right now I don’t feel that confident as I was in Bulgaria.”

Key to establishing herself as a teacher in BC is the aspect of language proficiency. Serenity reflects that she not only needs to become proficient in English, but in the English terms specific to her subject area. She acknowledges that her accent is something she works on, listening to tapes with headphones as she continues in part time employment. However, she gives more credence to the importance of not making errors in her speech, “people used to say accent, they say accent, but actually it’s not only the accent but the mistakes you make when you speak.” She states that,

when you’re speaking, you are not a child, you don’t have the luxury to say whatever, you are responsible for what you’re saying and sometimes it comes out wrong even if you know how to say, then you laugh at your own mistakes, your own mistakes, that’s the reality

Serenity is keenly aware of the importance of time in this regard. She attributes several years of practice and focus on language skills as crucial to her success as a teacher. She neither feels confident nor fully acknowledged in her identity as a teacher without proficiency in English.

it takes a lot longer to explain yourself when you start saying something in another language, people lose patience to listen to you, on the other hand you are going to be a teacher and it just makes sense if you can’t speak you won’t make a good teacher, but what they don’t understand is that, um, you actually know the language you are just not, um, really speaking it takes time, it’s subconscious process, you cannot start speaking right away, you have to go through the mistakes you do, you have to know one or two years you will speak like a gypsy, like a child (laughs)

Earlier in her teaching practicum, she notes that kids would tell her, “I don’t know what you are saying, I don’t understand it,” and this led her to doubt her ability to present material concisely and to her resulting perseverance in improving her accent/language

errors. As a specialist teacher she realizes that her ability to clearly communicate in her area of expertise is paramount to her identity as a successful teacher.

when it was, when my English, not the accent, when my English was an issue, it was for both students and colleagues, uh, and for me also, I had a hard time explaining, and uh, especially when you want to explain something in detail and when it's a physics concept, when it's a math course, then you struggle to find the words to explain it, and you have to think of a second way of explaining it because they don't get it (laughs), then, um, so it's equal, it doesn't make a difference, it's me

Her confidence in this area has grown through her relationship with her last school associate who countered her questioning of her identity as a teacher in this regard, stating “if they don't understand, it's because they don't listen (laughs).” She has internalized this statement, and adds “I don't think this is going to be a problem anymore,” further reiterating, almost confirming it for herself, “I don't feel there is a problem anymore.” The impact of this particular individual had on her growing confidence was paramount to how she saw herself as an effective teacher.

As schools are streamed in Bulgaria, in contrast to schools in BC, she realizes that there is a diversity of learners in the classrooms she is now encountering; this is something with which she realizes she still needs experience. Most of her teaching exposure thus far has been in senior science courses, where the student body is more homogeneous. In Bulgaria, with a streamed school system, classes were homogenous and students' only options in education were to attend a different, less academically streamed school. She notes that assessment methods are exceptionally different between the two systems; Bulgarian schools operated like universities with only a mid-year and year-end examination, while here she realizes she needs to adjust her practices to include assessments that incorporate homework, projects, and oral reports, “you have to include some other projects, some children who do not perform well on tests and quizzes they still can show they have the skills.” She sees wider assessment practices helping students; however, she pragmatically adds the benefit in the Bulgarian system was “not so much marking, this is a big difference.”

The teacher's only role in Bulgaria was to deliver material. Here, although she bemoans that the academic rigour is significantly less than she is used to, her role as a teacher has changed in her methods of delivery of material. When asked to elaborate, she points out that children are no different between the countries, "they watch the same movies, they listen to the same music the same as here, and they have the same role models, they are confused in the same way (laughs), here and there." She feels the differences are completely based on the educational system and not specific to the culture. Her perception of herself as a teacher has adjusted to the fact that she is challenged by her need to be appealing to students in this new system, "teaching is different, it is different here from what I was used to in Bulgaria...you have to make your subject appealing to the children and that's the teacher's role."

She is very excited by the opportunities the BC school system provides for the use of technology and teaching resources; aspects completely lacking in her experience in her previous country. She sees herself as a professional continually learning in this area, and she sees this as a good thing, "because you are forced to develop" as a teacher; in Bulgaria, once you received a position as a teacher, until retirement, little changed.

Serenity faces her new professional identity with a stoic resigned nature reflective of her Communist roots; she is pragmatic in looking back at the path she has travelled and how far she still feels she needs to progress. She looks forward to her coming experiences as a teacher-on-call where she can continue to learn and develop as a teacher; it will be "a good learning experience, to see a lot of different classroom management styles, a lot of different ways of teaching the same materials." Fundamentally she notes, "I consider myself a physics teacher and a math teacher and this is something I came with, from Bulgaria, and...this is your love, this is what you want to do." She welcomes the wealth of opportunities awaiting her now, but acknowledges, "I don't think it's going to be different though, teacher here, teacher there, you're still doing what you want to do."

4.2. Valerie's Story

Born in the USSR, Valerie was raised in a southern city until moving at the age of 12 with her family to a city in the north of Russia. She lived as a teenager in a city known for its harsh winters and bleak landscape. Valerie, as a young adult, found the YMCA, an organization that could offer her opportunities to leave the north of Russia and travel throughout the United States. Valeria spent a couple of years travelling through the U.S. as a youth worker with the YMCA and as a family caregiver. On her return to Russia, she met and married her husband. She immigrated with her husband to Vancouver when she was 30 and eight months pregnant.

When reflecting on her childhood growing up in a Communist country, she remembers a very hard life, and comments that it was her dreams that brought her to Vancouver. She never wanted to live in Russia, as she states that a person's dreams in Russia are so limited by difficult social conditions.

I never wanted to live in Russia because, I can say, uh, most people survive there, they just, they can't, I remember when I was working as a teacher, my dream was to buy boots, and I always wanted to buy boots, and then I bought them, and I was happy, and that was just my only dream, here I can dream about more things than boots (laughs), and I can buy more, and I remember how small my dreams were because I knew at that time I couldn't afford anything, and there was just no way, some people live this way until now

Her choice of Vancouver as a destination arose from her desire to leave winter weather behind, she comments, "I was just tired of living in the north, I didn't want to just go, I didn't want to go to Calgary, I didn't want to go to Toronto, because I read about winters there are brutal." In her travels in the U.S. she heard favourable comments about Canada; but politically, Russian immigration to the U.S. was a difficult prospect. As it was, it took her husband and her nearly five years to receive approval, and this waiting period was difficult,

I didn't know like, we couldn't buy anything, we couldn't go anywhere, we couldn't plan anything, because I was waiting for the decision, and then, when I gave up, got pregnant, I gave up, and then I got a phone

call from the Canadian embassy, get your stuff and come to Canada
(laughs)

Much to the dismay of friends and family, Valerie and her husband quit their jobs, hers as a teacher at the university and his as a director at a large company, and “gave it all up.”

Valerie expected from a young age she would be a teacher, as she has always had a passion for serving people, helping others, and sharing her knowledge. Her grandmother was a teacher, and her great-grandmother was a teacher. Her mother departed from this professional stream in becoming a doctor. Valerie notes that her mother was successful and a very busy woman with her profession and so, for the most part, her grandmother raised her. She acknowledges that her mother rarely saw her. She recalls her grandmother’s personality inspired her to be a teacher although she sees in many ways that they had different traits. She remembers that her grandmother, who strongly influenced her, often questioned her own identity as a teacher: “she wasn’t as always happy in her job, she always, she wanted to get something else.” As a student in elementary school in southern Russian, Valerie remembers admiring the personalities of some of the teachers she had, and wanting to emulate them:

they had very bright personalities, some of them, they just like, bright, very demanding, very, and when I looked at them I thought, wow, they have nerves of steel, they are great people, they are strong, and I admire them, I admire them and I thought I would never be like them, like I would never be like them, but now I can say I have nerves of steel too (laughs)

Being a teacher was an attainable goal for a young girl raised by a single professional parent in the remains of a Communist system. It seemed the obvious career tract for Valerie to follow both as a result of her personal suitability and her family history; for her it seemed inevitable.

Valerie spent five years studying at a pedagogical training institution for teachers in Russia which was then followed by a period of teaching at an elementary school. At the time of immigration, Valerie had secured a good job in a university teaching position, had seven years of teaching experience, and had a viable private tutoring service

established. Private tutoring was an essential aspect of her employment as the salary she obtained from teaching was inadequate; although, a university teaching position paid more than did elementary school teaching.

I taught, um, in elementary school too, and in university, but I had tutoring all the time, all ages, I can say all ages, I had, one thing, because as a teacher you can't survive, you can't make a living just getting money that you get from, from teaching because you have to have tutoring so I was tutoring people, so they came to my apartment, was private, but I made money that way, so, I never experienced hard time with not getting money because I always had money because I always had students (laughs), so, ya, and we had hard times with my husband when he didn't have a job and I was working and only money that I made were from tutoring not from university

Valerie believes she was a very successful teacher in Russia. She taught a phenomenally wide range of ages, from 4-80 years, and she mostly taught English. Her professional identity as a successful teacher is confirmed for her as she reflects with pride on both her students' successes and the professional references she received:

in IELTS test, they would have high scores, they would have 9 to, from 1-9, they had like 7 or 6, which is good for me, which tells I'm good teacher or they would take TOEFL test and they would have a high score, after it, like, 80% which is very high, so for me, for being their teacher it's like good, is good indicator of me being a good teacher, so they learn something

and I was very successful, I was very successful and I had good references when I went here I just contacted my previous job and everybody they cried, like they say "you come back," they gave me good references from there

Valerie notes that being a teacher in Russia was an essential part of her identity: "being a teacher there was different because there, I, it was my, the job that fed me, the job that educated me, the job that I spent my most time in, and I really loved it, I really loved it."

When Valerie and her husband settled in Vancouver, they felt a need to connect with community and immediately found a church to attend. The church they joined proved to be too large for them. Valerie notes that, "you can get lost, there is so many

people, and if you sit sometime during service, you don't know people who sit beside you." Seeking to establish cultural connections, they subsequently joined a small Russian church where Valerie says,

I know most people who come Russian speaking, I know them all, I know most of them, and they're my friends and right now we are in another church and so we keep relations with other Russian speaking people, so we just keep in touch and we meet and we do stuff together

This community connection, with other Russians, is deeply important to Valerie; it is not so much a religious component that is crucial, but a cultural identity that is necessary in her life. Connection with a Russian community is crucial to her repositioning in a new context: "that's, how you, that's how you make community, that's how you support each other if you are in trouble, so, people can help you find a job, they can help you financially, they can help you in difficult circumstances."

Connecting her children with their culture and their language is essential to how she is raising her daughters here in Canada. Valerie teaches them daily Russian language lessons and teaches at the Russian church. She feels, "it's important for kids because they see that they do really matter...they can do something to make a difference, to make life better, to make everybody happy, and to serve God, so it's very important, it's very important," to have cultural connections.

Through the church, Valerie met and became good friends with a Russian couple, both had been teachers in Russia and the wife had chosen to pursue a teaching career in BC. Valerie states that the information she received from this friend resulted in her finding her way to the College of Teachers, but this proved to be a convoluted process for her:

when I went to College of Teachers, I found this organization very, I couldn't understand their function, what they do, like what are you doing, I am teachers, what are you doing, some kind of union, they're not union, they're just, look into your diploma, and then they say what you need, and they, it took them some time, and then they finally

evaluated and they said what I needed, which wasn't clear to me too, like how they do it, I wasn't involved in this process

Valerie was grateful to have someone in the Russian community who could help her through the paperwork, who supported and encouraged her, and who referred her to an online university program for her to complete the required upgrading.

Valerie's five years of education in Russia were considered to be comparable to a Bachelor's degree when her credentials were assessed by the BC College of Teachers. The College of Teachers told her that she would need to take a teacher training program at a local university, including methodology courses. Prior to enrollment in this program, applicants are required to complete volunteer hours. Valerie found this to be an onerous task. She was surprised how difficult it was to get volunteer experience in local elementary schools. She felt her professional identity was not recognized as she pleaded for a volunteer position. She saw this as ironic after being employed as a teacher in Russia for many years: "when I came there with my resume I'm, please, please I want to work for you, I want to work for free, I want to volunteer." She found few receptive to her pleas and searching for volunteer work completely humiliating; she states that "one secretary just threw my resume into the garbage while I was standing there, said 'we don't need volunteers'." On another instance, she recalls how awful she felt when one secretary,

just looks at my resume (makes noise), and "what's this," and she just put it, like, at the bottom of the huge pile of others, and she said, "you know what there are millions of people like you, (slams table) and you are just, I don't know when you get there, see you," (laughs), "I will give you a call, probably never," and my heart, I was just breaking into pieces, and I came home crying, oh, how am I going to do it, it's just like, oh, please, and then I started to talk to people

Again, Valerie found connections through the Russian community. In speaking with others she was referred to an immigrant teacher who had secured a position in an afterschool program and who invited Valerie to complete her volunteer hours there. Valerie still has difficulty understanding why it was difficult to get volunteer work: "I was almost begging them on my knees, I was like, I was asking to work free." Once her hours were completed, Valerie submitted her documentation to the university and

recalls, "I was happy, I was so happy, I was so thrilled that I actually got into the ---- I couldn't believe it," she adds, "but I did it, IELTS, 9 is the highest mark you can get, and I got 8, and (laughs), I was so thrilled." Valerie comments on how the IELTS reconfirmed for her, her identity as a learner and her suitability for the teaching program.

Once entering the university program, Valerie was deterred by the first semester. She found it simplistic, often childish, whereas she was looking forward to "reading serious materials." She felt that there were "some speakers that seemed irrelevant to what we, what I, was just like speakers who would just like educate us on how to pronounce words, and who would say that 'you're language is distorted because you have an accent,'" which Valerie found offensive. Valerie's first practicum placement was far from where she lived; she needed to wake at five in the morning in order to be prepared to make multiple transit connections. She found her school associate at this site very negative toward her, feeling much of this was racial; "the attitude was so negative that the faculty ---- finally she pulled me out from that school." Valerie then completed the practicum at a school closer to her home with two school associates. She received good references and enjoyed this brief practicum "because these people really loved their jobs, they really loved what they did, and they really, they're really professionals." She felt she was treated respectfully, and made reference that the school associate, "she treats you like actually you are a person, not like you are a little piece of nothing," referring to her previous school associate. Her third placement also proved problematic as Valerie comments her school supervisor, experiencing the loss of a close family member at the start of Valerie's practicum, "went through rough time, she didn't want to be around anybody, and I was in her way, somehow."

Valerie was ultimately unsuccessful in passing the practicum requirements for completion of her university program and was devastated by this verdict; it shattered her sense of herself as a professional at its core:

my wings were cut (makes cutting noise) by my unfortunate practicum, and I don't feel strength and I don't feel desire anymore, I still don't feel it right now, and I didn't feel it then, when I was over it, I just cried and cried, and so, I couldn't believe that it happened to me, I couldn't believe it, but it happened and I have to accept it, but maybe later I will just overcome it

She states this is a consequence of “not the requirements, it’s just the relationships.” Valeria felt that her professional identity was challenged as a result of her culture and language. She feels it was ironic that the university staff professed multiculturalism, yet she felt excluded, “we are so multicultural, we are so, blah, blah, blah, but it was so cheap talk to me, because they did one thing and then they do other things.” She recalls that her Russian friend had warned her that teaching here was very stressful, but until Valerie encountered direct racial bias, she could not understand how teaching was stressful. In Valerie’s practicum experiences, she did not find working with students stressful, but she comments that she felt racist attitudes “from the adults, students no, kids, kids love me.”

Valerie felt her accent and her Russian background undermined her professional identity here:

I mean my nationality, ya, of course, my identity, they hated, especially in some schools, I can say that they are racists, racists, I can say in ---- they are, because my resume was thrown in the garbage in the first place, that was my first indicator (laughs)

She comments how intertwined and inseparable are her culture, background, and identity. When challenged, as in a negative comment about her accent or when she was told she needs to work on her language, she states:

oh, it’s like saying I don’t like your nose, or whatever, it’s like, I didn’t like it at all, and she didn’t like my character, she said, ah, you do this thing, and this thing, and, uh, I think at home, ah, you should be this and this, and my faculty associate she was telling me things like that too, which I didn’t like, because, and I think they shouldn’t do it, they should never comment on your, on your identity and my nationality, it’s personal and it’s not a nice thing to do

Valerie tries to understand all that she has been through, the difficulties with seeking volunteer work, course upgrading, the program at university, and her ultimate failure to pass the practicum portion of her program. With hindsight she reflects on her identity as a teacher and reconciles her practicum failure with justifying that there were signs she should have followed:

but we couldn't afford babysitters, I had to ask them to come, and I had to rush to school to volunteer, be there, but I did it (laughs), I'm so happy I did it, but some of the things, at the beginning, of my getting into ----, just really wanted to tell me that I shouldn't go there, so, but I was so stubborn, but like I really want to (laughs)

Not having been successful in acquiring certification in BC, Valerie questions her professional identity, surmising now, in repositioning herself, that perhaps her professional identity wasn't as entrenched as she thought.

I thought maybe not, maybe this is my mom's desire to put me into this position, not mine, and then, just, I thought maybe I should be somebody else, and I still have that, like I should try something, I should do something, different, I should do something different, try something different, ya, I still learn, so I don't know

In comparing herself as a teacher in Russia to now, she states that the attitude about teachers is different; there is a lot more respect for teachers in Russia than here. With having to run her own private tutoring service in Russia, Valerie learned marketing skills: "there you have to market yourself, it's like you being a product, and if they want for their kid, for their kid they want the best, and uh, so you have to sell yourself, right, you have to sell." Valerie pragmatically acknowledges that the major difference between her as a teacher in Russia and here, was that there she was successful as many of her students went on to prominent universities and well-paying jobs. Here the school system does not promote academic learning, and thus she justifies her identity as a skilled teacher and reconciles this identity with her inability to become a teacher here as a systemic issue.

I taught them the principle of how to learn, how to, how to make this learning happen, because at schools, in most elementary schools, here in public schools, they don't do it, they just, uh, they're always nice with kids, but they don't, that is why a lot of parents want to move their kids to private school because the academics are stronger there, and I can say that my academic side was very strong with my students because I took it very seriously, here you can't do anything because you are working against the system, if you even give the kids homework, I remember my school associate, she didn't like it, when I

give my kids math in school and homework, she was mad (laughs), she said "no we don't do that" (laughs), that's what she was mad, and I was so surprised.

Valerie sadly comments:

the attitude to teachers different, there is way more respect to a teacher than here, so here, it's just sometimes, (laughs), like they look through you, they don't see you, they don't wanna, and if you say things that they, that are right, you are wrong because, the student is always right.

Valerie consequently tried employment in a number of different areas, but found they all challenged her professional identity as a teacher:

I tried new professions, so, and, I wouldn't think I would do them, I wouldn't even think I would consider myself being that, a store clerk, or I don't know whatever, or, and administrator, or like writing for newspaper, I wouldn't think I would do it, but I did it so, I tried lots, lots of other things

Valerie was unsatisfied with her efforts in establishing herself within other professions and as a result, she is currently pursuing certification as a fitness instructor and has continued her service to others through teaching in the Russian community and at Sunday school. But it is difficult still for her to understand who she is in a different role and she reflects bitterly, "I give them my forgiveness, and it's, it's on their conscience, it's not on me, I just, move on, still it's hard for me right now, even now, even two years after it, it's still, I have still, those feelings, my heart feelings, but I think it will go over time." In her heart, Valerie will always be a teacher and she acknowledges, putting her life in perspective, how entrenched her professional identity is: "I am still a professional teacher, I am, I am, even if I don't have my ---, that's okay, maybe I'm not doing, not earning my living right now, but I have a great life, I have my family."

4.3. Natalya's Story

Natalya has been in the greater Vancouver region since emigrating over six years ago from a small city in Central Ukraine. She left Ukraine for a period prior to

coming to Canada as she worked as an au pair in Denmark for two years. On her return to Ukraine from Denmark, Natalya realized that she did not want to stay in her country of birth as there were few opportunities for her there. She found that none of the friends she graduated with from the pedagogical university were employed as teachers. Since they could not make a living through teaching, they found other jobs that provided more money and support, “because back in the Ukraine you don’t have enough, enough money to live on, I mean teaching.” Natalya reflects on her motivation for immigrating:

before I came here I was in Denmark and I realized that it's much easier to live in some other country other than Ukraine, it just (laughs), I don't know, it's just not stable to live in Ukraine, I'm not sure that I wanted to come back in there, I don't know, I just decided I wanted to go see the world, still, it's ah, ya, this part of the world wasn't familiar to me (laughs), so, ya, Canada, I don't know really why, maybe Canada was easier to get to instead of the States

She comments that the U.S. had a bad reputation and it was exceedingly difficult to obtain a Visa for emigrating to the U.S. from Ukraine; she adds that “for Ukrainian it’s hard to get anywhere.”

Since Natalya could not afford to travel, she realized that her best opportunity for immigration lay in initially working as a caregiver. She decided to find an agency to facilitate her placement. Although she knew others who found placements through the internet, she “didn’t want to risk” her safety. Working with an agency in Ukraine, she found a placement in the lower mainland of Vancouver that suited her. She wanted to come to Western Canada and she knew she didn’t want a rural placement: “I just don’t want to go to back to bears somewhere (laughs) as long as it’s somewhere next to the city, I’m good, even if it’s like small city, it’s fine.” Natalya comments that flying for the second time in her life was scary, not as scary as the first time, but the second time seemed momentous as her intent was to immigrate, “you know, you, you, you just leave everything behind you.” She emotionally remembers her friends coming to the train station to say goodbye to her, in snow and minus 15-20 degree weather.

Natalya’s was placed as a caregiver with a family who had an autistic child. She had no previous experience with special needs’ students and she found “it was

something interesting for me to know, because, before I came to Canada, the only, uh, experience, the only knowledge that I knew of autistic people was the movie.” Natalya feels she was fortunate in having a good placement with this family as they recognized her strengths and encouraged her to pursue a teaching career, helping her with the processes needed to pursue teaching certification. Natalya had hoped to become a teacher in BC, but wasn’t sure this would be a possibility for her here. She has always seen herself as a teacher and felt that her caregiver placement extended her knowledge in working with children with diverse needs. Her education and training in Ukraine did not prepare her for working with special needs students.

Natalya’s education in Ukraine was focused on her pursuing a career as a teacher. She progressed from vocational school with marks high enough to enter the pedagogical university without writing entrance exams. She was always determined to be a teacher, feeling it was the right profession for her: “all the way through I knew.” Although her mother died when Natalya was young, Natalya believes she went into teaching because her mother thought that it was a good career choice. Natalya reflects that her mother intended for Natalya’s brother to enter teaching, but he did not enter the pedagogical university, instead he completed legal studies. Natalya’s determination to pursue a teaching career has connected her with her mother’s wishes. Natalya’s brother’s career, as a lawyer for the police, is a career her mother would not have approved: “actually my mom didn’t allow him to do the kind of job he does right now.” Having lived under a Communist regime her mother was opposed to the corrupt government police force. Natalya’s becoming a teacher honours her mother’s wishes whereas her brother would have disappointed their mother. She acknowledges, “I guess that was the part of me becoming a teacher, probably the huge part (laughs).” Natalya adds that her stepmother was an additional source of direction for her career, noting that “my stepmother probably took part of it as well because, um, she’s, she’s a teacher.”

As well, Natalya’s father has always worked as a coach, running sports programs for young children and acting as a director for sports programming. When Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, her father was employed as a coach for the government hockey program. When the Soviet Union collapsed, and funding for government sports programming was no longer accessible, her father began his own private coaching program for football. She recalls many times being toted along as her father worked as

a sports instructor and she watched. She also remembers her father often making a small frozen pond for her to skate on while he coached hockey outside on the frozen river that ran through her city. Natalya's pursuit of teaching, then, ultimately followed the desires of the two most influential women in her life (her mother and stepmother), as well as a desire to follow in her father's footsteps: "I saw that part of my dad, this is why I bring me into teaching as well."

When Natalya completed the teacher training program at the pedagogical university, she was placed in a practicum situation at the same vocational school from which she had graduated. Fortuitously, the administrator had not changed and she remembered Natalya, offering her part-time work at the end of her practicum. This worked into full time employment in the following school year. She recalls teaching at the vocational school difficult due to her age; at 22 she was teaching 17 year olds and the boys often challenged her authority. However, she was grateful to have secured a position at the vocational school as it was the only school in the city with computer labs and some limited access to science lab equipment. Although equipment was hard to come by, she laughs as she acknowledges that they always had chalk. With few resources and little equipment available to teachers at most other schools, she was pleased to have secured a position at the vocational school.

While reflecting on her own education at the vocational school, Natalya fondly recalls her childhood. While going to school in the city, a large part of her time was spent in the village on weekends and holidays with her grandmother. Her grandmother was very religious and took her to church, and Natalya "really loved to go to church with her." While Natalya was growing up, it was illegal to attend church as the Soviet Union, in their efforts to politically control Ukrainian culture, closed churches. She recalls that, "Ukraine was part of Soviet Union for so long, and they killed, they killed all that, you couldn't go to church," but this was not closely policed in the countryside villages. Natalya tells the story of how she was baptized on one visit to the village when she was a baby, even though baptism was illegal.

my mom brought me to the village, my uh, my aunt I believe, just stealing, steal me and actually did the whole procedure and then return me, because, you couldn't, if anybody knew, that uh, you go to the church and you do this procedure, they will uh, it just, it was a

bad thing to do (laughs), so nobody knew I was actually in the church,
yes, this is what happened

Natalya's grandmother also taught her cultural traditions including Ukrainian cross stich. Attending church, for Natalya, is akin to connecting with her cultural identity and her family history.

Even now, Natalya sees connecting with the church as integrally tied to her Ukrainian heritage, language, and identity, so she attends a Ukrainian church in Vancouver. She appreciates the ability to speak in her first language; however she comments that although people here speak Ukrainian, they don't have an accent. She comments how the Ukrainian spoken "is very beautiful, it is right grammatically but this is the problem;" she states that the language is not what she is used to in that it does not hold the colloquial expressions and everyday casualness with which she is familiar. As a result, Natalya sees herself as different from others within the Ukrainian community in Vancouver.

Natalya is very conscious of her language and accent, feeling these position her as an outsider repositioning herself professionally in a new context.

I was afraid of my English, because even though, um, when I came to Canada I, had to, uh, some level English, and I remember people would complement me on my English, and so on and so on, however, when you go to the teaching, ah, you actually, no matter what level you have, you still have accent and students will, will hear it, and it, it just gives, puts you in some position, gives some impact, you being from outside

Her accent became a poignant issue during her practicum when some students in the math class she was teaching told parents that they couldn't understand her teaching as a result of her accent: "they actually said something about my accent, something about understanding the subject because I'm saying, I can't explain it any differently, my language isn't good enough, something like that." The principal, as a result, came in to the classroom to observe her teaching. She felt supported by the principal when the principal found that it was the level of mathematics that was challenging for the students

and not her accent or language ability. The principal affirmed her professional identity, so she could align her culture with her sense of herself as a teacher.

Until this time, Natalya was not confident in her language ability, commenting she “wasn’t sure whether I could explain things.” She feels her time spent volunteering prior to entering her university upgrading program really helped her develop confidence. She was very surprised how hard a process it was for her to obtain volunteer hours in a school.

well the thing is, it's really hard, it's really hard to get anyone to volunteer position in Canada (laughs), I don't know, if you go home, to Ukraine, everyone would want you, I don't think about anybody (laughs), anyone telling you, you need to do this and this and this, and I started, actually, looking for anything, I contacted, so, so many schools, I even don't remember how many

some of them will answer and some of them will not, just ya, it was really painful, in the end, I was just walking to the schools and (laughs) say “Hey people, I need to volunteer, I need to volunteer, please take me” (laughs)

In her country, people do not seek volunteer experiences, so she had no understanding of its purpose, or why it would be difficult to obtain volunteer work; she internalized this, assuming this difficulty was attributable to her language. However, she managed to secure a supportive volunteering opportunity wherein the teachers even allowed her to try teaching some lessons. These small opportunities expanded her confidence in herself as a teacher: “each lesson just give you this ability to understand that yes you can, and that students really understand you.”

Natalya was encouraged by her employer to pursue recertification; but, on applying to the BC College of Teachers for assessment of her credentials, she found “the whole beginning experience is frustrating as well, probably because you have to contact the BCCT and then you have to wait, wait, wait.” She was fortunate in that she was working full time and was living in her employer’s home; she realizes she was lucky in that she could afford to wait.

When she did enter the university upgrading program she found the early part simplistic, “they kind of play around with you, you kind of, like, they, maybe even to say, uh, treat you as a kid.” However, Natalya grew to appreciate the university program in preparing her for teaching. Not only was she hesitant of her language abilities, she was beginning to doubt her teaching ability, and the program reengaged her and connected her with her sense of herself as a teacher.

you just forget things, it happened to me as well because I didn't teach, I don't know, five years, I don't know, maybe more than that, five, six years before volunteering, and I'm getting back, ya ya, oh right, this is what you did, so you just need something like that, it's just human nature, you cannot just skip something like that, it's human nature to forget that, and if you are not doing something right there right now, you constantly doing that, you just forget so I find it really useful

Natalya saw the cohort group as a valuable resource for support. She drew on close relationships with other students from the cohort to help her move through the practicum experiences: “let's say something happened today, you said it, you share, you, and you forget, that's it, and you move on next day, because sometimes you just need somebody to say things.”

Through her practicum experiences, Natalya found that most staff and students were open to her cultural differences. She felt that she was well prepared by the university upgrading experience to accept differences and to learn to take cultural or language challenges with a sense of humour. She feels this attitude has made all the difference.

basically, that you have to be open-minded and you need to be, you need to find, different, like, approaches to different students, uh, and, I think that helped me a lot during my practicum here and I believe in my future career as well

Through being forthright in telling students that she has an accent and openly inviting them to ask her questions, she has found she can connect with students. She found that being open to her challenges has made her students more accepting of her

ethnicity; students have even asked her to show them how to write their names in Ukrainian.

Other than differences in the availability of resources in the schools here as opposed to in Ukraine, Natalya sees major differences in teaching methods. As a teacher in Ukraine, she saw herself as authoritarian, although perhaps less so than her colleagues there as she was so much younger. Here she realizes that she values relationships with students and being open to their interests, and this has made her a different teacher, more student-focused. She comments that in Ukraine learning was primarily through rote memorization, while here she sees student learning as more conceptually based.

a lot of things were about memorizing, and so for example when you talking about mathematics there lots of formulas, formulas that you have to use, you have to know how to do that, this this this this, while in here, not that many formulas, I mean, yes, you still doing math, you're still doing the same things as we did at school in Ukraine, however, it is a little bit different, there's twists in here

She is pleased to have found a balance between how she taught in Ukraine and new teaching methods here. She comments proudly that with one student she helped, she was able to move the student to new understanding by drawing on her previous teaching knowledge: "one of the girls was a little bit confused and so I showed her a little differently, and she understood that way better so I was really happy I could, I could bring something."

She does comment that she needs to learn strategies for class management, and she sees this as her weakness. As a teacher in her country, managing student behavior was not an issue for her as schools were not inclusive, being streamed for academic and non-academic students as well as not incorporating students with special needs, and the system was more authoritarian. She prefers the student centered teaching approach in this new context, however, she realizes at the same time that expecting unquestioning student compliance is not compatible.

I definitely like, like the idea of the system in here, uh, better, however, there are some things, sometimes I'm thinking if to take

something like, the good parts, from Ukrainian system the good parts from Canadian system, combine them together that would be like the perfect situation (laughs), however, it's not possible

She says she is often asked the question from colleagues as to how the two systems differ. She finds these questions difficult to answer because each system fundamentally arises from differing philosophical positions regarding learning and education. She now gives people an example of something that is different between the systems and asks them to judge which they prefer, stating "let me give you some examples and you tell me what you, whether it's better or not, because it's really hard to say, depending on what you stand on."

Natalya has not yet begun to apply for TOC positions, having just recently received her BC teaching certification. She is looking forward to learning through teaching-on-call, getting more experience with methods and class management styles. Although she acknowledges there are "always lots of next steps for me," she is settled and happy in repositioning herself as a teacher in BC.

I didn't really start to applying yet, so we will see how the whole story will end (laughs), but there, and get the position, but after all, I like the place where I am at the moment and uh, I'm happy to be here

4.4. Lisa's Story

Lisa grew up in a close community in India. She attended convent schools and her affiliation with the nuns and personnel of the school had great impact on her. She describes her family as Christian, and remarks that spirituality was part of the home atmosphere. The school and convent became the mainstay of her family's activities as they participated in a community of worship. She refers to the church as "very grounding" and notes that spirituality "really plays a role in my life, even today, even till today, and I impart the same in, into my kids too."

Lisa reflects on the nuns' influence in forming how she sees the world from a Christian perspective, "a lot of importance was given to the values, human values, so my upbringing and the influence that the school had in my life, that was great." She fondly recalls the nuns' influence in her becoming a teacher, "my association with the nuns

made a great role.” One nun in particular, Lisa recalls, was very hard on her, demanding strict compliance with her studies. Lisa notes proudly that she had the highest math scores in the school, attributing this to her teacher’s diligence with her.

Apart from emulating the nuns she encountered at the convent school, Lisa feels she determined to be a teacher as a result of her father’s direction.

it was my father who inspired me to be a teacher, and he said “that’s a noble profession,” because I think uh, my family would not be neglected, I could go and take my kids to school, come back, and my home is not neglected at the same time, it’s a noble profession where we create the doctors and the teachers, and the scientists, and all the rest of the people, so it’s in the building of people

yes, every professional had a teacher, so that was put, that was implanted into me and that encouraged me to uh, as years went by, I knew that I was called to be a teacher

As well as feeling her career was a spiritual calling for her, she recalls that she had a number of characteristics that suited her to the profession. She states that she was always serious about her studies and had good time management skills. With these characteristics she felt she had a calling “to impart the same to those who I dealt with.”

When Lisa completed her university coursework and teacher training, she secured a job at a private school in India. She comments that she was fortunate to work in a private school as the government schools were poor and did not have any resources. The private schools were able to select their students and so were not inclusionary; in her teaching she did not encounter students with behavioral concerns or students needing special support. She laments, however, that the private schools are profit-oriented as they,

are more into money making, they, it’s more of a business for them, so in one class, probably we have 40-50 students, and uh, the class is overcrowded, and the teacher, to manage 50 students, with activities, it’s way too, it’s impossible

Like Lisa’s own schooling, she was to use only English in her teaching position. Although students were taught local languages, the medium of instruction for all

academic subjects was English. English was differentiated from the local languages as English was used in business and higher employment opportunities;

everything was in English, it was, we learned the other languages, we never did that well, because we knew those regional languages were tough for us to study, because we needed to use, because we go out in the marketplace because people are speaking that language, it was only for that reason, other than that we really tried to speak English, and we were encouraged to speak English in the school, and uh, if we didn't speak English we had to pay a fine, of one cent (laughs), I even remember those (laughs)

Both the system in which Lisa was raised and the system in which she taught in India were teacher-centered. She comments that with so many students and desks in one class it was impossible to teach in any other manner. Lessons were teacher-directed and learning was based on rote memorization of academic tasks. She states that she needed, before completing grade three, to have instant recall of the times tables from 1-20. The focus was on grammar, handwriting, memorization, and assessment was through standardized testing and it was highly competitive for top spots: "elocution was with all those, with intonation, modulation, all those, we were encouraged for all those things, and we used to have competitions."

After teaching for twelve years at the private school in India, she moved with her husband and two young children to Dubai. This afforded them the ability to move their children from India's overburdened system and lack of opportunities. Her husband went to work with a good company and she obtained a teaching position in a very prestigious school. She believes the school at which she worked is the largest K-12 school in the world, with a population of approximately 10,000 students. As a result of its size and due to local laws, male and female students were separated. After primary grades the facilities were segregated with girls attending in the morning and boys using the same physical space in the afternoons.

boys and girls cannot study together, after the primary level, so they have to be segregated, and so the school, I taught the girls section, and uh, the girls section works like 7:45 to 12:45, and the same set of classroom will be, the same space, facilities, everything will be used

by the boys in the afternoon, so we had girls about 5,000 to 7,000, and uh, each grade level, each grade level, we had kindergarten and one, goes from A-Z, then they had added more, then it came to K, A1, A2, that way it went one, the alphabet, can you imagine

Due to her experience and abilities, Lisa was quickly recognized for her talents and promoted to section coordinator. As a section coordinator, Lisa had to make sure each class, every section of the grade level, was meeting the same learning outcomes, doing the same worksheets, covering the same material at the same time, and completing the same assessments. She reflects that there was no room for creativity, “there is no, no way the students could move around, so they just, they have to stay at those desks, desks are put in such a way you cannot do any group activities or anything as such.” She suggests that even the teachers discouraged any creativity among their methods as “you cannot think of doing something else, because if I were to do more, then the parents of the other grades would complain, saying that, oh, that teacher did more so I want my child in that class.”

Part of her responsibility was to make sure the student results were uniform; she created a common paper that students wrote in every class section on the same day and at the same time. Additionally, she was responsible for coordinating with the teachers of the boys’ school in order to ascertain common procedures were followed between them: “we exchange with the boys too, teachers who are teaching the boys, so they also, had the same material, because if there was a son and a daughter (laughs), same, they have to be doing the same.” She states, this is simply “how it was” and reflects that it was such a unique schooling experience that she doesn’t know if there is anything like it anywhere else in the world.

Lisa worked for 16 years in this system; flourishing in the professional opportunities that the school provided. As the school was associated with the United Kingdom, teachers were selected from both India and the U.K. and America. She notes that she enjoyed learning from these teachers about different teaching methods and that she grew professionally from the shared professional opportunities, including monthly in-service training and the provision of laptops. Lisa was a leader in her profession at this school within the Indian schooling section, and given a substantial amount of

responsibility. She was firmly established in her professional identity and enjoyed her role in this respect.

However, Lisa was always conscious of her ethnic identity as students were segregated into one of two academic systems: Indian or American. Teachers also were segregated, they taught separately based on their racial background, worked in separate areas of the school, and met in segregated staffrooms.

because we all, we, the syllabus was different, so the Indian syllabus teachers all grouped together, so there's no room for, or uh, that kind of thing, we were already separated into school systems, curriculums, so there was separation, yes, yes, so we had, our bosses, the management, had got those who would like to teach the American syllabus, and they will not even take, even if I were to, I have, I could go teach in the American school, I don't know for what, on what basis they separate us knowing, the opportunity, they will specify there, you should be US educated or UK educated to do this

As well, regardless of abilities, Lisa notes that there was segregation even in pay scales; Indian teachers were paid differently than U.K. teachers.

when it comes to the salary wise, it depended if we taught Indian syllabus we were paid less, thinking the money we sent to India is more, whereas a teacher in UK would be paid more because they think a teacher of the UK needs to be paid more because when she, to pay her bills she needs more money, discrimination

Regardless of the pay inequalities, Lisa felt valued as a teacher for her professional abilities, afforded a high standard of living, and her husband's job was lucrative,

it's a tax free country where we lived, the company provided us with a, a place with a swimming pool, and they gave us a car, the gas was given by them, the electricity bill was paid by them, our kids fees were paid by them, and we would get air tickets to go travel, back to our country, on a vacation, for all of us... we used to get bonuses as such, and I had a maid in the house to help me out, even though I didn't receive much of the salary because it's tax free

Lisa's difficulties in working in Dubai came as her own children grew. As she and her husband were there on work visas, children over 18 are not given a visa: "although we spent most of our time in the Gulf countries, they do not offer citizenship or a settled life, oh, we work there as, on a work visa, and the, and there is a lot of insecurity in life." She faced a choice to send her children away to school, for her daughter, "to go to the university when she was over 18, she finished her schooling I could not send her back to India because there was no one in India so I had to send her to university in America." Then when her son neared the age of 18, she realized she would need to separate her family. As a result, she and her husband determined to immigrate, yet again: "that's the reason we thought of moving to a land which we thought would be, more welcome, and where we can settle down as such."

On immigrating, Lisa knew she would need to adjust her professional focus in a new context, "I really, I wanted an upgrading, I wanted to be familiar with the BC curriculum before I got into the class, into an actual classroom." However, when Lisa found that her credentials were not readily accepted and that she needed to both upgrade coursework as well as complete an 11 month teacher training program, she was dejected. Furthermore, the cost of this transition was exorbitant.

it's expensive, so the money I made in my past teaching profession, I had to spend it all, on becoming a teacher again, not only that, it's not only the courses, the fees money I require, but what about the apartment that I take, an apartment, the car, all this, my living expense

its two and a half years, and for a new person to settle in this country, it's way too much, and after two and a half years, there is no guarantee, no guarantee that I'll be getting job, employed immediately

not making money, there's no replenishing there, and to replenish the amount I need to wait for four years, it took four years, for me, even now, for that money which I am getting, is not enough, not covering it, no it's not enough, so it's kind of losing, it's a task, a losing task, here

Lisa acknowledges that she enjoyed her upgrading and teacher training programs, although she felt them far too lengthy. She appreciated the preparation it provided her, enabling her to adjust her identity as a teacher in a teacher-centred system

to a professional in a student-centred system; she notes that this has changed how she sees herself as a teacher. Further, the exposure she had to specialist teacher presentations on special needs students was valuable. She notes that she felt the process took too long. As she brought so much teaching experience with her, she did not feel a lengthy retraining program was necessary for her.

Her practicum experiences were very straightforward, and she felt that the support she got from the FA's were crucial to her; they gave her a sense of communal support. She does not feel that her ethnic identity was an issue in any way in her practicum, but this may have been due to the fact that she completed her practica in a district where the majority of the student population echoes her ethnic identity. She is in awe of the number of students in each classroom and the opportunities afforded to children in schools in BC.

the classrooms here, can you imagine, the students, even in Dubai we had 40 students in a class, and in here it is just half the number, and the classrooms are so big, so huge, there is room for the kids to move around, and so many activities for them to do, and we are supported, we are supported, everything is given to them, so students can use them, all facilities provided, I kind of think the students, the children are fortunate in this land

She notes that she needed to adjust her methods with a change to a student-centred system of education, "the approach itself is totally different, totally different, and its child-centred." She feels she needed to reflect on herself as a teacher, adjusting her teaching methods in turn adjusted her identity as a teacher, "I had to do right about turn in my approach, but I love that, I love that, it's a nice change." She can blend the best of her previous view of herself as a teacher and her present view.

differently, it is totally, I enjoy it, I do it now in a very different, I can mix now, blend, the best of the East and the West together, see what I learned over there, what activities, those kind of things what I could do, that doesn't change anywhere, now if I have to teach them times table, if I have an activity, times table, what I have been doing there I would write here the same, way, like those kinds of things, I can do more, because I have more support here, so I can use all those

here, and I can blend them, a good mix of the East and the West, so that is what I think

Lisa takes pride in herself as a teacher and likes her new professional identity. She has confidence in her professional abilities, and notes that her confidence has improved because of all she has been through in adapting to the BC system. She notes that she did everything that was required of her to become a teacher in BC, overcoming obstacles and adjusting her professional identity in answering what she fundamentally feels is a spiritual calling:

there is a pride in that, when I think you kind of feel you are a professional, the professional approach is different, its ah, because all throughout it was not for the money, all throughout I had a feeling, I have a missionary call, I have a missionary call to make a difference in the lives of people, and uh, for me I feel the chosen people are the students

When Lisa completed her training and received her certification, she applied to several school districts, but did not receive any work as a TOC. Needing money to support her living expenses, she retained TOC employment at independent, private schools. Several of these schools were for students of South Asian ethnicity, and although she worked at these private schools continually, she could not seem to obtain permanent placements. When requesting explanation of one principal, she was told she couldn't be hired on permanently because of her ethnic background; they only hired white teachers for permanent contracts.

After nearly a year of waiting for a TOC placement in a public school district, she finally received her first call. Since this call, she has been working continually, again priding herself that established teachers are recognizing her professional abilities which is reinforcing her professional identity. However, she bemoans the placement she has on the pay scale, feeling her experience is not valued; she is beginning at zero although she is at a later stage in her life:

the kind of a grievance that I have if I have to say it, like I felt was, 23 years that I worked as a teacher in different countries, well they put me back into zero, saying I have to go through the training, I

obtained a license by studying two years of university here again to get to the standard of BC, and all my experience was not considered anywhere, be it whether it was for my qualification, for professional development, their, they put me through all this again, and then I came to the working, they have not considered my working, and I am at zero

Lisa looks back at how difficult a task it has been to reposition herself as a professional in BC, leaving behind a good lifestyle in coming to, “very different standard of living, very different, and it has been, like, I have, I cried almost every day.” Most challenging for Lisa has been to realize that her extensive background experience is not valued here. She wonders where her history as a teacher has gone, “zero here, so what happened to those 23 years of my teaching, did I not do it in schools?” She marvels at the irony of a Canadian immigration system that only allowed her to immigrate on the basis of her professional standing and experience, only to negate these aspects of her identity as a professional: “I did speak up for that, regarding my experience, but they said, no I needed to have BC experience, how will I have BC experience when I came from elsewhere?”

She mocks the Canadian immigration system for what it emulates, for in her experience, it contradicts these values through its actions in treating people discriminatorily. Teachers from other countries are not valued in the Canadian teaching system although Canada espouses to be a multicultural community: “again, we talk of world citizenship, when we are talking about say, when we are the people especially the teaching profession, we say, oh, we are multicultural, we are multi, we have to accept it is a global citizenship.” Lisa does acknowledge that her inability to find employment is a direct result of discriminatory practices, she says, “I felt discrimination, everywhere, everybody’s white, everybody’s white, and very few in a school, there is one or two, and when I am one of them, I feel in what way am I, why am I chosen for this?” Lisa feels she has been very fortunate in finding employment and she gives thanks to God, as many of her colleagues from the teacher training program have still not retained employment.

The hardships she has endured in repositioning herself as a teacher in BC have left her questioning her self-worth and professional identity, “I feel a lost, undervalued.”

Regardless of the spiritual calling she felt in immigrating, she regrets her decision, stating “I wish there would have been, I don’t know, right now we can say that, but after coming here, we haven’t, we felt we shouldn’t have taken this step, we regret, yes.” She would like the opportunity to take what she has learned back to her previous life, “I wish this change would come, in the countries that I taught before, I would love to take it back, if possible, ya, if possible I would take it totally.”

4.5. Valexy’s Story

Valexy came to BC begrudgingly. She had a moderately successful business she was running with her brother and her husband, and she had a young family. She felt life was going relatively well in Bulgaria, although she acknowledges she lived life day to day, focussing on the short term. Her husband, however, saw no potential for long term opportunities, and thus proposed that they emigrate. With hindsight, she feels he was right:

at first, I didn't want to immigrate, my husband was the driving force for that, but what was the worst, it wasn't the economics, the way we lived, but mostly the, the environment in which, it doesn't matter what you do, you are not powerful enough to change your life, you life depends on political parties which are now in power, depends on relatives which now work here, work there, depends on, and the other thing was the moral values, the moral values was so deteriorated, we didn't know how to educate our kids, what can you tell them when you see what is happening, the people that progress, what moral values they have, basically it becomes the corrupt, the corrupt that get ahead

However, leaving family and friends behind in Bulgaria was very hard for Valexy.

She is happy with her life in BC, having establishing her family in a more settled environment. She is pleased with the opportunities that are available here for her family, “here it’s totally different, you know if you put the effort, if you have the time, if you put in the work, you going from point A to point B, you will, you will arrive there.” Valexy sees that the potential for success here is unbounded, establishing yourself may take time, but opportunities are attainable, “maybe a year later or a year later, depends, this is

personal, it's a little bit of the draw of the life, but you will arrive, ya, you will arrive." She reflects that through immigrating she now has this opportunity, and she is happy she has placed her own children where they too have the potential to do with their lives what they choose.

it's a huge opportunity, it's a huge opportunity, which you do, you, whatever you do, you do it because you want to do it, and because you put the effort into it, and you have the potential to do it, it will be done, you don't depend on anybody, you don't um, you don't, well you need help, but the satisfaction it's such a good experience because you've done it by yourself

In the wake of the Communist overthrow in Bulgaria and on return from a maternity leave, she, with her husband and brother, started a computer company in a growing niche market. As many of the emerging businesses didn't have computers, their company was one of the first to provide such services. Her brother stocked and sold computers, while she was in charge of running classes and teaching customers to use the technology. Her husband worked with the computers in the area of networking and internet service provision; although she comments that it was 1996 and the internet was really slow. Although the business was going well, the political system was corrupt and running your own business was a precarious undertaking, "with all corruption and moral values."

Valexyl felt she used her natural talents for teaching in their business venture; she established classes for business groups as well as provided one-on-one instruction. She feels this was a natural role for her as she sees herself as a teacher, regardless of the area of focus. She remembers that when she was younger, she played the role of teacher to her younger cousins and this natural inclination was noted by her uncle, "when I was little I was teaching my cousins to read, I taught my cousins to read, and then my uncle told me, you have to be a teacher." This inspired her to want to be a teacher; however, as both her mother and father were engineers, as well as her boyfriend at the time, she felt pushed to become an engineer. It was understood that if you became an engineer you would then have opportunities, "everybody was engineer, you know what, if you are engineer you can do anything."

She recalls a saying in her country, “as they say it, if you are not good you can teach it.” This, she feels, reflects on the education system she went through, where neither teachers nor the profession were valued, therefore choosing teaching as a profession was not common; professionals defaulted into teaching. She excelled in math and physics and so, after grade seven, she needed to choose the high school she would go to as the schools were streamed by academic focus. She was accepted into the school that specialized in math, but also in Spanish. Looking back she regrets not having gone to a school that taught English, “I was in a high school for Spanish, I knew fluently the Spanish, I love the Spanish, now I had to learn the English, why, if I knew, I would have go for English (laughs)...who knew?”

Valexey completed her university education during a five year period of political turmoil. So the jobs that were available when she entered university were no longer viable when she finished her studies. She completed her university education in engineering as a company sponsored her education; otherwise the cost would have barred her from attending. When she graduated, employment in engineering was no longer an option as the company that sponsored her no longer existed due to the political situation, and so Valexy took the opportunity to train as a teacher. Teaching jobs were always an option; however, the salary was very low.

The social climate in the country had changed through her university years, and Valexy felt this through her practicum experiences as she found the norms and standards for student behavior had declined.

I was disappointed when I went for the practicum, because when I was in high school, this was again before the changes, before the big change, we had to wear uniforms, we had, um, um, we had to be home by a certain amount of, by seven time, drinking, smoking, there were rules around, on the street

disciplined, completely different, completely different, and by the time I was in university, then I went back the practicum, those kids were not the kids I was, I remember from five years ago, totally different dress code, totally different uh, you know, behavior, behavior wise, I was shocked, totally shocked

She found the education system she was familiar with, and to which she intended to return as a teacher, had changed due to political pressures. She reflects that her role as a teacher was of an authority figure in a teacher-directed system. She noted that students, “cannot speak out loud if it is not with your point of view, you know, it’s not really allowed, it’s not really encouraged.” Students were not allowed any personal expression in contradiction with the teacher, who in turn, as a government employee, necessarily reflected the current political opinions. She was so disappointed with the teaching system that she left it to go into business with her brother, starting a small company selling, networking, fixing, marketing, advertising, and teaching computer skills.

On immigrating, Valexy had determined to yet again pursue teaching. It was her husband’s influence that encouraged her.

when we actually decided to immigrate my husband was saying you have to be a teacher there, because the teacher had, different, different status, different, uh, you know, in the society, more valuable, as a profession, and when we arrived, actually in Toronto, one of the first thing I did was to check how I become a teacher

It took Valexy and her husband only a year and a half to complete the immigration process, it was expedited as they used an immigration lawyer and they had some funds from their computer business. She reflects that immigrating was a difficult path; however, she is grateful that she and her husband made this choice, “I will never regret I did it, because I think that’s, that’s one of the best things, after my family, my kids, it’s one of the best things I did.” She feels her children now have opportunities they would never have had otherwise. Valexy’s one regret is that she left family behind. Her father has since died, but she has been able to go back and visit others.

Although Valexy does not feel a strong spiritual connection to a religion, Bulgaria was an atheist country due to the political situation while she was growing up, she does feel a strong spiritual bond to her culture. She considers herself raised in an Orthodox tradition and celebrates, even now, traditions around holidays and name day celebrations. She feels her cultural roots are an inseparable part of her identity, and has established firm connections with the Bulgarian community here. She works countless volunteer hours for a non-profit society that runs a local Bulgarian K-5 school on

weekends. She feels that having her children exposed to the cultural connections is an integral part of their upbringing.

definitely, I want my kids to know, to know the language and uh, even not only seven million people are talking, speaking this language, you know, it's good to have it, it's good to keep it, it's good to know where they come from

She takes great pride in her efforts in running the cultural school, noting that the school has been licensed to provide school certificates for grade level completion through the Bulgarian ministry.

Through the Bulgarian community, Valexy fulfills her cultural and social needs. She has social connections and recreational activities within this community that help her connect with both information and resources; these connections were extremely valuable when she first arrived in BC.

specifically at the very beginning, information, just, everyday life information, some information was useful, that's always the case, definitely we help each other, it's a networking which we help each, I dance with this community, I have dance class, well not dance classes, but it's kind of getting together with friends and with friendship, it become a non-profit society, so (laughs), it is important

Valexy comments that the friendships, the parties and celebrations she has in her life are all intricately tied to the Bulgarian community. She values the opportunity to converse in her own language with others of the same cultural background; there is an ease of communication that doesn't happen in her English speaking world: "keeping the culture together, you just, you know, the jokes you can understand better (laughs), simple like this."

Valexy was not able to find any information through her cultural community regarding pursuing teaching in BC as no one she knew had gone through the process. She reflects that part of her difficulty in finding information outside of her community was that her English skills were poor and she could neither ask the right questions, nor understand the answers she was given. She wishes she had known someone Bulgarian

who could have seen her through this difficult process; today she mentors others in her community who hope to pursue teaching.

I didn't know anybody who knew how to do it, so everything was, kind of asking questions and, the problem was my English wasn't good enough, so even when I went to ask questions I'm asking and (laughs) I didn't understand the answer really well on many occasions, so it was the hard way, it could have been better if someone could have helped me, but I didn't know what to ask on the other side, it's like, you don't know, specifics

With the help of her husband's knowledge of the internet, she was able to locate the BCCT. She tried to communicate through writing, but found her skills deficient, so she went directly to the BCCT: "I went in person, because the writing wasn't, it's still, the worst part, from the language (laughs) so, I went in person to ask, they, they wanted me the application, I applied, and they said, okay." She then waited for pre-approval of her courses; a process she did not understand. She recalls the process being long and onerous, "all these process, like, many trips, many trips." Eventually her transcripts were adjudicated and she was referred to a local university to complete course upgrading and teacher training. She felt it was only her persistence in determining to be a teacher and in doggedly pursuing information that got her through the process.

Valexy needed to earn a living while pursuing the recertification process. Through this time she worked at various jobs. Her first job was working in a grocery store for two years. She felt this to be valuable training in everyday conversation skills, and in practicing English. After two years she secured a job in traffic control, it provided higher pay which was important for supporting her family; however, it didn't give her the experience with the language she felt crucial to her future success as a teacher. She reflects that she wishes she could have had the opportunity to find a job that met both of her needs, financial and pragmatic. When reflecting on what she could have done differently, she is happy with her decisions, but wishes the process of recertification could have been faster, "many things could be different, many things could be different, small decisions make big changes, but in general I love my life (laughs), in general, so I would know what I can do to become, become faster a certified teacher."

When she entered the teacher-training program at a local university she was excited by the social, collaborative environment of the program. Immediately she was immersed in an educational system quite unlike what she was used to, as she was enveloped into a cohort on whom she grew to rely. She comments that on assignments, she helped her colleagues out with computer aspects while they, in turn, helped with proofreading her assignments. Relationships became key to how she works as a professional, commenting, “it’s the relationships after all.”

Through her practicum experiences, she was placed in a small community teaching a modified math program to students of various abilities; the school was small and so students from the alternative program were placed in classes with regular program students: “so all of them put together, but really with, some with behaviour, some with different disabilities, all put together.” Her previous teaching experience did not prepare her for working in diversified classrooms, but she felt her teacher training here addressed these concerns. Most importantly, she felt strongly supported by the university faculty and the school staff, again, realizing that these relationships made all the difference to her practicum success.

Nearly five years after immigrating, Valexy received her BC teaching certification. Very quickly after completing her certification, Valexy found work as a TOC. She also spent some time working in a private school. She surmises that her skills with computers are what made her more marketable as a teacher, “I have this multiple skills for different areas, if I had only math, whoa, it wouldn’t be that easy, or just one area, no.” Valexy is presently working in a continuing contract position teaching computer skills and media arts. She found that repositioning herself as a teacher in BC challenged her conception of herself as a teacher.

Valexy felt there were cultural stereotypes and language boundaries she needed to overcome. She realized quickly that there were norms of behavior with which she was unfamiliar, she comments that there would

be cultural conflict, cultural conflicts, cultural difficulties, in terms of what is appropriate, what is not, to find the, as I said, you know, the philosophy of education in Bulgaria when I was in high school and here is totally different, so, it’s more like finding the bearings what

is okay what is not okay to do, where is the limit, where is exactly the limit

She experienced cultural conflicts most when teaching in the private system where she felt that as a result of the student population being more homogeneous in ethnic background, her culture, accent and language abilities came under scrutiny. She recalls being challenged by one parent who felt her child's marks were reflective not of the child's ability, but of the child's difficulty in understanding Valexy due to her accent. Valexy feels that the administration did not support her as they allowed the student to move to a different teacher for that subject. Valexy was made aware of her cultural identity and felt it was challenged not only by the parent, but also by the administration. She comments how her professional and personal identity "collided." However, her identity as a proficient teacher was reaffirmed when the student later retook the same examinations, after being taught by a Canadian-born teacher, and achieved the same results.

Language ability is what Valexy undeniably attests to as the largest barrier to her teaching. She believes that others may question her accent or language use, and this may also discount how she is seen as a professional. She comments bitterly that "the perception of the people that if you cannot really express yourself in this language, you don't know what you doing that is my belief." She felt undervalued as a professional when her language was questioned. She states she may have difficulty expressing herself in English; however, that shouldn't reflect on her knowledge of the subject, nor her ability as a teacher. She says, "it's hard to prove your knowledge in certain areas when you don't know how to express it, or you have to express it, but, still with the language, still with the accent, still with, not perfectly, not fluently." She also acknowledges, since coming to BC later in life, that her English language challenges will always be a part of who she is, "I mean English will be a challenge forever, totally, the language, the language."

Valexy feels strongly that her cultural identity has reinforced her identity as a teacher. Although she feels like she is an outsider, being a foreign-trained teacher, she states this fact helps her build relationships with students.

we talk about the immigrating process, where they come from, what happened, and what I used to build this relationship, is I was like you, my kids was like you, went to ESL and everything, so I know what it is, I know what it is, and this makes us closer

The biggest change in how Valexy sees herself now, as a teacher in the BC public school system, has been in the area of relationships. She feels building relationships with students is a key aspect to her identity as a teacher. She now sees her role as a teacher less as an instructor imparting knowledge, than as an individual who builds relationships with students. Valexy sees teaching is “not that much the knowledge, I mean knowledge is here, it’s moving, and it’s changing all the time but it’s about building relationships.” She has changed from a teacher who solely taught curricular knowledge to a teacher who fundamentally believes in relational teaching, “it’s more relationship, more than knowledge, I know the knowledge, I’m not teaching what I know most.”

Valexy is passionate about her new identity as a teacher. She loves working in a system that allows her to build relationships with students, while teaching in her curricular area. As an elective course teacher she is proud of her abilities in connecting with students as she sees many of them choose to take her courses year after year. While Valexy has no desire to return to her previous country and lifestyle, she does note that her culture and language separate her from other teachers here. She has realized that it takes time for her colleagues to accept her, and her relationships with them have improved over time. However, Valexy is always conscious of her ‘otherness’--her language and accent that make her who she is in this new context. She has changed from who she was, but does not feel totally accepted for who she is now. She summarizes her experiences in saying the “hard thing is, how can say that, you know, you grow something new, but you don’t have roots, sometimes, you know, you feel you belong here, but not fully, and you don’t belong there anymore.”

4.6. Katia’s Story

Katia emigrated from Eastern Europe thirteen years ago. She was raised in a small town with two siblings. Although she acknowledges that her family is “not super educated,” all of the children attended university as her parents saw education crucial to their future. Her parents are still alive and living in the same town. Her brother also lives

there working as a director in the forest industry. Her sister studied physiotherapy, but is no longer alive. Katia's experiences throughout her life have been coloured by the Communist system in which she lived growing up.

Under Communist rule, attending church services was illegal; however, people in the town still attended church and Katia believes this made religious beliefs more entrenched, "we were not allowed to attend church, but we would still go." Although Katia does not attend church here as often as she would like to, she still feels a connection with the Orthodox faith in which she was raised, "yes we are religious but we don't attend regular services, we have religion mostly in our spirit." Passing on her cultural roots to her child is very important to Katia, as she comments that she is raising her son here as a ---- and a Canadian. She states that she tries, "to teach him our ways." Her son is being raised to be fluent in ---- as well as English and French, and she follows ---- customs around celebrations. Furthermore, Katia returns with her son to Eastern Europe often so that they can connect with family and their culture, "yes, that's priority, top on my list," and she returns at least twice a year." Having those connections are an essential aspect of Katia's ability to live here as she feels a deep separation from her family as a result of immigrating; her sister's death has extended this sense of loss. Connecting with her culture enhances her sense of self, and these connections are extremely important for her life here.

When Katia completed her schooling in her town, she determined that she would attend university. Katia doesn't recall any prior decision to enter teaching just that under communism her options were very limited, and the pedagogical university was within commuting distance from her home. She subsequently completed the university program, and since her specialty was in teaching French, she was hired immediately by a high-school language school. She reflects that the school system in her home country was "disciplined" and academically focused. She comments that "the expectations are very high there, there is a lot of work that they are required to do." She worked in the school system for only a short period of time as she received a number of other job offers in areas other than teaching.

Katia applied for immigration right after the Communist system was overthrown, as she felt there were few options available to her on graduation. She comments, with a

sigh, that communism really framed her life, “the seed is planted under communism, and mainly I wanted to be free, to explore, and to travel, and just to explore.” Katia accepted a job offer after her initial teaching experience; she became an editor of a national news agency. Well established in her job, she finally received emigration approval years after her initial application. She wasn’t then sure she still wanted to emigrate. At that time, the Communist system was overthrown, and she was experiencing fulfillment in her professional role, “at that point I wasn’t even sure I wanted to leave anymore, there was no communism and things, at that point, they started to move.” However, the distrust engendered through living in the Communist system left her mistrusting the new political situation and her future possibilities. Katia determined to take the opportunity to emigrate when it arose, knowing she could always return to her home country, but may never again have the opportunity to leave.

Katia chose to come to BC as she had a distant cousin living in the lower mainland with whom she could stay for a period. She remembers distinctly the day she arrived as a “rainy, ugly day,” and this metaphorically frames her experiences here. She recalls poignantly how hard her initial period of time was here. She was finally able to obtain work at a coffee shop in the downtown area. However, the first day she started there was a city-wide transit strike and she couldn’t commute to the job. With the strike lasting months, Katia found she was again unemployed.

Katia looks back bitterly at this time in her life. Coming on her own to a new country, after having met with the personnel in the Canadian embassy in her country, she had high expectations that she feels were never fulfilled. She recalls meeting with Canadian employment services and found the staff provided little direction or information; they were not aware of the processes she needed to follow to pursue teaching recertification. She notes that it took her a number of years to find this information on her own.

Two significant aspects of her immigration experiences have deeply wounded her even until now in her life. The first was in meeting with employment services she was told that if she hoped to be successful in Canada she would need to change her name. She felt this to be an attack on her ethnic identity, her culture, and her background, and she herself never got over it. To her consternation, when she complied

and used an Anglicized version of her name, she suddenly began getting calls from employers.

The second aspect of her experiences that has left her bitter is that she found that when employers received her resume, she was turned down for many jobs as she was overqualified. She answered an advertisement for a local university research project and obtained employment as a research assistant for a six month period at a crucial time for her financially. Once this period was over, again employment services directed her to trim her resume as she tried to find employment in her recent area of professional expertise. Katia felt through these experiences that her personal and professional identities were not accepted. She was no longer a teacher, not employable as an editor, and certainly not accepted as an Eastern European immigrant.

While she searched for employment, she became entrenched in the Eastern European community. She became very involved in volunteer work; this connected her with her culture and a community of acceptance. She volunteered for an ethnic newspaper and used her skills in journalism there. She found this opportunity by looking through newspapers, and when she contacted the source, she was given an interview. With the support and encouragement of the manager of the newspaper who hired her, Katia pursued employment options. She feels that the government employment services were not only detrimental to her identity development, but pragmatically not helpful in addressing her needs. Through the support she received through the cultural connections with her volunteer work she came into contact with an online advertisement for a French language teacher, and so she applied.

Katia was offered the position, teaching French at a private school. Although she still had not attempted to negotiate the recertification process, she was hired as the school sought on her behalf a letter of permission, and the letter was quickly forthcoming. She realized that the letter gave her only temporary permission, but after a year at this school she decided that she no longer wanted to be teaching, "after a year, I didn't want to go back to teaching."

Katia found herself employed as a French teacher for students from grade 5-10 as well as having extra duties assigned to her, in a system entirely new to her. She was

given a grade 8 homeroom and duties associated with religious education. She found this cultural adjustment hard. She already felt her immigration had undermined her own cultural identity and now she was immersed in a foreign culture and religion. Her teaching experience here was challenging on many levels, and on reflection she decided she only survived the year by being strong.

Katia was shocked by the student behaviour she encountered. She was used to a disciplined system in her home country and here she found students openly challenged her. She felt they challenged her on the basis of her culture and accent. Students, she states, were very aggressive, especially the older students with whom she worked. However, she doesn't blame the students as she states they are just kids. She feels the system lacks discipline, and the students, "they just need more guidance." She feels there is a cultural divide between her expectations of student behaviour and the expectations for behaviour in BC schools.

In repositioning herself as a teacher in this context, Katia was discouraged mostly by the level of expectation for student achievement. She was dismayed by the lack of engagement students had in their learning, the apathy of the system for student learning, and the lack of involvement of parents in their children's learning. She marvels at the irony of French being an official language in this country and she, as a student in her home country, took studying French far more seriously than did any of the students she was teaching here. Both she and her brother are fluent in French, studying it since the second grade. There students valued learning, while here she sees apathy toward learning. She holds great respect for the school system in her home country, appreciating its discipline and high expectations. As a result, she cannot reconcile her identity as a teacher within the BC school system.

Katia will not pursue teaching as a profession in BC; she chooses to maintain her professional identity as a teacher in the system in her home country and has no desire to adapt her professional identity to this new context. She feels here she wouldn't be a teacher, but simply a babysitter.

Katia doesn't expect that the public school system is any different than the private school she experienced. Her own child attends public school and she works

diligently with her child's teacher in requesting homework assignments. She works with her child almost daily to complete homework assignments, work that other students are not required to do, as well as teaching him her native language. She sees that in the BC school system, students that age are not given homework, but she compares her son's educational level with that of a child in her native country at the same age and demands higher expectations than what is required in the BC school system.

Katia has been employed in her current full time office position for many years now, but finds the work unfulfilling and lacking the challenge she would like in her life. She feels that her options for employment here have been limited by her cultural background and language, especially by her accent. She notes that, "I have an accent and people, people do seem to acknowledge the fact that you do have an accent." Furthermore, she feels that as a result of her accent people treat her differently. She would like to find employment in journalism, but feels that because English is her second language, her "chances of being a successful editor...are probably zero."

Katia is settled with her husband and her child. She does not see herself professionally as a teacher; nor does she have a professional identity attached to what she is doing now. Professionally, she feels unsatisfied. She acknowledges that she has strong cultural and ethnic connections that she refuses to let go of, regardless of how she feels she has been persuaded here to do. She knows that this is where she needs to be to offer her child the many opportunities that are available to him as a Canadian. However, when asked what she would have done differently, Katia states unequivocally, "I wouldn't come, no, I wouldn't have come."

4.7. Lina's Story

Lina emigrated from a small city in Western Ukraine with her husband and two young children. She was raised in a small apartment in the city with an older sister and both her parents. She recalls that her mother had other career plans for her and her sister as no one in the family was a teacher:

we don't have teachers in our family cause my mom she is um, she is working at the hospital, and she really wanted us to probably follow that path but it's probably, just, hard when I went, I felt it's mine

and I really wanted, you know, to be a teacher, I understood this, just in school, it's my desire

She notes that even though she is sure it was really hard on her mother, she chose not to enter a health profession. However, both she and her sister determined to be teachers and her sister has spent several years teaching in Ukraine, having just taken on the duties of vice-principal.

Lina and her sister loved school. Lina recalls how she completed her schooling with a gold medal; received only on completing her entire schooling with A letter grades. With two B letter grades you were awarded a silver medal. She feels her grades were strongly a result of excellent teaching, "I got very good teachers since beginning in my country I am just lucky to have good teachers." With a strong focus on her schooling and studies and influenced by strong teachers, she followed her older sister into teacher training, attending the pedagogical university. After five years of university, again successful in her studies through achieving mostly A grades, she states she was invited to teach in a school in her city.

In her position at this school, she taught languages: German, Ukrainian, and English to grades 2-11, mostly from grade four on. She states that the educational system there is like the private system in BC, all the grades are together in one building. Although grades 1-3 are separated, there is no kindergarten. Until grade four, students have one teacher for all subjects. From grades 4-11 students have specialist teachers for each subject. Students there must learn at least one second language throughout their schooling with complete fluency by school completion. The second language a student learned was the school's decision, based on the number of students and teachers. She states that in her school, students in each grade were divided in half, with half learning German and the other half learning English. Second language learning varied with each school. In some schools students needed to learn English, German, and Polish; and in another school, students may need to learn English and French.

Lina states that the school system there is very academically focused, and there are high expectations for student learning. She feels children were often overwhelmed and tired, "because it's a lot, a lot, of homework, they are super tired in school and they are really tired at home because they have to work a lot and study a lot." She says that

younger children see the older children working so they cannot wait to get to school as they see it as an important part of their life growing up; however, once attending school, they find it very difficult:

in Ukraine children really excited to go to school, when they are six, oh it's a nice change they are thinking, but when they go to grade 1 they feel right away the difficulty, the study difficulty, and then when they need to go, let's say grade 2, they are scared of school, they are scared because it's very, very hard

She states that the heavy academic load translated to the teacher's workload. She would spend 2-3 hours nightly getting ready for the next day--writing formal lesson plans and assessments, and this did not include her marking load. The educational system demanded students be constantly evaluated and it was mandated teachers hold formal assessments weekly as student achievement directly reflected on the teacher's ability and continued employment.

At this school she met a history teacher who would later become her husband. With two teachers, finances were difficult. She states that classrooms were poorly equipped and teachers were responsible for procuring materials used within their classes. She states minimal funds were provided, and again, teachers were assessed on the materials they provided for their students. Both she and her husband found the workload heavy with a young family and a salary not commensurate with their efforts.

in Ukraine, because you know, salary wise, life is very difficult, you have your passion, you want to teach, you want to, um, give all the best to children, but materials, it's really, really difficult to live, and you see me and my husband we were teachers right, and we were trying our best, but still was very, very difficult, the family to live, and then we have two children

As a result, she and her husband considered emigrating and Canada was an obvious choice as they had some connections here.

Although she has relatives in Alberta and Toronto, she and her husband determined not to be a burden on their extended family and chose to emigrate to BC. Originally, they thought to immigrate to Toronto, not only because of their familial

connections, but due to the fact that Toronto has a large Ukrainian community. Their decision to come to BC was facilitated by a close neighbor who himself emigrated to BC. On a return visit to Ukraine, he told them great stories about BC and offered support for them on their arrival. She states that he described BC as, “the best place and you know, he pictured the BC so nicely and then he promised to help us a little bit at the beginning, I think that’s why mostly we decided to go here.” The immigration process took them about two years. She felt it was expedited because both she and her husband were professionals.

On arriving in BC, they immediately established themselves in a Ukrainian Orthodox church because, as Lina states, “we have religion in our heart.” She notes that in Ukraine, people are very religious, unlike people here. She says Sundays, for her family, are unquestioningly days spent at church, “you know, Sunday I couldn’t sit at home I need to be at church because it’s giving me some energy, to live probably.” She feels this dedication to her spirituality and cultural traditions come from growing up under the Communist rule of the Soviet Union. She states that in Ukraine you could not attend church, and certainly as a teacher, employed by the government, attending church was out of the question. She states that people still attended church and cultural traditions became even more firmly entrenched in Ukrainian people. She feels that now, without the Soviet Union in control of Ukraine, even more “people going back to their religion, back to their roots.”

Social connections she has made through the church here have made a difference in her life. When they first came to BC, her connections through the church were instrumental in helping her pursue recertification in BC.

people help me a lot, some amazing people help me a lot, a lot, when I was in the system, they were helping me, any questions I had, they were helping me, when I had to do writing, they would help me, a lot, a lot of people they help me, so it’s community that is important, I’m very thankful

Through the church community, she was referred to the BCCT where she attended an initial information session for immigrant teachers. She recalls it as a valuable experience, “they explained every single step, it was very clear, you can ask any

questions, very, very nice, so I got that information from the session.” She was then directed to a university upgrading program and teacher training for foreign-trained teachers.

At that time, she appreciated how onerous her immigration process and was grateful she already had all the necessary paperwork and documentation from her country. The only thing required of her was to obtain 30 hours of volunteer experience here. Although she thought this would be an easy task, offering to work for free, she now sees this as the most difficult part of her recertification experience. She recalls that no school she approached was interested in having her volunteer, “I could not, I couldn’t, I just walked to different, schools, and there was a huge line up and lots and lots of people, and I was about the give up.” The district in which she lived informed her that it was a two year waiting list for volunteering within the district. Then, when she thought there was no chance of obtaining a volunteer opportunity, she found support through a church connection.

no chances at all, and then, the same thing, through our community, through Ukrainian community, one teacher uh, she’s teaching a language, very nice teacher, in elementary school, and we just talking about it, and she said let me talk to my principal, and she said yes you can come

Although she had to travel to a district a long distance from her home, she was grateful to have the opportunity, commenting that just obtaining the volunteer hours was far more difficult than she would have ever expected, “for me I think that was the most difficult, the volunteer, to get into the school, and I was surprised.”

Lina thoroughly enjoyed the teacher training program, finding it interesting, albeit intense. She and her husband arranged for her mother to come from Ukraine to live with them through this period to help her with her children. She found through the year long program that she needed a great deal of time to complete assignments and work on lesson planning and she was grateful for her mother’s support. She comments that she “had maybe 2-3 hours’ sleep each day.” Although she was told on entering the program that she needed to quit her job in order to put in the time required of her through this

period, she was unable to do so financially. She still worked 2-3 times a week in the evenings and on weekends in a retail position.

In the program, she found the professors “amazing, very nice, and you know they were slow in walking us into the system, they did not repeat everything we knew, they just were giving us you know, BC stuff, for me that was amazing year.” For her, the year was a valuable experience and she enjoyed her first practicum experience, finding her school associate helpful, openly instructive, and encouraging. Her second practicum experience did not go as well. She was placed with an older male teacher in whom she felt she couldn’t “see that passion in him anymore.” Although she believes he was a dedicated teacher earlier in his career, she suspects he took on a student teacher to obtain tuition credits. Her final practicum was in the district she lived, so it was much more convenient. However, in this, her long practicum, she fully experienced the complexity of BC’s diversified classrooms.

She comments that although in her last few years teaching in Ukraine, many families were moving back to Ukraine from Russia and she needed to teach students to speak Ukrainian; they spoke Russian and she did not see this as a big challenge. In her practicum, she had a classroom of students with behavioural and special needs’ concerns. She did not have to address these needs in her previous teaching experiences in the Ukraine. Furthermore, other than Russian students, her experiences did not include working with students from varied cultural backgrounds. For her, the biggest challenge for her teaching in the BC system was to learn how to work in classrooms with a highly diverse group of students.

it was quite different, I had to learn, you know, different religion, different attitudes, different cultures, not easy for me at the beginning, and then, um, what was really difficult, because we did not have children with disabilities, in our classrooms, they are in separate schools, they have specialists to take care, so that was my big challenge, I had to um, read a lot, you know, I had some seminars, how to help these children, how to involve them, cause I felt it’s not fair, if I’m teaching students, right, I’m giving them, my heart and these children, they somehow aside, and so for me it was challenge to be fair to everyone

As challenging as she finds the BC education system, she really likes it. She feels it a more natural system than she is used to where students are forced to learn, rather than enjoying learning. She feels “it’s more natural, for me that word natural is their taking information and it’s slowly going in, because in our system, it’s a bit push, they make children, they pushing them, here it’s goes more natural.” With her own children she appreciates their ability to learn a number of curricular areas without being rushed. At first she was concerned that their academic levels would fall below those of children in Ukraine, but she sees that students here acquire the same knowledge, they just learn it more gradually. As high school is getting more and more difficult for her oldest, she states she has “no worries anymore.”

Lina has now worked as a TOC for three and a half years and is greatly enjoying the experience. At first she was fearful of the idea of teaching in a variety of situations, uncertain of her own abilities as a teacher in this system, “I was thinking I couldn’t be teaching in different schools, different teachers, different students, different principals, and after first teaching day, old fears just go away, simple, I can do it, it’s easy, no more fears.” She now finds the ability to learn from different teaching methods, to observe and learn, of great benefit to becoming a teacher in BC. She is comfortable in her new identity as a teacher in BC’s diverse educational system, but feels she still needs to learn more. She reads and attends seminars to facilitate her knowledge. As she states, “for me it’s each single day it’s a learning day.” She expects she will be continuing as a teacher on call for some time yet, but welcomes the opportunities to expand her knowledge.

She does not yet feel completely confident in her new teaching identity. Primarily this is because of her language ability: she states, “I still need to work on my language, and the more I speak, the more I read, the more I work on myself, it’s getting better, um, definitely need to take classes.” Although she has a strong background in English, she sees she needs to further master the language. She hasn’t felt that her culture, language ability, or accent has had any negative impact on her identity as a teacher; instead, she feels it has been of benefit. She has found through her experiences here that she has a unique connection with students. Beyond their initial interest in her background and accent, the students she encounters she is better able to connect with as a result of her experiences.

can help some children, so many uh, so many children from immigrant families, maybe, maybe we can understand them better, I am thinking, and I had a lot of chances in schools to help, you know, some children were here for a week, maybe two maybe three, so they still had that scared feeling at the beginning, and I was really happy when I was able to help them, even sometimes, you know, a few Russian language or Ukrainian, just to help them, and I was really happy

On reflection, Lina is very pleased with having completed her immigration and recertification requirements, and recounts how difficult a process it was.

that was a very very hard time, very tough time for me, especially that year when I went to university I had maybe two three hours only for sleep, it was very, very hard, but I knew I had a goal, I needed to finish it, and I did it

She suggests that anyone wanting to pursue recertification in BC should make certain that this is a passion for them, “you need to feel for yourself.” She warns that language competence is a barrier, “because if you come with no language at all then you come to school, you will spend extra, how many years, just learning the language, it takes time.” However, she acknowledges if you have the desire to accomplish this goal, knowing full well the obstacles, it is not an easy process, but it is “doable.”

4.8. Maros’ Story

Maros spent four years in England working as an au pair prior to immigrating to Canada. After her university studies, opportunities in the Czech Republic were limited and she found with a university education in teaching she could readily secure a position as a caregiver abroad. There were no other opportunities for her, “I couldn’t apply for any other job because Slovakia was not part of the European Union so that’s the only job we could have at that time.” Although she wanted to stay in England, as Slovakia was not part of the European Union she was not able to stay in England, nor able to apply for any other visas on her return to Slovakia.

She was raised in the Czech Republic, the middle sister of three, by parents whose backgrounds were in teaching. Maros’ mother worked as an elementary school

teacher for 12 years until a law was passed that saw her lose her position because she did not have the requisite educational qualifications. Maros recalls this being very sad for her mother as “she really loved teaching.” Her mother ran an afterschool care program for children where she continued teaching. Maros loved to go to the afterschool program where she admired her mother’s teaching skills.

every day after school I would go to um, after school activities, what is it called, after school care, and my mom was the teacher there, you know, just watching her, how she is teaching, how kids, um, you know, loved her, and ah, it was just a great influence

Maros cannot determine just when she decided to be a teacher herself, as she sees this as an integral part of her identity. Both her sisters, as well, decided to be teachers; her older sister is presently a vice principal. Her younger sister was devastated when she did not pass the exams required for university entrance, even taking the exams twice, “so she gave up on the dream which was really sad, cause we were all teachers.” Her parents, she remembers, were always strongly supportive of her goal to become a teacher, even in Canada.

my parents were supportive all the way, you know, my mom was always pushing me to become a teacher and I had that in me as well, which is always nice to have, teacher in the family, and uh, and have mentors and uh, follow the dreams, so here I am, Canadian teacher, my family is so proud (laughs)

Maros notes that many teachers she encountered during her schooling encouraged her to become a teacher. However, she acknowledges though that some of her teachers she were harsh. She jokingly adds, “some of the teachers, um, I’m still having nightmares about.” She states that the system was teacher-directed and students were expected to be fully compliant. She recalls that a few of her teachers were pleasant and supportive; unlike the teaching system in which they worked. She recalls her mother’s characteristics and emulated her as well as the teachers she remembers fondly. She states that she was set on becoming a teacher, “I didn’t want any other profession.” Although, as a young child, she saw becoming a teacher as a far off dream, “I never, I mean, I, um, I never thought it would, um, it would become true.” Getting into university was difficult and she doubted her ability to accomplish this, “when

you are in elementary school, secondary school, you just think university is something huge and you don't know if you can achieve that, go through that, six years of studies, but I did that." She completed university studies, returned from four years in England, and secured a position teaching at the primary level in the village school.

She both loved and was overwhelmed by her first year teaching. She was teaching first grade, and she laughs, since they don't have kindergarten, it was "first time for the children, first time for the teacher." She found learning the material and keeping up was a hectic process; but, she was mentored by another first grade teacher who was there "when I needed help she was there to help me, and for anything, you know, to do with report cards, parent teacher interviews." Mentorship was a key component of the system and Maros saw this support as crucial to helping her survive the year, especially with the numerous administrative observations of her teaching that were required. Again, Maros saw her mother's influence as key to forming her identity as a teacher.

she was grade one teacher at the same time, that was great, so you know, coming home talking about how would you do this, how would you do that, talking, what do you think about this, what do you think about that, that was such a great help

In hindsight, Maros criticizes her teaching methods at the time, as she felt she was regimented in a teacher-directed system. She wishes she were a different teacher through this period. Although, she recognizes that she did not have any other identity; she was raised in the teacher-directed system that was perpetuated through her teaching training and work experiences.

I taught, because I didn't know any other way, and I never thought there could be any other way, so basically, teacher center which I'm pinching myself now, I could have known better, I could have, you know, bring in different ways, but you know, everybody was teaching that same way, you don't know another way, so you teaching the same way

Maros recalls little diversity in the student population as special needs students did not attend the school. However, she remembers being challenged by gypsy children. She comments that this is a societal problem in Slovakia. These children, she

states, are “difficult to teach, um, they are not ready for, um, they don’t come ready for teach, for learning, for a day, um, most of the times hungry or, um, hygiene is not the way it should be.” The school system there did not provide teaching assistance in any way, there was “zero help in the class.” Maros felt that she was challenged by these students.

She was particularly challenged by one child who did not meet the learning outcomes. Maros despairingly reflects that she failed one child. To this day, Maros is haunted by this decision, “I feel guilty until today that I’ve done it.” She states it was such a difficult decision to make she couldn’t do it on her own; a team of teachers assessed the child and came to the same conclusion. However, she still experiences guilt as she was the one who “had to write that report card, I had to talk to the parent, I had to face the parent, it’s, it’s haun, haunts me till today.” She states that given the teacher she is now, she would “would never do it again, no I would never do it again.”

Other than this particular situation, Maros thoroughly enjoyed her first year’s teaching experience. However, after being in England for four years, she realized that with the compensation she received teaching in Slovakia, she would have a very hard time having the lifestyle she would like; “it’s just the salary is very low, the living standard is high, and the salary for teachers is uh, low.” She wanted to continue working on her fluency in English and so the United States or Canada seemed an obvious choice; again seeking work as a caregiver. She found the US would only allow her to stay for a year, and after being in England she knew one year was not enough time. She realized that she could work in Canada for up to three years and apply for landed immigrant status, and eventually Canadian citizenship if she so chose. Immigrating to Canada offered more choices. She worked through a nanny agency in Slovakia that placed people only in the Vancouver area. She couldn’t afford to travel and so working as a nanny offered her security, a way to continue learning English, and afforded her a better salary than did teaching in Slovakia. She saw it as “more secure, and as a woman, you know, coming to new country, not knowing anybody, I thought that would be a better way for me to start.”

Maros was fortunate in that the family she came to work for had previously had a nanny from Slovakia. So, Maros was introduced to her; they are still good friends.

Through this connection she also met with a number of other Slovakian people. Some of them were teachers and knew the process for becoming a teacher in BC. Although Maros came to BC with hopes of becoming a teacher it had seemed like an insurmountable task.

it was in back of my mind, I, at that time, I thought it was unreachable, it was just so far away, cause I have to um, work for 3 years, I have to apply for permanent residency, it would take another 3 years from that to get Canadian citizenship, so it was just such a, it was such a long way to get it, and I thought it would never happen, you know, and it, it did

The Slovakian teachers she met here encouraged her to pursue recertification, “so through the friends, I knew where to go and what to ask for, and what to do.” Having connections with other Slovakian people has been crucial to Maros’ integration into the Canadian context. She does not attend a church. She surmises this is a direct result of the Communist system in which she was raised, “growing up in Communist, Communist, we weren’t allowed and my parents were in teaching and they could not go to church, so I never, went to church, well maybe twice, just being curious.” As her parents were teachers, under the Communist system, they could not possibly be seen attending church. Maros acknowledges that connecting with the Slovakian community here is integral to her identity.

you just crave, you know, for the language, or for the food, or the culture, or, you know, you always look for it, you seek for it, you know, because, we are just so far away, and it’s just the comfort I would say, to be with Slovaks, or to talk to somebody on daily basis who is from the same country, it’s, it’s important

Without her family here, she needs the connection with her culture, “I can’t imagine not knowing anybody here that would be from my country, that would be, would be extremely difficult because I don’t have my family here, so this is like my family.”

So with guidance from her cultural community, she found her way to the BCCT. She found the process with the BCCT straightforward, but tedious.

every time you wanted to take a course you needed to have approval from BC college of teachers, is this what I am allowed to take, you know it was back and forth around the courses, and making decisions, it was difficult to pass the English language assessment and once if you don't pass that you are kind of blocked, you can't move forward

She needed to complete the IELTS, but found that she had great difficulty with it, taking it two or three times. She wishes she had studied English at the university in Slovakia. She completed her upgrading courses and went on to do the volunteer work required. Finding volunteer work was easy for her. As she was still working as a nanny, the teachers at the children's school were familiar with her and invited her into their classes when she requested it of them. She found the teachers very receptive and curious of her experiences in Slovakia. Maros found that volunteering confirmed her identity as a teacher, "right away I would like to be in school, and the feeling came again that this is what I am meant to do."

With all her requirements completed, Maros entered the one year university training program for foreign-trained teachers. Although she was fortunate to have obtained a government grant to pay the tuition, she felt she was under added pressure through the program because if she was not successful she would have needed to pay back the money, money she didn't have. Although she enjoyed the program, especially the workshops, she felt it was too long. She believes the most important part were the practica, and felt that the long practicum was essential, "that the three months that I done the long practicum gave me more than the four years in Slovakian university." Although she jokingly adds, that the long practicum "was so helpful but probably the most stressful time of my life." Her first practicum placement was in a district that required an extensive commute, which was time consuming. She begged for a closer location for her long practicum and feels very fortunate in being placed in close range to her home.

One of the things she found surprising in the BC system was that elementary teachers are able to teach all areas of instruction from K-7. In Slovakia, primary school teachers had separate training that did not cover intermediate level subject area teaching. In Slovakia, intermediate teachers are subject specialist teachers, similar to those in the BC secondary system. She was very concerned that her practicum

placement would be at the intermediate levels, as she sees herself only as a primary teacher.

if you a teacher, you teach all the subjects, and I do not realize that, you know if I don't feel comfortable teaching intermediate levels, I don't think I should be teaching that, and some of the classmates, you know, were more comfortable doing primary and they got intermediate for the long practicum which I think would be, I don't think was right, because in Slovakia if you are an intermediate teacher, you specialize in the subjects, a math teacher, or you know English teacher, here you do all the subjects, and I wasn't ready for that, and I was scared

Again, Maros feels very fortunate to have been placed in a primary classroom for her practicum, "that was great, otherwise I don't know if I would pass." Other than finding the reflection component of the practicum unnecessary and unwieldy, she thoroughly enjoyed her experience. She especially appreciated the mentorship from faculty associates and school associates. Maros is infinitely proud of her accomplishment in earning her graduation from the university program here, but acknowledges she wishes her family were a part of her celebrations.

you know how you get those gowns, graduation gowns, I never had that in Slovakia, I didn't get, it, and I think it is the cherry on the cake, if you don't have that it doesn't count, and I think like, I got it here in Canada and I have the picture of it, it is just like the cherry on the cake, I, I didn't have that in Slovakia, I got it here, but on the other hand I didn't have my family here to experience that, but it was a happy day, because they were able to send me flowers, so it was nice

Maros did not find through her experiences that her cultural identity was a barrier to her success as a teacher in BC; however, she has always been very conscious of her language and accent. She believes she is fortunate in BC to be living in such a multicultural society where she encounters many different accents every day. She doesn't recall her accent being an issue for anyone through her teaching experiences in BC; however, she is always conscious of it herself, "it was always on top of my, I wouldn't say anxieties, but, always thinking about it, I'm very aware of that, conscious of

it, ya.” She felt it unfortunate that there were few students of European background in the university training program, stating the majority of her classmates were of South Asian decent and had already come with English skills. She compared herself to them, “so I thought they were ahead of me, you know, in English, definitely, and that made me more anxious, their English is better than mine, I was always aware of that.”

Her experiences with the interviewer for the IELTS test have left her infinitely conscious of her accent, and questioning her professional identity. He asked of her, “if I was a parent of a kindergarten student as his or her teacher, how would I look at you.” This pointed question posed at a vulnerable stage in her seeking recertification in BC left her questioning her own abilities, “that made me so nervous, so um, you know, thinking twice, that this would be a good career for me.” Now, as a teacher working on call in the lower mainland, she is still reminded of this interviewer’s question and this makes her uneasy when working with parents, “talking to parents, I always feel a little bit of anxiety if I have to speak to born Canadian parents, if they are going to judge me, that English is my second language.” She reflects on her experiences with this interviewer and how she felt her identity was attacked; she states, “I don’t think I ever felt worse than that, being judged.” The damage to her sense of self from this experience has left her questioning her professional identity and has continued to permeate how she sees herself.

seeing a parent walking in the class always make, makes me freeze and um, think twice how I am going to speak, and I am very aware of it still, of my English and my accent, ya, but I don't know, if I was to choose this uh, career again, I don't know if I would do it again, you know, it's a lot of um, doubting and anxieties, I would say cause still English is not my first language

Maros feels that although she is a competent teacher, her language abilities are intricately tied to this perception of herself as a teacher in BC. She acknowledges that she has now spent nine years pursuing her dream of becoming a teacher in a new system, “well it was definitely an adjustment, it was definitely, I, long learning for me to, to become comfortable with the new system.” She has been on the TOC list in one school district for a number of years now, and after many years of receiving calls only one day a week or less, she is finally at a point where she is getting consistent work,

three or four days a week. However, with having gone through so much, and still not receiving regular work, the anxieties and depression come again and she ruminates on her cultural differences.

when you are ready to teach, you know, you dressed to go, and you don't get that call for 3 or 4 days, you know, you basically start thinking is there something wrong with me they are not choosing me, but, it's an automatic system, it's not the way that they choose you because they want you, it's the system who does call out, autodialer, yes, so you can't, but you still think what's wrong, is it me, is it the accent, what is it, because I'm from different country, what is it, you know

Maros states that, although she worked so hard to become a teacher in BC over the years, she still needs to have two or three other jobs to get by, noting "it's not what I imagined this to be."

Maros feels that being a TOC has given her valuable insight into how she now sees herself as a teacher in the BC school system. However, when she doesn't receive a call to teach, she says she again starts "doubting myself, you doubt yourself, because you need this every day, to be in school, to, to improve yourself, you know, and if you are not there, how can you do that." She is grateful for her experiences, acquiring materials, learning different teaching methods, and management styles, but wonders how long she can continue hoping for a permanent position; "it taught me a lot, but four years is long enough, I thought already, I'm done enough, but it's estimated 5-7 years to be on call, everyday I'm asking myself how long can I be on call for."

With her father's death last year, Maros feels a strong pull to go home. Both her sisters now have families, and Maros is now an aunt, so she states "it's becoming harder every year to be away." She is hesitant to step too solidly into her new identity as a Canadian teacher as she feels a pull to go back. She reflects on the years she has spent now, determining to be a teacher here, and feels inadequate in still not having secured a position.

so ya, you know, I've been playing with the idea, to stay or to go home, since I can see becoming a Canadian teacher, a full time Canadian

teachers, it takes long to get there, how long can I wait, you know, how much longer can I wait, cause I'm not getting younger, I'm getting older

She knows she would not have difficulty getting her old job back, but she has been gone nine years and although she acknowledges her English has greatly improved, she still has little Canadian teaching experience. She is torn by the decision: to stay and persevere believing it will get better or go back home to family and friends having little to show for her efforts. Going back for her would be akin to acknowledging she cannot be a teacher in Canada, and this tears at her innate perception of herself. She knows she has accomplished a lot on her own, but going back with little teaching experience questions her essence of herself as a successful teacher.

and going back, at, at the age of 36 and having just one year teaching experience back home, here four years on call, you know, it may be hard, I don't know, it's hard to say, um, everybody my age would have at least 12, I think, years, 12 years teaching experience, and me coming back it's just one year, you know, so I'm kind of behind in that, but I have the English

I could still go back to the school where I was teaching, it's the village, they would welcome me anytime, do I want to do that, you know, it's just hard to make these, this decision, um, it took me nine years to be where I am right now, and just to throw everything away and just go back, give up on everything I achieved by myself, you know, and just go back, I just don't know, but you know, comparing family and what I achieved, it's just like, I just can't make that decision yet

Maros has “started from zero twice” and to make the decision to go back at this point is too difficult for her. She reflects that she wishes she had come to Canada earlier in life and studied here, for her university experiences in Slovakia mean little here, it was a “waste of time for coming here.” She is grateful that she is single as she believes she couldn't do what she is doing now if she were married or had a family of her own. This personal fulfillment in her life she has put aside in order to establish her identity as a teacher in BC. When asked if looking back at the last nine years, would she do it again, she laments “it was, it was, really tough, probably no, no.”

4.9. Lea's Story

Lea was born the eldest of five in a small rural community in Guyana, South America. She comments that her father “wasn't very present in the formative years of my life so my mother pretty much raised us on her own.” Lea states that her mother was an amazing woman and that Lea was raised in contradiction with the prevailing social norms, as she was “raised to be strong and self-sufficient and independent.” In other households, men were the centre of the family, so Lea reflects that her mother's strong maternal position had a great influence on Lea's sense of self determination. Life in Guyana was difficult and Lea grew up surrounded by poverty; as a result, her mother saw education as the only opportunity for her children to improve their lives. Lea states “I learned early that I needed to be independent, and the importance of an education, my mom instilled in us that at a young, quite a young age, so school is, a way of, a way out.”

Lea completed high school at 16, as in Guyana high school ends with grade 10. She remembers one specific teacher who changed her life; although in reflecting, Lea “felt this woman hated me” Lea states, “but in the end, she said later, she just saw a lot of potential in me and she wanted to make sure I realized that potential.” This teacher was an established teacher with over 30 years of experience, and who, on Lea's behalf, wrote a letter to the ministry requesting Lea as a student teacher. In Guyana, once high school is completed you can work, with the ministry's permission, as a student teacher for a small stipend; “you go under the tutelage basically of a teacher, an established teacher in the school.” At the age of 16, Lea became a teacher.

so ya, I entered into teaching for that one year, and it really pushed me, it challenged me, in a way I never thought I could be challenged, you know I was so young, I was 16, and here I was teaching kids who were about, you know, like a little bit younger than I was

Lea taught grades 8-10 home economics: food and nutrition, and clothing and textiles. She notes that she learned a lot over the year, although it was very demanding of her, “a very sink or swim event.” Lea states that through the year “I learned a lot about myself, and just my ability to relate to students, like I have that natural ability.” As well, for the first time in her life, she was earning her own money. It wasn't much, “but it was good, it felt amazing to be making my own money.”

Lea notes that the school system is very authoritarian, “where the teacher is the center of the classroom, it’s a case of you can’t speak unless you ask to speak, you put your hand up, it was very strict.” She comments that she was much more loose in her approach to teaching, perhaps as a result of her young age. She states that, “early on I just saw too, that it just doesn’t work, to instill fear in a student is not the way to go.” A few of the teachers she encountered, who she felt were some of the best teachers, were not like that, and Lea modeled her teaching after them, being more “democratic in my classroom from early on” so that “no one was scared of me.” The year helped Lea confirm her identity as a teacher, stating the year “really made me grow, sort of found out what I was, I guess, what my purpose was as a teacher, it’s not just to teach but ya, to make students become better individuals, and to help them realize their potential.”

She remembers one student who “made an impression” on her. The student was one of two sisters and Lea felt from what was disclosed to her, that the girl was verbally and emotionally abused at home, always being compared to her more accomplished sister. At a parent teacher meeting, Lea spoke directly to the mother, stating she “brought it up to the mother, what she was doing based on what her daughter told me.” Lea said “I told her that her daughter had so much potential, more than she believed, and I saw it, and she should see it.” Lea acknowledges that the mother was certainly not open to Lea’s comments, “the mother of course was very offended, said I had no right telling her that about her child.” In retrospect, Lea felt reaffirmed in her decision as the girl went from failing all her subjects to show a “marked improvement in her performance.” The situation, Lea feels, formed her identity as a teacher;. She believes she works from a position of concern for students, and looking back she sees “that was one of the points that I learned a lot about myself, that fearlessness to approach sensitive issues.” Lea was glad to be able to see the potential in others, just as another teacher had seen in her.

The year confirmed for Lea that she was well suited to the teaching profession. Most people out of high school didn’t have work to go to. A few, if they could, went to university or travelled, and Lea laughs when she comments she had money neither for university nor travel. She believes that being the oldest of five children with essentially a single working parent placed her naturally into a teaching role with her siblings; “I taught my sisters to read, and I think I helped them, I stimulated an interest in both, things like

that, I mean, it's organic." She notes that "when you reflect on it, that definitely shaped the kind of person I am, and my, I guess, suitability for teaching arose from that." Her mother, as well, was a teacher at the age of 16, although she did not pursue teaching as a career; she had Lea at 17 and could not then pursue the requisite teacher training. With her mother's strong support, Lea determined to attend university to become a teacher. Lea feels her path, strongly influenced by her mother's strong spirit, and through being the oldest, was laid out for her, "I just evolved that way, I had my own journey and the journey led me there."

In order for Lea to pursue teacher training she needed to attend university. This necessitated her leaving the small rural community, the only world she knew until that time. When she looks back, she is still in awe of how daunting the move was, "I would have to move to another city which would have been like about a two hour drive, but it seemed like a different world, a different country (laughs), it's just a very different context in Guyana." Her father arranged for her to stay with an aunt of his, a woman who was very strict and very religious, and who Lea had never met. Lea states that the first year of university was very tough for her, missing her family and being in a strange context. She jokingly credits her seriousness in her studies to her great-aunt's strict rules; however, she realistically notes that this was her only opportunity for an education and she took this very seriously. Where other students were partying and having fun, she "was quite limited, just for finances, moneywise."

this was my only chance at the university, if I messed it up that would be it for me, and I just knew what I wanted and I was quite determined, and education, a way out, getting a job, being able to support yourself, my parents couldn't support me

For the second year and through her final university years, Lea worked to support herself, and moved from her great-aunt's home into the university dormitory.

With the move to residence at university, Lea could spend more time on campus and with her studies. Her determination to succeed was noted by one of her professors who approached Lea in third year with an employment proposition. As the professor would be on temporary leave for the following year, she suggested that Lea work as a tutor through her matriculation year, gradually taking over the teacher's duties

completely during the following year. Although positioned as a university instructor, taking on the teaching duties from the professor, Lea did not forget her studies. Further, Lea had her first formal teaching evaluations through this time and through these, she felt reaffirmed in her identity as a teacher.

At this time, an opportunity for Lea came from the Dean of the faculty. The Dean suggested that Lea should apply for a scholarship opportunity; to complete a Master's in Public Policy through Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada. The opportunity seemed unlikely, but Lea noted the Dean "thought I would be great for this, so I thought, okay I'll apply." Much to Lea's surprise, after four years spent completing her undergraduate degree at the university in Guyana, and with full teaching duties through her fourth year, she was headed to Halifax to complete a one year intensive Master's Degree. All expenses for Lea were covered through the scholarship, and for Lea, this was the first time she didn't need to work to pay for her schooling and expenses.

Touching down in Halifax brought Lea a long way from her rural upbringing. She is still amazed by the experience.

oh my goodness, it was like, whoa, I mean Halifax, as far as Canada goes, was quite small, but for me it was like, huge, I couldn't, I remember my first impression touching down at the airport, I thought Canada was just wildly huge, ya, it's so much smaller where I come

She found in the program that she did not have the background science courses needed for her studies, so in addition to the Master's program of studies, she completed extra courses. Her year was exceptionally difficult and she considers that "it was hard, I know, I know, but I did it, I didn't know how I did it, but I didn't just do it, I succeeded." It was through this year's experiences that she met her future husband who was also completing his Master's degree. At the end of the year, successful in her studies, Lea needed to return to Guyana as the scholarship contract into which she had entered required her to return to Guyana to work for four years working in the public sector.

She returned to her position instructing at the university in Guyana and was pleased with her partner's decision to join her; he also took a position teaching at the

university and conducting contract work for international mining companies exploring in Guyana. With a Master's Degree, Lea was placed on a higher pay scale and her lecturer duties expanded to see her teaching second year coursework. Lea comments that "I did that for one more year and then I decided that, to be a better teacher I should do some studies in education." After one year back in her teaching position at the university, she concurrently entered post graduate studies in education, completing a diploma in social studies education. With tenure as an instructor, and now head of the university department, Lea again found that she did not need to pay for her schooling.

As a result of her independent nature, Lea was always open to exploring new possibilities. She did consulting work for the UN as well as contract work for Canadian government officials as they paired with municipalities in Guyana in public sector reform. Lea's husband at this time was offered a position through his contract work, but the job was in Vancouver. As Lea determined her husband was unhappy in Guyana, acknowledging that "he just missed home, I could see it taking a toll on him, I mean, it's very different in Guyana," she agreed to leave Guyana. With no problems encountered through immigration, she was on her way in less than eight months.

Lea expected her background would serve her well in Vancouver; "I expected that my background would be valuable here, you know, I did some research, I could probably get a job at a college, you know, starting my PhD or something, so that was the plan." She and her husband landed in Toronto, a suburb in which his parents lived to visit with them and with the idea to drive west to Vancouver so that Lea could see the country. While driving across Canada, her husband found the company that offered him the position had gone under. Lea recalls, "we came here to no job, neither of us, so we lived for six months without any work." Through this period Lea applied to every college and university in the lower mainland to no avail.

I mean my background, even though I had a Master's degree, at Dalhousie, my area of study, like I studied public policy, marine transportation policy, and it was, I guess it just wasn't something the colleges recognized, like public sector management, and I even published, it was in public sector reform, you know, and it didn't help, nothing helped, and after a while, I gave up, I really did

After six months of trying for post-secondary employment, Lea decided to pursue public school teaching, to “see what it would be like to get back into the school system, high school this time, not university or college.” With her husband’s encouragement, she sent her materials into the BCCT to be assessed.

The results from the BCCT were that Lea needed to complete six prerequisite courses. She is still confused by how the BCCT came to this decision as there were two requirements that she felt unnecessary. Firstly, she needed to complete Canadian Geography coursework which she felt was redundant, given her studies at the Master’s level at Dalhousie. She questions how this requirement was determined; “I just wondered, people who evaluated your qualifications may, may not look into your qualifications, look into, specifically the courses you’ve done, and what the content, each of the courses touch on.” The second requirement was that she complete coursework in English. Lea’s entire schooling was in English, she taught one year of high school home economics in English, she taught for several years at the University of Guyana, solely in English, and she completed a Canadian university Master’s degree in English. Looking at this now, Lea wishes she had had the energy to have pursued this as she feels she was unfairly treated; “so ya, I did my prerequisites, I could probably have put up more of a fight, but I didn’t, I was just so tired at that point; I just decided to do what I needed to do.” She did argue with the local college staff when she went to complete her prerequisite coursework as they required her to complete an English assessment prior to enrolment; she sent the department head a writing sample and he agreed that she be exempted from the assessment.

Lea found the transition to a Canadian context extremely difficult. She acknowledges she had “some bitterness in the beginning” in “knowing I had a great job back home, and I was actually offered a semi-permanent job by the UN, they wanted me to oversee a program and I said no, I’m moving to Canada.” Fundamentally for Lea the difficulty in her transition has much more to do with a new sociocultural context. She states, that besides leaving an excellent job behind, she “knew no one here, that was another thing, it was so hard to make friends here.” Her general attitude is what saw her through this difficult time.

I think when you struggled as a child, at everything you, everything you've gotten you've had to work really hard for, you just feel a sense of, I don't know, gratitude when things work well, even you, you have little struggles popping up here and there, you embrace them, because nothing compares to what you went through as a child, so that was my attitude overall

Since she did not know anyone else here from Guyana, Lea felt very isolated. She said she tried to meet people by inviting acquaintances of her husband's brother to housewarming parties, but this did not seem to work. She says "that's how you make friends back home, you have a few parties, a few socials, and you have people over." She recalls that the cultural differences in socializing were profound for her; no matter what she tried, she did not feel accepted in her new sociocultural context. She was astounded that people would seem to connect in offering to extend friendship, but failed to follow through, "they would say nice things, it was really nice to meet you, we should do lunch, and they never delivered on their promise and I could never understand that, why do people say they will do something and they don't." She feels that in Guyana, people are very open and friendly, and making friends was never a concern in that context, "I guess, we are very open, I mean, if you meet someone that you click with, they are your friend, and you, you make an effort with your friends, and here I didn't find that people did."

Lea's strong cultural and spiritual connections were being questioned through this period. She does not attend church here because, although her father was religious, her mother was "a little more critically minded when it comes to religion." Her mother thought "religion could be very indoctrinated kids and stuff, she thought it was way too impressionable to be going to Sunday school." Lea states, "I am spiritual but I am not religious." Lea's connections then are to a personal and cultural spirituality and without receiving acceptance through relationships here she began to question her sense of self, "you take a few steps back to question who you are, I don't know, it's just counterintuitive, you are not developing as an individual." She acknowledges that due to her cultural background, she is very open, talkative and very passionate and cultural differences had her questioning her actions, "you are always second guessing yourself, and when you do that, there is always a little voice in your head constantly chiming in is this the right thing to do?" She thinks maybe her culture overwhelms Canadians;

“people don’t get my humour or maybe I came on too strong, you know, I did a lot of second guessing myself, I didn’t feel I fit in.”

Lea recalls how grateful she was when her husband found employment with a company and through this connection they were invited to social gatherings with other professionals. She found to her delight that many of them were from different countries. She says she “concluded that because they had a similar story I probably feel more at home in that environment.” Through this group she made some connections, and states that with these people she could come to terms with her experiences through hearing of the experiences of others, “we would have great discussions about, you know settle here.”

Lea feels she transitioned through a difficult period trying to adjust to this new context. She was grateful to be going back to school in completing her prerequisite coursework. Here was a world in which she was more at home; she had always been studious and competent at her studies. She befriended a girl in her class, as Lea noticed this individual was overwhelmed with her workload, so Lea began cooking extra and bringing leftovers to school to help this girl out. Lea didn’t see this as unusual behaviour, but consistent with her cultural background, stating “it was so much in my culture.”

she didn't have time to cook and all that, so I cooked, I'd bring food for her, and she's, she couldn't get over that gesture, but back home, that is something you do for a friend, so I made a good friend, by being myself, and we're still friends

This incident resulted in both an important social connection for Lea as well as an opportunity for Lea to consider that her cultural background could indeed be accepted here.

Lea found her cultural background helped her in obtaining volunteer work at a local high school. She acknowledges that her independent spirit and her determination facilitated her acquiring the volunteer hours she needed. Lea said she did not ask if she could do volunteer work within the school, but just “went to the office and said this is what I want to do, who should I talk to?” She was directed to the department head of

social studies, who was impressed with her, giving her ample opportunities to observe, mark student work, and do some teaching. She found the students were intrigued by her background when she did a presentation on Guyana. Her success in this context was integral to her understanding that the cultural identity she had been struggling with could indeed be accepted here; “he thought it was great and the students loved it, ya, it was a gift for them, and a gift for me for sure, so that’s what I did.” The entire experience was so positive that Lea became even more determined to pursue teacher training here.

On entering the university teacher training program, Lea was again confronted with her sense of ‘otherness.’”

I didn't know what to make of it in the beginning, I felt, like in terms of the students in the class, the other adults, the other teachers, I was the only one from the Caribbean, and that felt a bit different for me, I did feel a bit different, I mean, separate from them, anyone else

Lea felt there was a strong cohort of South Asian students who were cliquy, and she felt both separate from their sense of collegiality, and envious of it. To have had someone in the program with her cultural background,

would have been great, it would have been great, but there again, in our culture, we are very, we are not cliquy, we embrace, we are like bees flitting from flower to flower, we are very open, and I just didn't find that in the beginning, as time went by there were a few other people in the class who were a little more open, a little more inviting, and a little more supportive, um, so, eventually it got easier

Again Lea relied on her cultural roots to forge an early friendship. When one student was away for the first few classes for familial reasons, Lea took it on herself to maintain a second set of notes and materials for this student on her return. Lea thinks “she was really surprised that I did that cause I didn’t know her,” but Lea acknowledges she came from a background where people were in a close knit community but had little, so everyone helped each other when they could. Lea just sees this act as simply natural, “if I was absent this is what I would love someone to do for me.”

Lea flourished in the practica she needed to complete in the program; she thoroughly enjoyed establishing relationships. She found valuable relationships with the faculty as well as the teachers with whom she was placed. She feels “relationships are a huge part of my success, and I think I was able to utilize my strengths as a very personable individual.” The difficulties Lea encountered through her practica resulted from both the volume of work she needed to complete and the process of learning to teach in a student-centered system.

a lot of my colleagues, you know, had some difficult times, sort of being reintroduced into the classroom as a teacher, but for me, there were difficulties, but not when it came to that student teacher relationship part of it, the difficulty for me was in trying to figure out how to teach the content, this new content creatively, in a way that engaged my students, the methodology, ya, right, because I had come from a very teacher-centered, approach to teaching

Lea found that she loved working as a teacher in the BC school system where she was able to develop the relationships that she feels are key to her sense of herself as a teacher. She felt the students “embraced me as their teacher” to a point where the classroom teacher had difficulty returning to the class at the end of the practicum; his comments reaffirmed for her that “it was a good sign that you were accepted as a teacher.”

At no point through this year did Lea feel that her cultural background, her language, or her accent came into play as a barrier. She feels that perhaps because she has a diverse background, she has Portuguese, Black, Chinese, and East Indian lineage, students see her as exotic. Students are also curious because “no one could place me.” She felt her cultural identity helped her build relationships with students and she relates to many of their experiences because the student population is so diverse culturally.

I felt that my culture was celebrated as opposed to, you know, being, um, a big red dot, you know, ya, so that was really, my students loved it too, and the students were quite mixed, like the, the demographic, it was a mixed demographic, I could relate to a lot of the students, and I have a mixed ethnicity

Through her practicum, Lea requested that students' complete evaluations of her teaching and their comments again reaffirmed her professional identity;

they really loved how understanding I was with them, and that really meant a lot, and that, understanding and fair, and for me as a teacher, I want to be fair to my students, it's part of my philosophy, part of my, who I am as a teacher, so I really like to hear that, ya

Since completing her practica and teacher training program, Lea has been on call teaching in one district, and she loves the teacher she has become. She finds teaching now is "just so intuitive, there is no thinking about what to do, it's natural, it comes out." She feels that by being authentic in who she is, embracing her cultural background, she is able to exchange her sense of herself as a teacher in Guyana to that of a teacher in the BC school system. She reflects that one of the best things she has learned is to be natural, and this has come from a blend of keeping her cultural integrity with enveloping new teaching methods that embrace the importance of relationships in her professional identity.

I'm comfortable with whom I am, more, you know, my personality, cause a lot of my personality comes out in my teaching, and I find it's been well received by students, I'm more authentic, you know, there is none of this second guessing, I'm still reflective, in terms of my, methods, the methods that I use

She is extremely satisfied and fulfilled in her new professional identity although she jokes that it can be a difficult profession.

I am happy, and I see better things ahead for me, and teaching is fulfilling, it really is, there are days when you want to strangle the kids (laughs), but more, I find more, I just, I love what I do, I come home and I just feel so good about what I have done

4.10. Diana's Story

Diana emigrated from India with her husband and two daughters just two and a half years ago. At the time of their immigration, Diana had 15 years of experience teaching in a prestigious private school, recognized as the best school in India. Her

husband was well established running his own construction business with 100 employees in his company. Life was going very well financially, but life in India was far from comfortable. Diana and her husband, through many struggles, were settled in their lives, but they had grave concerns for their daughters; the lack of opportunities, the racism they experienced, and ultimately for their safety. Canada offered an escape to security, and as both Diana and her husband were fluent in English, it seemed Canada offered what they were seeking for their young family.

we heard it was a better life, there is security, there is value for life, so more social security, as compared to India, where, there is racism, because we are from Pakistan so they used to call us refugees, and we could not have good jobs, our children could not get into good school, no government jobs, there was the kind of thing where they would give preference to their own community and we, we had to struggle, and especially now, with changes in the government, it was not very safe, for the girls, I have two daughters and I was really concerned about them when they grow up, when they go out

A friend of their family visited India from BC and spoke very highly of a vibrant South Asian community. The friend encouraged them to complete their immigration application, and they complied, with the expectation the application would take several years to receive acceptance. They were surprised to find that their applications were processed quickly and they were accepted within a few short months; and so, they were faced with the decision to immigrate.

we just had an opportunity, a friend was visiting us from Canada and said why don't you come, and we said no, we are pretty happy, we had good money, we had good house, my husband had a flourishing business, but she said, just try, so we put in our papers, and you wouldn't believe it but within five months we were here

The impetus to accept the immigration opportunity came when there was a news broadcast of a young girl being raped midday on public transit; “a gang rape of a girl in New Delhi on a moving bus.” The publicity of the gang rape as well as an increase in societal problems occurring at the time made Diana and her husband decide to move, as

Diana reflects “those type of things started scaring us.” For the sake of their daughters, they determined to emigrate.

Diana’s husband came to BC, staying with the friend that had visited them. She comments that her husband didn’t like BC when he arrived as he landed in Abbotsford and it was a stormy, snowy November day. He didn’t like the rural environment, nor had he ever seen snow. Diana followed her husband here for a month in the summer, at which time they found rental accommodations close to an elementary school in Surrey. Diana returned to India to conclude the packing and to deal with the house, and then left India with her daughters. The move was supported by her family. They were sad to see them leave but, she states, they were “excited, happy for me, that I am going for a better thing.” Diana left behind her younger brother and sister as well as her parents.

Her husband’s family was more upset with the move. Since her husband’s family relied on him, they tried to dissuade him: “they were really upset, saying why are you going here you have money, you have flourishing business, here people know you by name.” Diana recalls that her husband was adamant about the move on his daughters’ behalf, “he said no, but I have to think about my own kids, I do not think they are safe here.” Although she and her husband had their needs met, their fundamental concerns were for their daughters, “we had everything, everything, all luxuries of life, good money, that is what everybody wants, and they said why are you going, not that we have to think about our own self, but we have to think about our kids.” Diana and her husband knew also that if the move did not work out for the best, they could readily return.

Diana and her husband established themselves immediately in Surrey. They sought out this community due to a large population of similar background residing there. She states that coming to a community with other people of similar backgrounds was critical to their move; “knowing that we have our own community here, a community, a place we can grow, we picked Vancouver so we could have our own community around, so we start from here.” Further, Diana states, “you see people who are similar to you, that gives security to begin with, okay we know people, just not personally, but maybe they are from our own community, our own culture.” Diana would not have immigrated without having the opportunity to be in a community of similar culture to her own. She attends temple regularly and maintains her religious practices. These spiritual

guides are integral to her life and she is determined to raise her daughters immersed in cultural beliefs and spiritual understanding, although she acknowledges they may choose to have other beliefs when they are older.

I believe in ----, and the gods that we worship and each god has its own identity and purpose, so we believe, I believe in them so I want my daughters also to know about them, so I sometimes take them to temple, in the evening I do prayers whenever I have time, so I make sure they are with me, and they know about it, and I try to teach my own language

Diana feels it is very important that her daughters learn “where they are from, and what I believe in.” In addition to being on Skype with family members in India, she plans to visit India soon with her daughters. It is expected that her daughters should be steeped in their culture; “at least they should know, because this is what, because when you go back home, your parents, grandparent, they expect, okay our kids, our grandchildren should know about our own culture it’s very important.” She is concerned that her youngest, on attending daycare and full day kindergarten here while Diana was completing her university teaching training program, has forgotten much of her first language in place of learning English. Diana has since made “special efforts to make sure she speaks her own language too.”

Although Diana and her husband speak English, they sought out a community in which they could converse in their first language. Continuing communication in her first language keeps her connected to the security of her cultural identity. She acknowledges that she did not need support from this community to become established here after the move, but the immersion into a culture similar to what she left was reassuring and opened doors to larger community connections; “we have a few friends that are from our own community, from where we began, and then, because of them, we started knowing the other people around, and we are acceptable of everybody.” She states that through this community, some of whom have emigrated from the same specific area of India, she has become connected with a larger group, and has felt a community of acceptance of her cultural identity.

Prior to Diana's arrival in BC, her husband had discovered what was needed of her to seek recertification as a teacher in BC. Diana, when still in India, had compiled all of the requisite paperwork and sent it to her husband who applied to the BCCT on her behalf. When Diana immigrated she did not need to wait as the BCCT's determination of her requirements was already completed. Diana, having completed teacher training in India, having 15 years of experience, and having a Master's Degree in Child Psychology was required to take coursework pertinent to studies of Canada. As well, she was directed to a teacher training program at a local university.

Although Diana had extensive experience in India, she was required to complete volunteer work in a school in BC prior to enrolment in the teacher training program. Diana was fortunate as she approached the administration of the school her daughters attended and she was welcomed as a volunteer there. Diana spent over 18 months volunteering at the elementary school, on site from 8:30-2:30 daily. During this time, Diana took night classes to complete her required coursework. Diana feels the time she spent immersed in the school system was an amazing opportunity to experience a completely different teaching system than what she encountered in India. As well, she felt her identity as a teacher was confirmed for her in this new context as even initial reports to the school administration noted her natural suitability for teaching, "but then first few days the teachers give her really good feedback about me, she's very cooperative, she's very patient, that's the thing they all said, she's very patient with the kids, and that's what you require."

Her continuation at this school for an extended period of time gave her confidence in her abilities in adjusting to the BC school system; she jokes that TOCs coming into the school would look to her for confirmation of how they were doing. Diana took pride in her role at the school, especially with students who she had thought would be so different than those she was used to in India. She felt confident as she says, "the kids started looking at me, and they started saying hi, believing in me, ya, I'm the person they can come up and ask for help."

In India, Diana worked for a private, corporate sponsored school. She notes that in India there are government public schools, and then there are private schools that are funded by parents through donations and tuition fees as well as sponsored by

corporations. She states the “good schools are the ones that are run by private sectors.” There is a chasm between the two systems that reflects the economic and sociocultural divide that is India.

only the privileged ones, the parents who could afford to send their children to such good schools, and they had to pay tuition fees and it was big amount, expensive schools, so only the ones there, they had enough resources to send their kids to schools

Diana states that even for the privileged getting into the best schools was not an easy undertaking as parents needed to approach the head of the schools using bribery to get their children enrolled.

like the machine was very hard, so they had to come through the chairman and they had to get their name promoted, okay, I want my kid to be in your school so I give you donation to your school, so ya, those things were very prominent over there

She reflects that the teachers differed between the schools as did the resources. Government schools did not have books or other resources for student use and the teachers were both poorly trained and offered little for students’ learning: “the ones who do not have resources, they go to the government schools and they, the teachers there, they don’t care, okay they just have to pass them on to the next class, even if they are not learning.”

As a teacher in India, Diana saw herself as an authoritative figure in a teacher-centered model. Classes were large with 35-45 students in each class; she ponders that may have bearing on why the system is so teacher-focused. The student is unengaged in this system, “whatever, whatever the teacher is saying, delivering to the kids, the kids just sit over there, and the kids just listen to you, and they just follow you.” In this system, Diana’s identity as a successful teacher was in seeing herself delivering content and continually assessing learning; with no individuation.

it was all teacher-centered, teacher designed, everything, the curriculum, it was more of a rote learning, we had exams, formal exams, like every week, to be unit tests, so whatever we had taught, there would be a test, and those were calculated to the finals, then

we had midterms, then we had finals, so the marks were calculated and they were given grades, so it was very assessment, whereas here it is not that much assessment, it is more of like, learning based

Further, Diana notes that she had no experience with special needs students or differentiated learning as these students did not attend school, “nowhere, nowhere, we never had, if there was there was a child, learning disabilities, this kid was pulled out of the school, like, he doesn’t have a place in the normal school system, no.”

Stepping into volunteering in her daughters’ school brought Diana quickly into a new learning experience, “that brought about a lot of change in me, that’s what I have to really think hard, what I was doing for 15 years.” She was most impressed with a school system that offered equal opportunities for an education regardless of privileges, or lack thereof, and regardless of learning needs.

everybody is equal, even if ah, your parent is working at X Y Z job and the other person’s father, mother, owns X Y Z, exactly so the same school they are getting the same treatment, that is the best thing, it’s absolutely different

With the class sizes in India, she felt teachers “cannot cater to everybody’s needs.” Diana is thrilled with the child-centered approach used in the BC school system as compared to India; she comments, “here it is student centered, each and every child is given importance, their learning styles, their learning abilities are looked up to, and the teachers try to tailor their teaching according to the needs of the kids.” As a result of her background studies in child psychology through completing a Master’s Degree, Diana finds individualized education appealing.

whereas here it is not that much assessment, it is more of like, learning based, you have those PLOs and you work around those PLOs, and maybe okay, you see the needs of your class and you say okay, this is maybe what my class is capable of, and you pick up these PLOs and maybe a little more to give a little challenge, according to the needs of the kids

Further, Diana was surprised by split classes here, classes teaching two grades in one classroom, as these did not exist in the school system in India. She feels split

classes challenge teachers to a greater extent, but again, offer the ability to meet a greater diversity of student needs. Diana is further impressed by the focus on early reading in the school system here. In India the focus on reading came after students entered schools and first learned the alphabet; reading came through learning to write. There was little availability of reading materials for children in India; you could take out a book from the library for a week's duration only. Diana is enthralled with the availability of children's books here as compared with in India, "here the books are everywhere, so that, from like, the child is born you can start reading from different levels, picture books, they are beautiful, they are amazing."

When beginning her teacher training program here, Diana needed to learn to be a different teacher. Changing this ingrained identity was hard for her and even now she sees she needs to be cautious of her new teaching identity as she states a "good part of my life I had seen that only, so it's hard to undo and forget about it, cause sometimes, somewhere, it does come, it resurfaces itself, ya, it does, but I have to be careful." Diana appreciated the experiences she encountered in the teacher training program, feeling it was very valuable for her. She states that, "everybody should go through this process, I've, very valuable, because it created a kind of bridge for me from what I was to what I had to do now, it really strengthened it." She felt the training program enabled her to position herself as a teacher in the BC context, leaving behind the aspects that defined her as a teacher in India, "it really helped me to leave my experience behind and just move forward."

Her extensive volunteer work gave her confidence when she entered her first practicum experience. The 18 months she had volunteered in her daughters' school positioned her as an experienced teacher among her peers within the teacher training program. She noted that the other teachers in the program, of similar ethnic background to hers, would approach her with questions regarding the new sociocultural context they encountered in BC schools.

With an excellent first practicum experience, Diana felt confident in her identity as a teacher when moving into her second practicum. However, her confidence was challenged early in the second practicum as she felt, regardless of her extensive consultation and preparation prior to the practicum, she could do nothing right in the

teacher's opinion. The teacher was openly rude to her and states that her preparation and lesson plans were unacceptable; although the university assured her these plans followed the university expectations. She felt that as soon as she began working with him, he was rude, and "he started like, shouting at me in the class." Diana is certain that her ethnicity came into play as she concluded, "he's a bit racist."

Fortunately, the faculty assessed the situation and moved Diana to another placement to complete the practicum requirements. Diana, already stressed from the disruption and having to prepare for a different teaching context, was under the additional pressure of needing to extend the practicum. Fortunately the SA was a "very good, wonderful person, wonderful person, she welcomed me with open arms, she really made me feel comfortable." Diana states that this experience would have made her question her new identity as a teacher, "it would have, if I had thought about it, but then I stopped thinking about it, maybe it was destiny, it had to happen, so okay, you pass out of a bad dream, and you go on."

With the stressors in her life, "writing lessons till three in the morning, and getting up early, it's tough with the immersion, and two kids and my husband had just started his own business," she took ill--passing out one day and being taken by ambulance to the local hospital. She had caught a virus and was dehydrated; however, she recovered to complete her practicum. She deeply appreciates the support of her peers in her cohort through this stressful period. She acknowledges, "I put a lot of hard work and they did not want me to fail." The support of her peers was crucial to her feeling accepted; she recalls "they were like a family to me." Her determined nature saw her complete the practicum requirements with extending her time only by a short period.

Diana reflects that through all of this, she had never considered a different career. She comments, "I think I always wanted to become a teacher, ya, I loved working with kids." When she was young she was hired by a neighbour to tutor her four children, and Diana managed tutoring all of them through different levels of schooling. In India, Diana went directly to college in order to be a teacher and she recalls her parents supported her choices only maintaining that she be happy with her decisions. She recalls that a close uncle would reprimand her parents for allowing her to enter teaching as with good grades she should have been studying sciences, becoming a doctor or an

engineer. These careers offered both money and more advantages for a girl in India, “it’s more prestigious, it’s not only money, but okay, doctor, so you get a good husband, those kind of things, for girls they look up to that kind of thing, doctor, she gonna get a good partner.” Even her siblings teased her about her career choice; “sometimes, they tease, you are not intelligent that is why you went into teaching, in India, everybody wants to be either a doctor or an engineer.” She recalls rebuffing their taunts with reminding them that they received their education and consequent careers by being taught by a teacher.

Diana is proud of her determined spirit; she feels she lives “every day for the moment.” Although, she sees she has a rebellious nature, narrating a story of her love marriage which countered her family’s wishes and traditional cultural expectations. Diana is confident that she has chosen the right career; she alludes to the belief that many of the events that she has encountered seem to have been her destiny.

When she first arrived here, she met with government skills connect personnel who discouraged her from pursuing teaching, telling her that in teaching “there is no scope, there is no jobs, why put your money there.” Diana states it was suggested that she go into retail sales, but she states “I cannot think of another job, standing at the till taking money, I cannot think of myself as that, I am a teacher, and I have to go into that.” Regardless of how she was advised, Diana was determined to reposition herself as a teacher in the BC school system. She feels she has come a long way from the person she was, teaching in India; however, she realizes that changing her identity through repositioning herself as a teacher here is a tenuous undertaking. She is vigilant in maintaining her new identity in the new sociocultural context.

more liberal, ah, not teacher-centered, its more student-centered, what my kids expect, what are their needs, special need kids, they are having IEPs, I had never heard about IEPs, so what’s IEP, so ya, those kind of things, it’s a challenge, no doubt, it’s hard for you to give away what you been doing, and what the system, what you been taught, it’s quite engraved in me deep down

Ever the adventurous spirit, Diana is not only seeking employment in several of the nearby school districts, but has also now opened her own teaching related business.

She feels through this enterprise, she can continue her destiny, to work with children, and to find employment in an area of her expertise, child psychology. Through her brother- and sister-in-law's recent immigration struggles here, Diana sees that she was fortunate to have been fluent in English, as she watches this couple face impediments without English fluency. She is grateful that her English abilities allowed her to overcome barriers that she may otherwise have confronted. For now, Diana is satisfied with her life and her professional identity in this new system, but she reiterates that she does not know what tomorrow will bring, "I am happy, like I said, I don't look to the past, just for today and for the future, for the future, what's going to happen, not too far off (laughs)."

4.11. Ines' Story

Growing up with four brothers, Ines states with a laugh, "I grew up tough." Otherwise, being raised on a ranch in Argentina, Ines came from a privileged background. She recalls throughout her story how the poverty that surrounded her through her childhood helped shaped her identity as a teacher today. She acknowledges she has "core values that I bring into the classroom."

As a child, Ines was raised in the Protestant religion; through her connections with the church, Ines became a Sunday school teacher at a young age. Her parents were strong proponents of their spiritual beliefs and these shaped Ines' beliefs. She reflects on her years spent teaching Sunday school and working with local children, and considers that she was perhaps destined to teach. With a Christian faith, her parents encouraged Ines to work in helping others. In her capacity as a Sunday school teacher, she recalls going out into the community and extending help wherever possible. She states, "we lived in a privileged community so I worked a lot in shanty towns, like with street kids, ya I did a lot of work around that." Ines suggests that this was a natural part of her life, as the poverty that surrounded her seemed boundless.

it was such a need, and the community that surrounded, where I entered, there were so many needs, so many street kids, though, it was a reality for me as well, and I took that as a responsibility as well, you know, helping those kids, and we would feed them and then, ya, have Sunday school for them

Ines feels her experiences working with children in poverty had lasting impact on her lifelong views; being positioned as privileged has left her with a poignant awareness of her own self in relation to others less fortunate. She remarks that her experiences were

really powerful, really powerful because you get to see a different reality from yours and the needs are so basic, so, they are really basic in life, they really bring you to that place, my God, what is it I need in life, and it makes you wonder why you want all these other things, I should be happy I have all the basics, you know, you value life in a different way when you get those experiences

She sees her role as a teacher as an extension of her core beliefs in working with kids; “what I want to offer the kids, you know, the nature of, the importance of caring for them.”

Ines, as a result of her family’s position, went to private school to study in the International Baccalaureate program. The public school system was not considered a strong education and she notes that “most people, um, if they can afford it will send their kids to the private schools, its more solid education and you also have a chance to learn a second language.” Ines studied English. She both loved and hated her education as it offered opportunities, yet was grueling in its expectations. One of the opportunities available through the school allowed Ines to go on international exchanges; her mother was an avid lover of travel and wanted Ines to have the same passion. Ines indeed grew passionate about traveling, seeing other countries and learning about other cultures. She realized when entering university that the gruelling IB program prepared her well for the workload she encountered there, having completed many first year courses through her final high school year: “two years in one.” Ines completed a degree in Graphic Arts through her university studies.

At the same time she attended university, she was offered a teaching job at a private high school. Becoming a teacher at the time was, she reflects, not a conscious choice, “I think, ya, I think life sort of put me in that place, I think I never really took the decision like in a logical way, okay I wanna be a teacher, it just, it happened.” She was surprised to receive the job offer as she did not even apply, but thought when it came

her way that she may as well try it. She found herself positioned as a high school IB graphic arts and technology teacher.

She found she really enjoyed working as a teacher in the IB program as it offered a creative platform for learning. Due to the high expectations embedded in the program, she was able to emphasize the process of creating; she feels the creative process is more meaningful than the actual product. Again, this spoke to her growing identification with the essence of human nature, “the critical thinking, learning, and how, how to become a more creative thinker in general, I really like that, so, I, really expanding through things that, in essence that is how we were born.” She feels as a teacher she was able to offer students a “higher level of awareness,” as this was such a part of her own identity. Positioned since birth as privileged among others less fortunate and being raised with a Christian perspective to reach out to those in need, have provided the core for her identity. She found she was fulfilled on both a personal and professional level and she formed a strong professional identity of caring for students: “it was a great experience, and you could see the potential, most of those kids had, you created that.”

She does concede that teaching was both challenging and demanding; “the kids in private schools they were quite spoiled, so discipline, classroom management, was chaos sometimes, especially with art.” Furthermore, she notes the parents, due to their privileged nature, were often difficult to deal with, “they were so hard, it was so hard with parents.” Her difficulty with parents may have resulted from the fact that Ines herself was not much older than the students she was teaching and she was still developing confidence in her professional self.

When Ines graduated from university, she determined to follow the passions she had developed for travelling, stating that “when I finished my degree I said I needed to go traveling, I need to see the world.” Through her subsequent travels, she came to Vancouver to visit her brother who had been attending a post-secondary educational program here. The visit was enough to convince Ines that Vancouver was a place she wanted to be.

I came along and visited him, and I loved it, the mountains, the city, and everything, and he took me to Emily Carr and said oh, if you want to pursue more studies, come here, live with me, instead of, okay, I

thought about it when I went back to Argentina, finished some work I was doing down there, and ya, after two years, even though he moved back to Argentina, I decided to move to Canada

And so, on a Student Visitor Visa, Ines moved to Vancouver to attend a six month continuing studies program at Emily Carr University. Again, her travels were fully supported by her parents, especially by her mom, “she was like, go, go explore the world.” Her parents promised to visit her, and they have come numerous times over the years.

Once the program and her Student Visitor Visa expired, she applied for a Student Visa, and then eventually for permanent residence. Ines found the immigration experience “was long, and tedious, lots of paperwork, ah, just now after seven years I got to do my citizenship exam, finally, and ya, so, ya it’s been a long process, um, just getting all the paperwork.” Through this time Ines met her boyfriend, now her husband, and they applied as a couple for permanent residence, as he was also here from Argentina on a Student Visa.

Although settled in Vancouver, Ines’ passion for traveling is still being fulfilled through yearly family get-togethers that occur all over the world. With her brothers scattered about, living in several different countries, getting together at a neutral spot in the world allows them all to travel and unite. Their last meeting was in Italy, and Ines visits Argentina several times in a year. She comments that on these family visits, she still identifies herself as a teacher. Her family holiday the previous year was in Panama, where Ines and her husband took the opportunity to volunteer in an orphanage. Ines taught art to the children, and again, found working with underprivileged youth to be life confirming and inspiring.

they don’t have anything, it’s just them, barefoot, they are in that orphanage, and nobody has objects, you know, they are all like, I don’t know, it’s just them, you know, and they value who they are as them, they are whole, they are full of experience, they are not attached to anything, and still they are happy, and you know they share, there was a lot of happiness around, and this was a strong community, and ya, they were not attached to anything, even the kids, you know, even like their families were not there, they were taken away by the

government, it was such a powerful experience to see them grow, you know, and then, it's, I don't know, it makes you think, you know, why when we get into this life we think we need things, and when happiness comes from within, you know

Ines finds that sometimes she gets lost when she gets back to her real life, and she feels blessed to have these experiences that reaffirm her core values.

Working with disadvantaged youth continues to be a focus for her. When she moved to Vancouver, she began working with street youth in the downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Arriving here, she “was longing to get in connection with that aspect, really see people from a different way.” She speaks about how working with underprivileged people shows her the essence of what it is to be human; however, in truth these activities arise from the essence of her own humanity. Again, Ines felt she developed greatly from these interactions, learning about various cultures as well as exchanging perspectives with those she met. She “learned a lot of them and the people of the street, just trying to talk to them, and just giving them food.” She sees that through her efforts she is not only giving, but receiving through learning about others` life perspectives.

Ines worked in graphic design until she realized that she wanted a change: “I started hating it, I didn't want to be behind a computer anymore, and I was not happy.” She felt a deep loss of social connectedness when she and her husband determined to settle here. Although they were living in a shared house, which offered her a community of sorts, she worked from home feeling isolated from society. She had found friends in the community who were also from Argentina, and these friends were important in helping her feel connected to her culture. Then, although she felt a cultural connection and had established herself in this community, she was not happy working without being around people. She started thinking about what she could do instead. She considered teaching as an option, but had doubts about whether she would be able to enter teaching here, as she thought “teaching might be one of, may be my path, but then, oh, I don't have all the prerequisite courses, I don't think I would be capable here because of the language, I started going back and forward.” Through her husband's constant encouragement, her family's support, and after two years of deliberating, she determined to try.

She started by volunteering at different schools “to sort out the system, because I didn’t know anything about the system, I was totally foreign to it.” Immediately she found the school system here very different from her experiences in Argentina.

I cannot say something that it's negative or positive, it's just different from where I come, um, what strike me as the most different was this multiculturalism, this diversity in the classrooms, it was so huge, because in Argentina you don't see that at all, and especially at private schools it's mostly white people and, so I was impressed of seeing all these kids from different places, how did they all get in one classroom

In working with students from diverse background she encountered through her volunteer experiences, Ines came to realize that she could easily relate to them. She states that, “most of the kids had accents, it was like oh, so they are like me (laughs), I am not so different (laughs), it’s not a problem for me being here, even if I have an accent.” Positioning herself in classrooms in BC offered Ines a perspective that she could be a part of the multicultural context in which she found herself.

that's when I started to realize I have all this in common with these ESL students as well, because I'm really ESL, they're ESL, I know what the struggle is, to be in, living in a different country, learning a different language, going through that, you know, I started making those connections and being more confident and comfortable with the system

Furthermore, Ines felt she could bond with these students, just as she had throughout her life in working with children. Exchanging perspectives with children from other parts of the world offered Ines affirmation that she should pursue her teaching certification as a result of her innate skills relating to children.

I started thinking, okay I already have these skills how can I bring my skills into the education system, I'm always thinking about bridging and making those connections, how it applies to education, and then I also convinced myself that I could do it

Ines approached the BCCT and attended a meeting with other international teachers. She found that since she did not receive a formal teaching certificate in Argentina, not having completed a teacher training program, she would need to both pursue additional coursework and complete a local university teacher training program rather than the shorter program for foreign-trained teachers. She completed her requisite coursework and thoroughly enjoyed learning more about the Canadian context. She laughs that these courses helped when she did her citizenship exam. She felt the upgrading coursework “was a way of also really integrating, into society.”

Ines vividly remembers beginning the university teacher training program as she remembers immediately being positioned as ‘other,’ “oh, I was terrified, I was so terrified, I remember the first day, I don’t know, they are white, I thought what am I doing here, they are all white people (laughs), and they all speak English.” She states that there was one other person in the cohort that wasn’t Canadian, but he was still Caucasian and his first, and only language, was English; “so at the beginning, I was feeling an outsider, for sure.” She feels her relationship with a faculty member attached to the program was fundamental to her success through this time, as the faculty associate had previous experience working with foreign-trained teachers. Ines felt this person had a deep understanding of Ines’ position as an ethnic minority within the program and as an immigrant.

Her practicums were in two different districts, and Ines was again concerned about appearing as an outsider, “of course at the beginning I’m freaking out because it’s something new, and it’s a new system, and will they accept me, because of the accent.” She recalls that she had little experience with teaching subject matter in Argentina; when she did teach, she taught high school graphic arts and now she was teaching primary curricula. As well, her past experience with street children was more about simply teaching skills to survive, as she recalls trying to teach reading skills to children through the Sunday school in Argentina without resources, “ya it was hard, I was teaching some of them to read and there were no books, it was more that survival, those kids were about how do I survive.” She comments, as a result, that her practicums were “a crash course in learning everything.”

Ines found her creative bent and her passion for teaching served her well through her practica, she says she understands “the learning processes, the concepts that they need to learn, but I like to create that connection with the kids, and get them inspired

I want to offer the kids, you know, the nature of, the importance of caring for them, feeling this environment and community where they can be, you know, outspoken, where it is safe for them to express, and my interest always has been building self-esteem with kids, so that was always my core thing, if I can build good self-esteem in those kids they can do anything they want in the world

She found that students were intrigued by her accent and her “otherness” and, she notes especially the boys, were enthralled to learn she was from the same country as a currently very popular soccer player. She was pleased to have positive feedback that confirmed her identity as a teacher, “people tell me, you are very patient person, you are soft, and friendly, even having a way of, working with kids.”

Throughout her experiences in BC schools, Ines has found that her greatest concern is her accent. She has questioned her ability to position herself as a teacher in BC schools as a result of her accent. When starting in her practica, consistent with her open attitude to all she encounters, she states, “the very first day I told them, I am from Argentina, I have an accent, so the kids were, so ya, they were okay with it.” At no time did she find that her accent was a concern with the students she encountered. To the contrary, she found her confidence increased with her ability to exchange positions, “kids were really nice, and ya, they were like, you have an interesting accent.”

Ines was far more uncomfortable with her accent and language abilities when dealing with adults, “the adults it’s more like, the judgment that scares me more, you know, that judging you from somewhere else.” However, Ines has found that being upfront and open regarding her concerns has helped and she wonders if what she is concerned about is “more me wanting to be accepted in the system,” and her fear of fitting in. When she began her practicums, she was forthright in presenting her concerns:

will they accept me having an accent, I remember the first practicum, having a conversation with all the teachers, and I asked them, what are

my possibilities as an international teacher with an accent in this system, and they were pretty positive you know, you won't have any problems, just keep practicing

The feedback she has received has always been positive, however she feels it has been a difficult task determining her identity in this new context:

it was difficult at the beginning, it was my fear, the difficulty that I wanted to be accepted, but at the same without losing myself and trying to pretend I am somebody I am not, keeping my identity, because I think that would be so bad if I do that

She does still feel that improving her language skills is a goal, "I do feel I do need to improve a few things in my English, and the way I communicate and write things." She also realizes that she has grown more comfortable in her new position, and reflects that her concerns may have been a result of moving between systems and adapting her professional identity to a new context.

Ines knows that the core values and beliefs that comprise her identity as a teacher in BC schools facilitate her relationships with children. However, she has realized that although she has innate abilities, she has changed a lot through her teaching experiences here, as she says "you come with your ideas but you have to shape them." She states, "I think, yes I am a different teacher, I feel like I've grown differently." Ines feels that she has grown more open to experiences and that she has adapted to the context of teaching in the BC school system:

the fact of changing countries has made me more open, you have to be open, or now you don't adapt, you know in the beginning, I remember the first year, you know, I came with all my cultural baggage here, I was having such a hard time to integrate, because I was holding this identity, but it was actually changing, and when I'm moving into a different, I need to adapt, and through adapt process, once I went through that process of adapting and accepting who I was, I think, I was here, and accepted in society how it was, and how it is, and I learned to be open

4.12. Kay's Story

Kay came to Canada over 20 years ago, emigrating from a small city in Ukraine. She is the only child of professional parents; her mother was a massage therapist at the local hospital and her father was a teacher who became the director of a school. Becoming a teacher herself then easily followed from her parents' influence, "I grew up between, among the people who were either in nursing or doctors or teachers, so no other professions were even an option, or a consideration." She comments that "since I did not like blood or the thought of blood," becoming a teacher was inevitable.

When she was a child, Kay had two dolls that she used to teach; "I had my dolls, two of them, that's all I had, and set up my, you know, mini classroom, in the hallway, and I taught them, and I taught them my name in different writings." She recalls her parents being upset that she had taught her dolls to write by writing her own name all over the wallpaper on the walls in the small apartment, as well as on the windows and cupboards. She laughs at her zealousness, and comments that her behaviour led to her becoming a teacher, "that was my inspiration." She recalls dreaming of running her own school, "I always grew up since a kid wanting to have a school of my own and it would be up on a mountain," where the "kids would be happy and knowledgeable."

As a young child, Kay was raised in the village, outside of the city, and since her parents worked in the city, she spent a great deal of time with her grandmother. Her grandmother would take her to kindergarten and then later pick her up to take Kay back to the office where she worked as an accountant. While Kay would wait for her grandmother to finish her day, she would pass the time playing on an old typewriter and interacting with the adults that came into the office. She recalls that sometimes her father would pick her up and take her for the afternoon to his school, where she would watch him teach.

After her kindergarten year, her parents moved to the city, wanting to raise her as a city girl rather than in the village. She comments that where you lived had an effect on how you were perceived in society, "urban and rural is perceived differently there than here, here you want to be in a rural setting because it, you know, shows wealth, there it shows, poverty, and less intelligence." Once she moved to the city she was in school full days; but, after school she would go to either of her parents' workplaces. She is not

sure whether her exposure to her father's teaching influenced her career choice, but she states,

I was kind of always among people, I don't know, what led to make that decision, I guess that with working people and kids, I don't know, I don't really know what really were the exact, you can't really put a finger on it, I think it was just an accumulation of things, and it just made sense

Kay comments that becoming a teacher for her was a logical choice as graduation "offered guaranteed job, so I knew that in four years I would have a job, I knew I would have good qualification, and it would be, um, credible in other cities." So at the age of 14, having completed compulsory schooling, she chose to attend the pedagogical university four-year teacher training program. The other option, continuing schooling for two more years, opened further career options, but it meant being out of the workforce for longer.

With both of her parents working in government jobs under Communist rule, there were often times when the government could not afford to pay employees. Months would go by without any salary income, but bills still needed to be paid. Choosing to go into teaching allowed Kay the opportunity to work sooner, and to spend summer months working at various jobs to help her parents pay the bills. A further incentive to enter the teacher's college came in the way of a scholarship. As a result of her high grades, Kay was offered a small stipend to attend the pedagogical university; she received two dollars a month pay for each month she attended. She states that the decision to become a teacher in Ukraine then "was just an accumulation of things, and it just made sense."

She recalls her teacher training as being intensive. In addition to her coursework she was obligated to complete volunteer work, read outside the curriculum, and participate in extracurricular activities outside of school. She remembers working at an orphanage, as well as working with exotic animals, as part of her volunteer activities. She states that she participated in every sport that was available, and was involved in drama events. Kay notes that students in the program were "obligated to go to the library with a list of books we were obligated to read" even over the summer break. The

training program, apart from its academic and extracurricular expectations, had students observing in classrooms in preparation for teaching throughout the four-year program. She recalls that students were mentored by senior teachers who had been specially chosen due to their wealth of experience. She feels the four-year program was an extensive preparation for teaching,

a four year education being fully immerged into the classroom watching someone teach before you can even contemplate the thought of being in front of the kids, so yes, it did not allowed for creativity because you are already, kind of, shaped into partially what that teacher, and what their practice

When she completed the teacher's training program, she had ample experience already in classrooms and so stepped without concern straight into a teaching position.

Kay's first teaching position was in a pilot program where, under the Communist rule, it was decided that children at the age of six would attend full day school--enabling more parents to work. The program that Kay entered saw her in a five year rotation; she was given a group of students that she would teach for five consecutive years, from kindergarten through grade four. She notes the benefits of having the same children for five years was that "you get to see how they change, you get to see how they, you kind of become it, you become their number one teacher, ya, and you develop good relationship."

Part of her role was to develop relationships with parents, since parents were integral to school operations. The government maintained the external building and grounds, but parents were responsible for all internal maintenance and school upgrades. Kay comments that certain parents were more involved in maintaining the school than were others, "but then the expectation was that that kid would not fail so bribery was, was quite ah, not encouraged, but it wasn't discouraged either." It was expected that Kay would make regular home visits. So, Kay states, "once a month or once in two months I actually had to go to parents' house and just have visit and have tea, see what the environment is like, at home." It was mandatory that these visits be recorded with audiotapes subsequently turned over to the district office, for KGB access if required:

they had to know everything and anything about everyone, so lots of paperwork, you would be supplied with questions, or whatever you looking for, so they would tell you what you looking for, and you had to provide them information and if you don't then you would be questioned, but I mean it was easy, but like, you know, the school is here, and the parents, like they all been houses in a row, so it's not like I'm walking all over the city, you could do it in one night, so there was no such thing as parent teacher interviews

She comments that at the age of 16, doing some of these visits made her uneasy due to the nature of the families she needed to contact; for these she would take her father along for support.

The school day started for Kay at 8 a.m. and went to 2 p.m.; then there was a session that followed from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. School space was at a premium so younger children attended mornings and the older students attended in the later session. Kay surmises that they did not have parent teacher interviews at the school as the space could not accommodate these. The classrooms held two-seat wooden desks and there were 40-42 students in each class, and this was the same at every grade level, including kindergarten. Kay was responsible for teaching all subjects other than physical education and music, "I had art, I did Ukrainian language, literature, um, Russian language, and literature as well, so they would have writing and literature, reading, there would be two separate, math, Russian was mandatory." Russian language and literature studies were mandatory due to the political situation, the Russian Communist rule at the time.

Kay was pleased that she was able to earn a salary to help her parents; she made \$18 a month. At this salary level, she states she made more than her mother who had years of experience in her position at the hospital. Kay notes that teachers could make more by substitute teaching in the alternate session, working then a 12 hour day. However, she recalls that you did not make much to compensate for the length of the work day. Kay comments, "there's no such thing as increment, you don't grow" so working extra as a substitute was the only way to enhance your salary and once you were a teacher, your salary did not increase with experience. There was only one other option for increasing your salary and that was to become a mentor teacher as

experienced teachers were placed in a mentoring role with young teachers. However, Kay reflects that you didn't need to be a good teacher to be a mentor, simply older with more experience. She does not recall her own mentor fondly as she believes the teacher was only in the role for the enhanced financial component. She comments that in the system, parents would often bribe teachers, obtaining differing results depending on the individual teacher, "you would have it all the time, parent walk into your classroom, with a bag of something, and I don't think so, but some would, take it, why not."

The expectations within the classroom were high. Kay states that the classrooms were expected to be meticulous. She was responsible for all the materials she used. Teachers were expected to provide these with their own funds and since money was scarce, Kay spent summers developing her own materials.

you provide your own stuff, you pay for your own stuff, no books, no nothing, you are your own resource, you pay for it, you subsidize, no computer, no internet, I mean I spent lots of, in the summer, because it's wee little guys, you have to have lots of things and I used to do a lot of, um, for long term I need to use resources, so I used to carve out of wood flowers and leaves and teddy bears with Ukrainian outfits on, because I wanted to have those resources to last for years

Classrooms were monitored and the expectations for teacher were high as teachers were continually subject to evaluation: "I could have 20 administrators come into my class, watch me teach and I did not know that was coming, so they would just walk into class and have a seat and I have to carry on." Kay states that at all times,

the expectation was class start, everything had to be already like, right here, like the board had to have, like all objectives, things written quickly, that all had to be done, classroom has to be immaculate, you had to have plants in the classroom, you had to have other wildlife, there were expectations so you don't just walk into bare walls, they had to see that the classroom was clean, active, and the teachers are doing whatever magic they have to do and kids have to be on the dot

Lesson plans needed to be submitted to a person in authority, somewhat like a vice principal, who weekly ensured that plans were completed appropriately. Kay states that lesson plans were extensive and held under close scrutiny, “10-20-30 pages long, they would be filed in these huge binders that anyone can just open and look at your lesson plans, what you taught, like five weeks ago, or what you planning three weeks from now.” Lesson plans needed to be logged for the entire year from the start, she would have the opportunity to make minor adjustments, but doing so needed to be discussed with the school administrator. Kay states that creativity was not encouraged as “you can’t just do things on the fly, that wasn’t encouraged, you have to know what happens from now, you had to foresee that.”

Kay does not think she was a good teacher in that school system as a result of her inexperience. She enjoyed her position as a teacher: “I loved the classroom, and I liked the kids, but I think you have to have experience.” Working as a teacher was considered a good job. She assesses her ability as an effective teacher against the older teachers who had many years of experience and feels she falls short. She immigrated to Canada prior to her students completing their final year with her in grade four, and she feels a sense of loss to her identity as a teacher through this; she was not there to share in her students’ success in graduating from the primary level.

Kay came to BC as a result of her parents’ relationship with relatives here; the opportunity came for Kay to have a better life through emigrating. Kay came to Vancouver as a caregiver for a distant relative. She found the move traumatic.

you take heart and soul, you basically take it away from someone and you put them in a foreign environment, foreign people, foreign culture, forced to learn the language overnight, and, and full immersion overnight, um, you know, I think, I think, I don’t know, at 19, um, I don’t know, I think, if I like was 13 or 14 it probably it would have affected me less, but I think at 19, 20 you kind of start to form a little bit, like an adult and I think it can have, I don’t know, it was tough, it was tough, I mean, I miss the language, I miss everything

Kay feels that transitioning here was difficult, especially learning English, which she had not been exposed to in Ukraine. She states that she read a lot of books, with a dictionary at her side, and even “had to start dreaming in English.” She really worked

hard to adjust, but reflects that she, even now, wonders if it was the right path for her in life.

I don't know, I, I don't know if it was the right thing to do, I don't know, I think I lost part of my identity as a result of it, that I, I see it now, I see now, that I miss it and I think, I think, I think it partially affected me, the way I perceive certain things, and how I deal with certain things, it kind of made me little more harsh person, I think so, that's what I think, ya

For the family she lived with in Vancouver, church was part of their lifestyle and Kay became deeply connected with the church both spiritually and socially. In Ukraine, Kay states that she and her parents practiced religious customs and cultural traditions, but because of Communist rule, these practices were not publically acknowledged:

because under Communist we were not allowed to have beliefs, so I went to church, I was baptized in a house with windows closed, priest dressed up as a clown, um, no one was allowed to know or otherwise my parents would lose their job or we would be killed, like that's how severe it was, we weren't, we had an icon in the house, we hide it, and I was not allowed to um, speak about religion, I was not allowed to mention to anyone that I went to church

She notes that she went to church in a village far from her own and an elderly aunt took her—with Kay dressed in some other clothes to make her unrecognizable. Kay offers that “we had that faith, that belief, and I knew, we had the traditions,” but they never spoke openly about their spirituality. She laughs that they would celebrate religious traditions in their apartment with the windows curtained and the lights off so that they couldn't be detected while others did the same in neighbouring apartments, “in the dark, cause no one was allowed to know, although people next door are doing the same thing.” Coming to BC meant Kay could be open about how important her religious beliefs and cultural traditions are to her sense of self, “I think it is important to believe in something.”

Attending church services and social activities offered Kay a connection with home through language and culture, and ironically this was more poignant than it had been for her in Ukraine. She comments how integral this was to her identity, “that

offered for me, communication and a sense of home, because they spoke Ukrainian and it offered community that I never had, it was taken away by the Communists, and I actually created friendships.” Through the church, she was able to both speak Ukrainian as well as practice her English, as not everyone spoke Ukrainian fluently. She became actively involved with the church choir and joined a small singing group and worked every summer in the church camp for children. She found a lot of encouragement and support through these social networks, and several people she connected with through the church encouraged her to pursue teaching in BC.

Kay met with the BCCT and determined to redo a degree here and then complete a full teacher training program, rather than attend the teacher training program designed for foreign-trained teachers. She felt that she would have better opportunities for employment as a result. She enjoyed completing a bachelor’s degree in fine arts, with a minor in business; however, she did not like the teacher training program. In relation to her own background of teacher preparation, “which was hard core and which was very demanding, very uh, kind of set and very rigid,” she found the training program here not very effective. She felt that she learned a lot through her undergrad degree regarding curriculum. This is the area she did not have background knowledge, for in Ukraine she taught primary school. Here she completed her practicum in fine arts at the high school level. She was pleased that she had ample background in lesson plans and organization in Ukraine, and in these areas she feels she does well.

As she worked as a caregiver for two children prior to enrolling in the teacher training program, she had considerable exposure to the educational system here. However, she does not feel the teacher training program prepared her for the behavioural issues that she confronted, “that it didn’t prepare me for real life experiences so when I walked into a classroom I wasn’t prepared for the behaviour problems, it was right away and I had to deal effectively.” Without encountering behavioural concerns in her classroom in Ukraine, nor the ethnic diversity she encountered in her teaching here, she felt she needed, “hands on experiences, the tools, cause, you have a lot of behaviour, especially high school, you have a lot of behavioural issues, it’s not about curriculum, it’s about other things too.” Kay found that the mentoring she received through her practica to be the most valuable part of her training experience.

On completion of her training program and on receiving her certification through the BCCT, Kay found work as a long term substitute teacher in the school where she completed her practicum. She feels she was successful in securing employment because of her new identity as a teacher; she sees herself as a blend of her knowledge and training in Ukraine and her ability to adapt to the demands of the BC classroom. She feels she is an efficient and effective teacher, as a result of the extensive training she had in Ukraine, “what makes you strong teacher because you come from very hard working very hard core kind of background.” As well, she now sees herself as talented in building relationships with students, “I like that relationship, I like that dynamic, because it’s challenging.” Further, her innate creativity leads her to seek new and creative methods to reach her students and to keep their interests as she states, “it’s not about just the curriculum, curriculum is there, it what you bring with the curriculum.”

She appreciates the ability she has in the BC system to be flexible and spontaneous; this was not part of how she saw herself as a teacher in Ukraine. She comments that she sees her new identity as a teacher, not as she was in Ukraine, and not fully a Canadian teacher either, but something different than both. She sees she is good at controlling behaviour due to her harshness as a teacher when in Ukraine, “I’m good at it, I’m harsh, I can be really harsh, but I can do, I’m good at it, and I do a lot of, I think, from the experience I believe that, and it’s part of my job.” However, she sees that motivating her students and creating an interesting learning environment are important aspects of how she sees herself as a teacher now, “every class I bring something interesting, I have to, otherwise I will lose them.”

Kay considers her ethnic background an essential aspect of her identity as a teacher in BC. She works in a school with students of primarily South Asian descent and she feels her ability to bring her own background as ‘other’ into relationships is key to her professional practice. She states that her ethnic background, “brings diversity, it makes, it shows that we’re not all the same, because a lot of teachers are white, Caucasian, and when you have accent, I think it brings that other cultural value to the kids.” She does acknowledge that sometimes her background can be a cause for misunderstandings in cross cultural communication. Fundamentally, her identity as a foreign-trained teacher enables her to work with students to adjust racial stereotypes:

when they speak Punjabi I start speaking Ukrainian, and they get, they get like, this is the reaction you get, whoa, whoa, what is that, and, and I would say as soon as they pull the white mark, or racist mark, or comment, I say we are all different, I can speak another language, I am, I am just as different as you are, so you can't, so I talk about, I talk about, judgmental and stereotyping, I talk about stereotyping a lot, because I show them it's not about the color of skin, or the language you speak, it's about the type of human you are

However, she feels that after 20 years she still needs to be cautious of how she presents herself, especially in written communication, "it is just cultural differences, so sometimes it could be, so I have to watch what I say, and I never reply to someone in an email 'cause I wouldn't want to cross that cultural barrier." She feels she speaks well, but in writing she has to watch how others may perceive her in her professional realm, "one thing, the written component, I speak well, but I have to review my things, if I am creating a professional document I have to review." She jokes that she feels much better when she sees that the Canadian-born teachers in her school make errors, as these allow her to forgive her own, "I can see their errors, sometimes I cannot see my own, but I can see their errors, clearly, really you were born in Canada and you write like that, it makes me wonder, but that makes me actually feel better."

Kay now sees herself as an effective teacher, however she feels her professional identity stems from being neither Ukrainian nor Canadian. Even though she has been here for more than half of her adult life, she still feels a sense of 'otherness', as although "fully immersed into that culture because you can't, you can't, you can't become a Canadian if you are not born as a Canadian you cannot, you can become Canadian on paper." Because of the diversity of the immigrant population in Canada, Kay feels that unless you are born Canadian, you are shaped by other forces as a result of the difficulties you have been through. She believes "no one moves to Canada out of pleasure, in most cases, you have someone who comes from hardships."

Kay also no longer sees herself as Ukrainian. After four years here, Kay returned to Ukraine as she needed to make a decision regarding applying for Canadian citizenship. When she was in Ukraine, she vividly remembers being at the market and wanting to buy a painting. She had traveled from her small city to the capital city for a

daytrip and had gone along with a Canadian tour bus, which stopped at the large open market. The market is a busy hub and locals as well as tourists frequent its shops. She knew the painting was over-priced for the tourists, and that the price was not the cost at which that he would have sold it to someone local. She began to bargain with the vendor in Ukrainian. She states that he looked at her and was offended, telling her, “you are not from here, you are from that bus,” and he refused to barter with her. This was a momentous event in the formation of her identity.

I will never forget that, I remember where I was standing, and I will never forget that, and it killed me, it killed my identity, it killed me as a person, because I, for the first time, and the only time, I was rejected by my own people, when someone, an elderly tells you you are not from here, you are from that bus, and I knew that I don't belong, I'm not the same as the people on that bus, and I was like okay, I'm like, okay, if I'm not part of this country, I'm not accepted by my own people, and I will never be accepted by these people, I'm kind of drifting in between, who am I, what am I

She states that that was 16 years ago, and yet she remembers it clearly, “I'll never forget, I remember the moment, I remember what I was doing, I remember what I was wearing.

Kay felt this was a turning point in her determination to forge a new professional identity as a teacher in BC. She decided that she could only go forward, and she acknowledges that she “never looked back.” She feels the identity she has formed now has made her a stronger teacher, she can relate to students from diverse backgrounds and this ‘otherness’ makes her unique.

I think, if you were raised outside of Canada you have a third identity and I think the definition comes from within, it's not a bad thing I think it makes you a lot more diverse, I think it should be something to be proud of

She is not raising her children in the language and culture she was raised in; they are Canadian children. It has also been many years now since she herself has been involved in the church and cultural commitments, as she sees her identity lies between cultures. She feels when her children are old enough to understand the cultural

differences, they too will determine who they want to be, and “they can make the decision if they want to later.” For now, they will be Canadian children with all the opportunities that affords them. She notes, “they are Canadian, ya, if a kid eats peanut butter and jelly, they are Canadian.”

5. Discussion and Results

The life histories of the twelve participants in this study offer insight into their professional identity development through analyses of their movement through different positions in their lives. Their stories offer an understanding of the significance of others in positioning through various contexts. As well, participant stories illuminate identity development through interactions with others that may have posed barriers or provided opportunities. Professional identity development for foreign-trained teachers incorporates both their personal histories and their integration into the sociocultural context and discourse of the teaching profession.

The use of LPA as a methodological framework for the analysis of the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers allows a focus on social practices and professional positioning within new sociocultural contexts. The use of LPA contrasts other narrative methodologies that focus on mentalistic or individualistic views of identity development. LPA, as a unique narrative method, assumes “positioning and changing positions within the sociophysical and sociocultural times, places, and events that define our lives make possible our understanding of ourselves as both subject and objects of our experience” (Martin, 2011, p. 2). Further, LPA, in referring to broader social contexts, incorporates an appreciation for the perspectives of the professional community foreign-trained teachers’ encounter when repositioning in BC classrooms.

A limitation in analyzing participant stories arises from the fact that information was received only through interviews completed with each participant, while the LPA seeks to incorporate multiple perspectives. However, the LPA framework is still ideal for these analyses as it is “an attempt to recapture and reconstruct the broader social, historical contexts within which interactions with significant others occurred” (Martin, 2011, p. 6). As Martin’s (2011) LPA seeks to understand “the lives of persons in context” (p. 6), it is an effective method to illustrate the impact of others in the development of professional identity. LPA follows a Mead understanding of a generalized other which highlights that foreign-trained teachers encounter general perceptions and attitudes through their repositioning efforts. As will be discussed in Section 5.3, this research has shown that foreign-trained teachers have encountered

general bias in relation to acceptance of their accent and language differences in this new context; this, in turn, makes many of them question their own identities. In taking on the attitudes of a generalized other regarding their language abilities, some foreign-trained teachers question their competence in the sociocultural context of BC classrooms.

LPA is specifically apt for use with answering the overarching research question, “How is a foreign-trained teacher’s sense of professional identity affected by work experiences in British Columbia K-12 schools?” as it incorporates an ontological perspective in understanding professional identity as a developmental process. Foreign-trained teachers have a cumulative history that defines their professional identity and has bearing on their ability or desire to integrate new perspectives and possibilities through interactivity with others in new contexts. As the premise of LPA is that social positioning shapes perspectives, and as foreign-trained teachers position themselves in new sociocultural contexts, LPA is particularly useful in providing an understanding of how professional identity is developed, integrating new perspectives, and adjusted through the social practice of teaching in BC classrooms.

Martin’s (2011) LPA is based on the theoretical framework of PET that “stress(s) the importance of moving among different positions within sociophysical, sociocultural, and social, psychological space and time” (p. 1). LPA arises from Mead’s underlying conceptualization of identity emerging through social interactivity with others, both particular others and generalized others. As discussed in Section 3.4, identity development then is understood as developmental, continually emergent through sociocultural involvement, and determined through purposeful, agentic activity (Martin, 2011, p. 1). As foreign-trained teachers encounter new sociocultural contexts in classrooms in BC, their stories have shown how their conceptions of themselves as teachers have changed, with some integrating new perspectives more successfully than others.

As noted, a limitation of the current research is its inability to draw on reflections and input from secondary source materials. While the life histories were drawn from a single interview with participants, no other data sources were accessed. Ideally, this research would have been richer and provided more in-depth analyses if it had the

opportunity to include secondary source materials. As participants emigrated from a number of different countries, accessing information regarding the concrete particulars of interactions with others within their country of origin was impossible. Further, although LPA analyzes positioned experiences and perspectives across different phases of the person's life experiences, accessing information from secondary sources in their present positioning may have proved threatening. Many of the participants noted they feel vulnerable to negative perspectives encountered through their repositioning efforts. Accessing the perspectives of others through eliciting secondary source materials may have increased participants' feelings of vulnerability. Without the benefit of secondary source materials then, the following analyses can be considered a modification of LPA as Martin intended LPA to integrate multiple perspectives.

This chapter will consider the barriers and affordances to professional identity development for foreign-trained teachers in the BC school context through modified LPA. As discussed herein, cumulative histories have significant bearing on the development of professional identity; especially in relation to language barriers as previously noted in research (Beynon et al., 2001; Cruickshank, 2004; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011; Myles et al., 2006; Phillion, 2003; Walsh & Brigham, 2007; Xu, 1999). Phillion's (2003) conclusions that foreign-trained teachers experience prejudicial treatment in systemic, social, and general areas will be reconsidered in light of the current research. Through this chapter, each phase of LPA will integrate and reflect on previous findings in literature regarding foreign-trained teachers and their repositioning efforts.

5.1. Particular Others and Relevant Generalized Others

In this phase, the researcher seeks to identify "particular, influential others" (Martin, 2011, p. 5) and, in addition, consider the effects of relevant generalized others. For the purpose of this analysis, generalized others are those factors considered by the researcher to have had influence on positioning these individuals within broader sociocultural contexts. Mostly this phase of analysis considers what influenced these individuals to become teachers, both initially and in repositioning themselves as teachers in BC.

For most of the participants, positioning as a teacher in their country of origin was seen as an inevitable path. Many of them were positioned as teachers at a young age, having younger siblings to care for, or being placed in a care-giving role by the society in which they were raised. Several were placed in teaching roles and recognized for their efforts in this domain by particular others such as uncles or parents. Many of them took on the role of teaching in Sunday schools at their place of worship or accepted positions as tutors for younger relatives, neighbours, or for those less fortunate within their community. Whether positioned in a teaching role by particular or general others, they were often placed in circumstances where they worked in teaching relationships at a young age, and took on the perspectives of others who saw them in this role.

For all the participants, their life experiences with political and sociocultural perspectives had bearing on their positioning as teachers. For the majority of the participants, growing up in Communist systems offered few options for future careers and so teaching was a viable career path. Several entered teaching in their own countries as a result of financial constraints. Entering pedagogical universities was often a pragmatic decision as teaching afforded relatively easy employment in careers that were considered respectable employment for women in their societies. Some entered university programs as a result of scholarships or financial awards that made teacher training financially feasible.

For the two participants from India, teaching was considered an honourable career. However for both, their families would have preferred they enter scientific and medical fields as these were seen as more lucrative than teaching. In India, class and sect had bearing on their decisions to enter teaching as a profession; their refusal to enter scientific, medical careers meant they lost opportunity to 'better' themselves in seeking marital options at a higher social level.

For the participant from Guyana and the other from Argentina, teaching was an adjunct to what they had grown up doing as a result of the poverty in the society in which they were raised. Both came from families that envisioned education as a means to rise above the constraints imposed by poverty in their society; and, both were positioned at a young age as teachers and caregivers to others less fortunate.

For all the participants, political and sociocultural perspectives had a bearing on how they saw themselves as teachers within their life contexts. Many of them described themselves as teachers, in their country of origin, who were harsh, structured, and lacking spontaneity. Under Communist rule, the system under which many of them taught, they were expected to show unwavering compliance to teaching regulations and methods. Spontaneity in practice was not acceptable. All participants came from teacher-directed systems of education and most saw themselves as capable teachers within this system; one felt she did not have enough experience to gauge whether she was an effective teacher.

The systems in which they were trained affected how they saw themselves as teachers. All but one participant completed teacher training programs in their country of origin and the training was rigid and dogmatic; hours were spent on lesson planning and formalized instruction in rote learning. The two participants that were neither from Europe nor India felt that relationships were important to how they saw themselves as teachers. Several of the participants noted they were young when they entered teaching in their country of origin and as a result implied that they didn't see themselves as strict as the older individuals within the teaching profession there.

For the eight participants from Eastern European countries, teaching did not provide financial stability; they could not make a living from teaching and typically worked in other jobs or tutored privately. Teaching, although a government position, often meant that salaries were jeopardized by political upheaval; teachers were not paid if the government was not financially stable. Further, the stipend, if received, was insufficient for financing a family. Their involvement in private tutoring offered an additional source of income, but also for many of the participants, tutoring offered fulfillment in their role as teacher. Many of them commented that they gauged themselves to be successful teachers when the individuals they tutored went on to experience success in areas of schooling, business, and language acquisition.

The political context in which individuals were raised had significant bearing on their cultural identity. All participants commented that their cultural identity was a core aspect of their professional identity as ethnic minority teachers in BC. Of the eight participants who worked under Communist rule, many commented that their access to

religion and cultural traditions were curtailed in their country of origin. Some commented they were threatened by severe consequences should they be involved in religious or cultural activities--facing confinement or death should they be caught practicing their religious beliefs. Nonetheless, several confided that they practiced religious and cultural traditions in secret regardless of the political condition, commenting that making these practices taboo actually ingrained their value even deeper into their belief systems. Many experienced great relief at the freedom to practice their religious and cultural traditions after their immigration to BC.

Coming to BC, all of the participants commented that religious and cultural aspects were deeply intertwined with their conception of themselves as teachers. Spiritual involvement at times was found to collide with a nondenominational school system in BC. One participant commented that she was chastised as a result of playing gospel music during her preparation time at a school in BC. One participant commented that she was reprimanded for playing a video that mentioned God, while she felt this religious component important in how she saw herself as a teacher imparting information to students. One participant commented that it was God's will that led her to immigrate to Canada and pursue teaching recertification in BC. Every participant commented that spirituality and culture are integral parts of their identity as teachers in BC. For most of the participants, spiritual and cultural aspects are a greater part of their identity as teachers in BC than as teachers in their country of origin. They feel a sense of freedom here to practice their beliefs and maintain cultural connections. These connections are integral to their sense of themselves as minority teachers in BC classrooms. Cultural connections seemed, for the participant who had been in BC the longest, to dissipate with time.

Each participant in the research encountered particular individuals who had influenced their choice of teaching as a career. Particular others tended to note openly the specific characteristics or personal suitability of the participant to a career in teaching. These comments and encouragements were ingrained into the participants' views of themselves, as participants reflected on these being key motivating aspects affirming their natural suitability to teaching. The fact that participants reiterated these comments in the interview, often many years after the initial incident, attests to the

important influence these particular others had on their perceptions of themselves as teachers.

In addition, relevant generalized others in the form of political and sociocultural contexts informed how participants' saw themselves as teachers. Participants raised in a Communist system felt their career options were limited; teaching was a feasible choice within these constraints. Further, on becoming teachers, participants who were trained as teachers in Communist systems tended to view their teaching identities as harsh, assessment based, and non-relational as a result of the regulated teacher-directed systems in which they worked. The participants who were trained and worked as teachers in India saw themselves constrained by poverty within the system; without access to materials and outside resources, they were enveloped in teaching identities that were strict, and focused on rote memory learning and oral assessment. The two participants who were trained in South America taught at private schools where they saw themselves as effective evaluators imparting curricula. However, for both, as a result of the poverty around them, relationships were personally important and they attempted to bring this core value into their identity as a teacher.

Participants formed teaching identities in their country of origin through the influence of particular others and the influences of generalized others: political systems, poverty, and various sociocultural aspects. Many of them iterated specific comments they remember being made by particular others, comments that held great encouragement for them in regard to their suitability for teaching. Many suggested that they had innate talents and natural abilities for teaching that were recognized and nurtured by particular others. Several noted that mentors, with whom they did not have particularly close relationships, seemed to single them out and direct them to teaching as a result of personal attributes participants held. The influence of generalized others, (i.e., Communist systems or societal poverty), had bearing on their professional identity development within teacher-directed systems.

5.2. Positions and Perspectives Occupied and Exchanged at Different Life Phases

In this phase of the analysis the relationships that the participants have occupied or exchanged with particular and generalized others will be considered in light of their repositioning as teachers in BC schools. This analysis will consider the impact of others' perspectives on how participants see themselves as teachers. As well, this phase of the analysis will consider how participants have come to adjust their professional identities as teachers in BC classrooms in light of their experiences negotiating new positions.

All participants when encountering BC classrooms for the first time initially felt anxious about working with students who were different from their previous background experiences. Many of the participants commented that they were not equipped to effectively address the students' ethnic diversity in the classrooms in which they volunteered or worked. Many of them came from societies in which ethnic diversity was not a reality. However, every participant acknowledged their anxieties were short lived. Participants found that they were comfortable with students almost immediately, noting that students in BC were really no different than students where they were from, commenting that "kids are kids everywhere, I think so, they are all the same." Participants found that students were welcoming of the participants' ethnic differences and this acceptance reinforced their belief in their natural abilities as teachers. The students with whom participants worked made them feel comfortable in their role as teachers.

Although sometimes having to address students' cultural insensitivity, for the most part, foreign-trained teachers found affirmation of their identities as teachers in the perspectives of students they encountered in BC schools. Not only did the participants feel welcomed by the students with whom they worked, they found that students were intrigued by their foreign backgrounds. Many participants commented that students went out of their way to build relationships with them as a result of ethnic differences. As research has shown, foreign-trained teachers can act as role models for students of ethnic minority backgrounds (Schmidt & Block, 2010; Bascia, 1996c; Walsh & Brigham, 2007). As Schmidt and Block (2010) argue for the incorporation of foreign-trained teachers as "role models and advocates within the system who can speak their first

languages and relate to their circumstances” so indeed did participants in this research echo this claim. Most of the participants articulated pride in their ability to relate to students who had been through immigration experiences or who came from culturally diverse backgrounds. Participants felt a deep sense of connection with students as a result of their experiences as foreign-trained teachers and through their own immigration experiences. For participants, working with students from diverse ethnic backgrounds engendered confidence in their own identities as ethnic minority teachers. Their professional identities were confirmed in the perspectives of the students with whom they worked, and this engendered natural positioning as role models for students of minority ethnic backgrounds.

Further, being positioned with students with diverse backgrounds offered foreign-trained teachers the opportunity to act as agents for social change. Diverse ethnic student populations offered foreign-trained teachers an ability to connect with students on a global level. Many of the participants commented that they felt a sense of duty to help those students who may be marginalized as a result of any number of issues, as the participants themselves had had similar experiences through their immigration processes. As Zhao (2010) and Kincheloe (2008) have suggested, education needs to involve teachers as advocates for global citizenry and encourage teachers to challenge social injustice. Foreign-trained teachers acknowledge they are uniquely suited to these demands. As Kincheloe (2008) has argued, students need educators who embrace diversity, and “who take seriously the cultivation of civic courage and citizenship” (p. 48). As Santoro (2007) found, “teachers who are ‘other’ to the ‘mainstream’ have a strong commitment to principles of social justice” (p. 83). And, as Su (1997) noted, teachers of ethnic minority backgrounds see a “need for social justice and were prepared to act as social change agents in their teaching roles” (p. 337). Indeed for many of the participants in the current research, being positioned as ‘other’ left them with a deep sense of commitment to social justice and a need to ‘right the wrongs’ facing students who differed from norms.

In contrast to experiencing embracing or validating perspectives from students, foreign-trained teachers encountered a sense of ‘otherness’ in trying to fit in with adults and colleagues. Two of the participants who completed the teacher training program for non-foreign-trained teachers found that they experienced a deep isolation when

positioned with Canadian-born students in the program. They commented that they perceived they were set apart due to their ethnic differences, that they were 'other' to the norm. Other participants commented that to varying degrees they experienced a feeling of 'otherness' while volunteering or through their teaching practica. Many even encountered discrimination as a result of their ethnic differences. Bhatia (2002) has stated that "being othered or racialized is part of many non-European/Western immigrants' acculturation experience, and these experiences are tightly knit with their evolving conceptions of a selfhood that is hyphenated, fractured and in-between" (p. 71). These experiences echo similar findings in literature that state that foreign-trained teachers experience a "sense of 'difference,' of 'otherness'" as a consequence of their ethnic differences (Bascia, 1996a; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Santoro, 2007).

Participants who had experienced longer periods of employment in BC schools determined that this feeling of 'otherness' dissipated with time and through long term relationships with colleagues. However, all participants reflected that they had felt, and some continue to feel set apart from other teachers because their ethnicity is negatively associated with their teaching ability. For participants who have resisted oppressive attitudes towards their ethnic backgrounds and have embraced their ethnic differences, being positioned as an ethnic minority teacher in BC schools has direct bearing on their confidence in their professional identity. One participant openly commented that she can use her ethnic minority identity as leverage; she uses her ethnic differences to portray to her students that ethnicity is not a barrier in itself. Those participants who still feel a sense of 'otherness' as a result of their ethnic differences report less confidence in their identities as successful teachers. This also seems to occur mostly for participants with less long term experience in BC schools.

One participant was deeply affected by the perspectives of particular others with whom she came into contact during her immigration experiences. Through these meetings she was told to change her name, being directed that her name made her seem too ethnic, and thus, less employable in BC. She was also directed to remove work and educational experiences from her resume to avoid being seen as overqualified. These incidents deeply affected her sense of herself as a professional, as an ethnic minority teacher. Combined with a lack of mentoring relationships and a negative teaching experience, this participant has chosen not to pursue teaching as a career in

BC. To this day, she comments that she goes by an Anglicized name, and her colleagues are vaguely aware of her particular ethnic background. She feels she needs to lose her ethnic identity to capitulate or comply to the perspectives of those with whom she works in a professional capacity.

Relationships with particular others have been instrumental in defining how foreign-trained teachers define themselves in BC schools. Participants who have had experiences with positive mentors have had successful practica and feel they are respected as teachers in this new context. Mentorship has been a key aspect of foreign-trained teachers positioning as teachers in BC schools. Participants have relayed comments regarding the importance of mentors and noted how much this positive support has encouraged them to continue with teaching as a profession. All participants spoke strongly about the faculty support they received through their teacher training program here, and appreciated that faculty was respectful of the participants' perspectives. Only one participant reflected that she did not feel supported by her faculty associate. This participant was also not successful in passing the practicum component of the training program, and has a negative perspective on the experience overall. Most of the participants suggested that they were successful as a result of the welcoming and enveloping perspectives of the faculty members.

A crucial aspect for all participants when immigrating here was to seek comparable perspectives to their own. All participants commented strongly on the importance of cultural community; most attended a church here. Although all participants had strong feelings about maintaining cultural traditions, these seem to dissipate with time for the participants with extensive teaching experience. It was imperative to all participants to connect with a community of support from a similar cultural background in their early experiences in BC. Finding a cultural community offers foreign-trained teachers a sense of support both for cultural traditions and for social purposes. Many teach presently at Sunday schools or in programs tied to places of worship. One participant states that she had a very difficult time adjusting to the context in BC as a result of not being able to connect with her own culture; she was unable to find a cultural community to replace what she had left behind. Connections with cultural communities offer participants a source of emotional and social support--something they all acknowledge as a loss resulting from their immigration. Several of the participants

stated that it was through relationships with particular others in their cultural community that they found the guidance and/or encouragement to pursue certification as a teacher in BC.

The encouragement received by participants through relationships with particular others encountered through their efforts to reposition themselves as professionals in BC had great impact on these efforts. Each participant directly acknowledged the support of at least one particular person in facilitating her professional identity development. All participants found acceptance through the perspectives of the students with whom they came into contact. Students from ethnically diverse backgrounds offered important opportunities for foreign-trained teachers for advocacy and connections. Primarily, moving from a teacher-directed system into the student focussed system in BC classrooms was a catalyst for change in how foreign-trained teachers adjusted their professional identities. Relationships with colleagues and students provided opportunities for new perspectives and positions and these, in turn, prompted changes in how they began to see themselves as teachers in BC.

5.3. Thematic Analysis of Positions/Perspectives

The purpose of Phase 3 of the LPA is to identify common salient themes that arise from an analysis of positioning experiences and differing perspectives encountered in life. For the purposes of this research, this analysis will consider common themes in relation to findings reported by Phillion (2003) that suggest foreign-trained teachers face three levels of obstacles: systemic, social, and general. The discussion ensuing considers systemic concerns to include barriers such as cost, access, and timeframe to certification in BC, as well as the level of success achieved by this participant group in reestablishing themselves as teachers in BC. Social affordances for foreign-trained teachers include a cultural community of care, mentorship, and spiritual connections; social barriers include discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. Finally, a discussion of the general obstacles faced by foreign-trained teachers will consider the role of language and accent in their repositioning efforts.

Although the ensuing analysis follows Phillion's categorization of obstacles, it could be argued that as accent and language issues posed pervasive barriers to the

professional identity development of the foreign-trained teachers in this research, accent and language concerns are more suitably categorized as systemic barriers. The lack of acceptance of foreign-trained teachers' accents and language deficiencies ensued from the professional teaching community itself, and thus can be considered a systemic issue. LPA would suggest that general professional community attitudes regarding accent and language issues constitute the generalized other; foreign-trained teachers take on the perspectives of the generalized attitudes they encounter through their repositioning efforts. As a consequence, the professional teaching community's negative perspectives in regard to foreign accents and language cause foreign-trained teachers to question their professional identities and competence in the BC school system.

5.3.1. Systemic

Phillion (2003) found that foreign-trained teachers face systemic barriers when repositioning as professionals in new contexts. These barriers include a lack of recognition and acceptance of education and teaching experience from their country of origin, as well as costs both financially and in the time required to complete recertification. Finally, as participants have noted, there is still no guarantee of employment at the end of this arduous path.

For many participants, repositioning as a teacher in BC schools has challenged their sense of professional identity. Many participants reflected on the dichotomy between being positioned as a professional teacher for immigration purposes versus feeling professionally devalued as they negotiated the recertification processes for teaching in BC. Participants commented on the extensive costs and lengthy timeframe involved in being repositioned as a teacher in BC. For most of the participants, the costs accrued for the process of recertification, when they already were teachers, have been significantly high, leaving many of them managing financial burdens and laden with debts. Several of the participants took many years to complete the recertification process to establish themselves as teachers in BC. Specifically, it took much time to obtain the background educational requirements, complete required volunteer hours, complete the teacher training program, and correspond with the BCCT to have documentation accessed. Positioning themselves as teachers in BC has often had an

adverse effect on their lives financially as well as personally. Some participants openly acknowledge that they have invested so much time in attempting to reposition themselves in BC that they cannot return to their country of origin. For, they have been away for too long with too little to show for their efforts.

Additionally, although all but one participant came with previous teacher training, participants felt that they were placed in a position where their professional and educational backgrounds were not valued. Most participants commented on the elusive nature of document assessment; they found they were not involved in the process of determining educational equivalency, nor did they understand how decisions were made by the BCCT. This finding supports similar results found in relevant literature (Beynon et al., 2004). In contrast, although previous literature states that one of the difficulties for foreign-trained teachers in repositioning themselves is access to information, many participants in this study found that information was readily available. While many of them were prompted by particular others to seek information on recertification, the information was reported to be readily accessible. Although Phillion (2003) found this to be an impediment to foreign-trained teachers positioning in new contexts, the findings here did not completely support this concern. Perhaps as a result of the technological gains since 2003 when Phillion reported this concern, this is no longer an issue; two participants noted that they even found online information regarding the recertification process in BC while they were still in their country of origin. However, there was some misunderstanding regarding the role of the BCCT. Specifically, some participants commented that, because it was called a “college,” they mistakenly assumed that they would be completing their required studies with the BCCT.

A prevalent concern regarding repositioning as a teacher in BC was in the devaluing of previous experience. Participants in the study often felt that their perspectives, based on experience in other countries and systems, should be valued in the BC education system. Participants often had fluency in other languages and experience teaching in other languages that were not credited; foreign-trained teachers were often bringing skills and abilities beyond those acquired by teachers presently teaching in BC classrooms. These findings are supported by previous research in concluding that foreign-trained teachers find that their previous teaching experience and educational training obtained in their countries of origin are often undervalued or

disregarded (Beynon et al., 2004; Myles et al., 2006; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011; Quiocho & Rios, 2000; Walsh & Brigham, 2007). Schmidt's (2010) observation that the repositioning efforts of foreign-trained teachers are "made more complex when the very education systems these teachers are trying to access fail to value the contributions of educators with languages, cultures, and backgrounds different from those of the mainstream teaching force" (p. 1) are echoed in the concerns expressed by the participants in this research.

Participants commented that they felt professionally devalued as there was no process for incorporating their previous experience. For some of them, this meant that several years of employment was rendered meaningless. One participant commented, "they put me through all this again, and then I came to the working, they have not considered my working, and I am at zero." Participants feel invalidated or diminished when previous teaching experience is not recognized. They are not recognized professionally for their wealth of knowledge and insight, nor are they awarded salary enhancement commensurate to their actual training and experience. Foreign-trained teachers, regardless of previous experience in another country are placed at zero for increment years for their salary, and this in turn has impact on important related issues: maternity or educational leaves, seniority, and retirement. Fundamentally, foreign-trained teachers coming to BC with teaching experience in other countries feel that they are positioned as beginning teachers and thus their experiences are devalued in the perspectives of those with whom they work in the BC school system.

Many of the participants were surprised by the systemic devaluing of their professional identities as reflected in their inability to acquire continuous employment. Participants accessed information on recertification processes, completed requisite coursework and volunteer work, and were successful in completing their teacher training program; however, many were surprised and dismayed at the length of time it took them to secure employment. Of those who have secured employment, only two are working full time, others have found intermittent work as teachers-on-call, or are awaiting their certification having recently completed their teacher training program. Two participants are not seeking employment as teachers: one failed the teacher training program and the other is disillusioned with teaching in BC. Table 5.1 details the employment information for participants in this research.

Table 5.1. Demographic Background of Participants: Employment

Name	Age	Country of Origin	Years in Canada	Recertified	Presently Employed	TOC	F/T
Serenity	39	Bulgaria	7.0	Pending	No		
Valerie	38	Kazakhstan	9.0	No/Failed	No		
Natalya	33	Ukraine	6.0	Recently	No		
Diana	42	India	2.5	Recently	No		
Valexey	44	Bulgaria	12.0	Yes	Yes		Yes
Katia	46	E. Europe	13.0	Yes/N/A	No		
Lisa	55	India	4.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Lina	40	Ukraine	8.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Maros	37	Czech Republic	9.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Lea	33	Guyana	4.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Ines	32	Argentina	7.0	Pending	No		
Kay	40	Ukraine	20.0	Yes	Yes		Yes

Note. Data retrieved from Demographic Form.

According to the data provided in Table 5.1, the average number of years in Canada for participants is slightly over five years. Country of origin seems to have no bearing on employability levels once recertified as teachers in BC. Other than one participant choosing not to pursue teaching, and a second not completing the teacher-training program successfully, all participants who have received their recertification are presently employed as teachers, albeit most of them as teachers-on-call rather than in full-time employment. It is interesting to note that the two participants who have spent the most years in Canada (apart from one participant who chose not to pursue teaching), are the only two who have found full-time employment. This reflects BC Statistics data noting immigrants with a university degree having been in BC greater than five years have a higher employment rate than those having been in BC less than five years (BC Stats, 2011a, p. 3). Also, these two individuals also completed the teacher training program for non-foreign-trained teachers, PDP, rather than the program developed for foreign-trained teachers, PQP. However, due to the small sample size, it is impossible to make claims that one program within the educational system may be a better indicator of employment success than another.

The most significant systemic aspect that appeared to influence the development of professional identity was the change in positioning from a teacher-directed system to

a student-focused system, as one participant commented “everything was very new to me, the system, the entire system was new to me.” All participants’ commented that this positional exchange enabled a new understanding of teacher-student interactions. Exposure to these new conventions enabled participants to reflect on their previous training and to adjust their methods and relationships with students. Many participants commented that they grew enormously from this positional exchange and that their identities as teachers were adjusted accordingly. Most participants reflected that they were different teachers now, given this exchange of perspectives. They often commented that they now had the best of both worlds: an appreciation for structure in their teaching, as well as a new focus on teacher-student relationships.

All of the participants who continued with teaching in BC saw themselves as better teachers as a result of this positional exchange and many commented that learning to work with students with special needs and behavioural concerns opened up new perspectives on education. All participants came from systems wherein special needs students either did not attend an educational program or were in segregated schools. Having special needs students included in their classrooms in BC posed challenges for many of them with respect to learning how to meet individual student needs and to manage classroom discipline. Duchesne and Stitou (2011) comment that foreign-trained teachers need to become accustomed to classroom management strategies in the Canadian student-centred educational model, involving a reconceptualization of the role of learners within the classroom as active participants in learning. Participants commented that due to the educational streaming and the academic rigour in the systems in which they worked in their country of origin, this was not an area of challenge or need in their previous work as teachers.

Many participants, although finding it challenging to deal with a diversity of student needs, respected incorporating an inclusionary perspective. Some commented that they wish they had had the opportunity to experience this new position while they were teaching in their country of origin. So, they were pleased with their new professional identities as they were now able to interact with students from a broader conceptualization of the educational process.

5.3.2. Social

Phillion (2003) states that foreign-trained teachers face racism and discrimination in their repositioning efforts and these findings are also supported in other research (Schmidt, 2010b; Quijano & Rios, 2000; Deters, 2011). Through interviews with twelve foreign-trained teachers regarding their professional identity development, the findings from literature regarding racism and discrimination are substantiated by this research.

All foreign-trained teachers interviewed commented on their experiences with discrimination related to their ethnic background. One commented that she experienced direct racial treatment as a result of her “nationality, ya, of course, my identity, they hated, especially in some schools, I can say that they are racists.” Participants commented that they experienced discriminatory treatment such as:

- Practicum placements at great distances from their homes
- Practicum placements at grade levels with which they were unfamiliar
- Practicum placements with teachers who were unaccepting of racial differences
- Exclusion from meetings
- Lack of communication of requirements and expectations
- Not being employed due to their ethnic background

Participants commented that in the above noted situations, they were treated differently from others who were Caucasian. Ironically, as several of the participants were Caucasian, they perceived themselves as ethnically different, ‘other than,’ Canadian-born Caucasian teachers. Interestingly, foreign-trained teachers each dealt with issues encountered in one of two ways. Some felt experiencing discrimination gave them a stronger identity as an ethnic minority teacher, and thus enabled them to be more effective role models for students from different ethnic backgrounds. These individuals felt that discrimination may be an inevitable aspect of repositioning themselves in a new context; they took these experiences as opportunities to grow stronger in their ethnic identities. Others found the discriminatory practices they encountered debilitating--one to such an extent that she chose not to pursue teaching. Another felt discrimination was the cause of her being unsuccessful in the teacher training program.

Although the theme of discrimination arose as a social barrier to participants' professional repositioning, social aspects were also reported to overwhelmingly be an affordance to identity development. All participants, on immigrating, sought cultural and spiritual connections within a community of similar backgrounds. Participants often commented how it was a relief to be able to converse in their own language, as they sought comfort in connecting with their cultural roots. These cultural communities offered social opportunities where participants met friends and mentors who encouraged and guided them through recertification efforts. The participant from Guyana found it difficult to find a similar cultural group here. She comments how she floundered without a social connection with someone from a similar cultural background to hers. For the participant in BC the longest period of time, these cultural connections are no longer as crucial in her life. The longer she has been here, the less she has sought out opportunities for cultural connections, having replaced these with connections with others from differing cultural backgrounds.

A common theme that was unanticipated at the outset of this research was the importance of spirituality. All participants spoke of a deep spiritual aspect in their lives that gave meaning to their lives. This spiritual connection was paramount to the participants' sense of well-being and in their psychological integration of perspectives. Spirituality became an anchor to their past life experiences. Often participants commented on how their spirituality was expressed through cultural traditions. Most participants with children also felt a sense of duty in passing these spiritual connections to their children. Often connection with a place of worship here offered social connections, and many have found deep friendships through common spiritual beliefs.

Findings in this research support conclusions that foreign-trained teachers face social barriers through discrimination (Phillion, 2003; Schmidt, 2010b). The discrimination foreign-trained teachers confronted is attributed to both particular others encountered through work experiences, as well as systematic discrimination through their recertification and efforts to find employment. However, spiritual or cultural connections with people of similar backgrounds supported the integrity of their culture of origin, their cumulative histories, and provided a community of care that offered affordances to their repositioning efforts.

5.3.3. General

Phillion (2003) found that language fluency and a lack of acceptance of foreign accents posed obstacles for the integration of foreign-trained teachers. Other research has supported the claim that foreign-trained teachers face discrimination based on their accents, difficulties with context specific language, and unfamiliarity with idiomatic expressions (Beynon et al., 2001; Cruickshank, 2004; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011; Myles et al., 2006; Phillion, 2003; Walsh & Brigham, 2007; Xu, 1999). Participants in the current research all noted concerns with their language fluency levels as well as their accents. Many acknowledged that they experienced negative perspectives from within the teaching community, generalized community bias, in regard to their accents and language errors. Taking on the perspectives of this generalized other affected how they see themselves as teachers, questioning their professional identities and competency.

Participants noted that their language abilities and accents immediately situated them as 'other' in their teaching experiences. Participants appreciated that through their training here they were given the confidence to address their accents and language deficiencies in a forthcoming manner. Participants stated that they often spoke openly with students, acknowledging that they may mispronounce words or that they had accents reflecting their first language. Participants commented that being perceived as 'other' as a result of their accents was unavoidable, "no matter what level you have, you still have accent and students will, will hear it, and it, it just gives, puts you in some position, gives some impact, you being from outside." However, most participants found that openly acknowledging their language deficiencies and being open to correction from students enabled them to have better relationships with students.

Some of the foreign-trained teachers directly experienced negative repercussions as a result of their accents. One participant felt challenged by students in a math class when a small group of students who were doing poorly suggested to their parents, and consequently the administration, that their poor achievement was a result of the foreign-trained teacher's accent. Another participant changed her practicum placement as she felt the teacher mentor with whom she was paired took exception to her accent. While yet another participant felt unsupported by the administration when a parent requested

her daughter be removed from class as a result of the foreign-trained teacher's accent having a negative effect on her daughter's learning.

For the most part, foreign-trained teachers in this research felt themselves to be at a disadvantage as a result of their accents or their lack of English fluency. Several commented that it took a great deal of time for them to practice the lexicon specific to their subject area. One participant listened to audio tapes, practicing her pronunciation while at her part-time job. Others commented that the time needed to develop language proficiency at a level acceptable to the colleagues they encountered in teaching was extensive. Participants commented that having an accent made Canadian-born teachers perceive them to be less intelligent and less capable, stating they were made to feel "inferior if you have an accent, because you are not from here."

Ultimately, foreign accents and language proficiency levels were the most pervasive theme in the experiences of foreign-trained teachers in developing professional identities in BC. Many participants questioned their own identities as teachers on the basis of their language proficiency. Specifically, participants commented that their accents and language concerns were an issue with colleagues within the teaching profession who resultantly positioned foreign-trained teachers as 'other.' The biases encountered within the generalized other of the teaching community had a significant impact on the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers as foreign-trained teachers took the perspectives of others toward themselves.

Time was the one factor that foreign-trained teachers felt alleviated this concern. Many stated that these concerns were dissipated with time as they became more 'Canadianized' and their accents were less pronounced. Language proficiency was directly related to how confident they felt as teachers in BC and may be directly connected with employment rates. These results are substantiated by BC Statistic's claims that full time employment rates for immigrant professionals increase over time (BC Stats, 2011a, p. 3). It may be that employability is directly linked to perceptions of the language proficiency levels of foreign-trained teachers. With extended interactivity with the social perspectives and sociocultural context of BC classrooms, foreign-trained teachers experienced less bias from the teaching community. Foreign-trained teachers who had extended periods of employment in BC commented that they felt more

competent as teachers over time; although they still acknowledged their greatest challenge within the teaching community is how their accents and language abilities are perceived. Further research with individuals over extended periods of time is needed to support this hypothesis.

5.4. Integration of Defining Positions and Perspectives

According to the theoretical conceptions underlying LPA, all individuals, including foreign-trained teachers, have direct experiences in social interactions that facilitate or hinder integration of various perspectives. Each of the participants travelled a path that was unique in their relationships with others and these relationships had bearing on their professional identity development. The following is a summary of each participant's ability to integrate the various positions they have experienced, and how they have consequently developed professional identities as teachers in BC schools, or not, as in the case of two participants.

5.4.1. *Serenity*

Growing up in a Communist system, Serenity identifies with Communistic tenets; she is pragmatic, sees purpose in work, and is often resigned to the positions in which she has been placed. Serenity has tried to distance herself from these roots in immigrating and seeking a better life for her and her family. However, regardless of the difficulties before her, she is dogmatic, noting, "you have to adjust, you're, you have to live another life." In coming to Canada, Serenity acknowledges that here people also have problems. This view, along with her acceptance of her struggles, again identifies her with Communist underpinnings. Serenity calmly accepts that language concerns are paramount to her professional identity and accepts that others have a right to judge her in this regard. She measures her teaching abilities through the acceptance of others; as a result she spends hours working to improve her language abilities. She accepts the perspectives of others in positioning her as a less than competent teacher as a result of her language deficiencies. She comments that "you are going to be a teacher and it just makes sense if you can't speak you won't make a good teacher."

5.4.2. Valerie

Valerie, although raised in a Communist system, has spent much of her adult life in efforts to distance herself from Communist tenets, where her dreams were so limited. Traveling as a young adult and working in other parts of the world opened possibilities for Valerie. Her personality is one of determination; her grandmother instilled in her strength of character and a hopeful perspective that she applies in all areas of her life. Valerie perceives and integrates into her identity a perspective of herself as a successful teacher, as she believes that she was an effective teacher in her country of origin. Having failed to meet the learning outcomes of the teaching program here, Valerie has chosen to distance herself from the perspectives of those she encountered at the university here. Instead, she still conceives of herself as a teacher and chooses to hold fast to a one-sided view of herself as a successful teacher. Her inability to integrate the positions of those in the university training program has left her bitter about the educational processes in BC, and feeling that she has been treated unfairly as a result of her ethnicity. Knowing she will not teach in public schools in BC, she chooses to pursue teaching related activities through her community. Although, she continues to have difficulty reconciling her failure with her professional identity.

5.4.3. Natalya

Natalya was heavily influenced by the perspectives of her parents. She felt she went into teaching as a result of her mother's wishes for her before her mother died. Her father and her stepmother, as well, encouraged Natalya in this career choice. Natalya chose to integrate these perspectives into her own in stating she always knew she would be a teacher. Natalya chose to distance herself from the Communist system in her country of origin as she saw few opportunities under this system. She spent time in another country prior to coming to BC in an effort to learn English and distance herself from her previous identity. As a caregiver in BC, she integrated the perspective of her employer that she should indeed pursue teaching. Through successful experiences in the teacher training program, Natalya was able to successfully integrate new perspectives and has developed a professional identity that she feels prepares her for teaching in BC.

5.4.4. Lisa

Having been educated in a private religious setting, Lisa identifies with the fundamentals of her religious training. Although influenced by her father's perspective that teaching was a noble profession, she feels she is a teacher as a result of this career being a religious calling for her. Lisa reflects on the different positions in various phases of her life with calm acceptance; she taught for many years in India prior to teaching in Dubai. Each of these systems, she feels, offered perspectives that informed her professional identity. She believes she has natural attributes that identify her as a teacher regardless of the social situations she faces. She is able to integrate this view of herself as she was successful in teaching in both systems; she saw that others perceived of her as competent. Coming to BC, Lisa has had problems integrating differing perspectives. Although she has enjoyed developing a new professional identity in a student-focussed system, she has had difficulty understanding the subjectivity of the recertification process. She cannot accept that the system devalues her years of experience and her level of skill: she feels discriminated against as an ethnic minority teacher. Although she still feels that teaching is akin to a missionary calling, she is somewhat dejected by the perspectives she has encountered in repositioning herself as a teacher in BC.

5.4.5. Valexy

Valexy left a corrupt political system and a defunct moral society to provide her family with greater opportunities. In distancing herself from a socialist paradigm she has adopted a hopeful perspective on life. In her previous country, she states no matter what you did, life did not change. While here, she feels opportunities are bounded only by your own efforts. For Valexy, connecting with a community of similar perspectives is crucial to her life here; she is avidly involved in the Bulgarian community and appreciates the opportunity to be with individuals who come from the same background as she does. In her efforts to reestablish herself as a teacher in BC, Valexy has developed intersubjectivity: she believes that relationships are the crux of integrating new perspectives into her professional identity.

5.4.6. Katia

Katia has not been successful in integrating the new perspectives she has encountered in BC. Katia has never distanced herself from her country of origin and this inability to separate has been further intensified by the death of her sister. Katia often travels back to be with her family and she feels strongly that her roots are still in her country of origin. Although Katia successfully found employment here as a teacher in a private school, she could not reconcile her perceptions of herself as a teacher in her native country and in adapting her professional identity to what she encountered here. She was deeply affected by her experiences with embassy and employment services staff here who, she felt, denied her ethnic identity as she stated, “you arrive here, and they tell you to change your name, so it’s such a different, it’s huge, and many people can’t, can’t get over it;” she feels that here her background, her history, and her identity “mean nothing.” She was disillusioned by the low standards she saw for both achievement and behaviour in the BC school system. Katia was unable to integrate these new perspectives. Unwilling to develop her professional identity as a teacher here, she has thus chosen not to pursue teaching in BC. Katia is currently unfulfilled and unhappy in her job. However, as a result of the opportunities here for her son’s future, she feels she cannot return to her home country and the perspectives she still holds from there.

5.4.7. Lina

Lina has a deep connection with her spirituality and cultural traditions. She notes that this is probably a response to the Communist control of her country when she was growing up. She feels people were more entrenched in their religion in an effort to maintain their cultural identity. In coming to BC, Lina has integrated this perspective in her life here as she is very involved in her church, teaching Sunday school and raising her children in its teachings. Lina’s influence to be a teacher came strongly through her relationships with her own teachers as well as her older sister’s decision to enter teaching. Lina is very open to integrating new perspectives and feels she learns something every day she teaches here. Her open and flexible approach to change has allowed her to easily develop a new professional identity in working in a student-

focussed system. She is passionate about teaching in BC, and centered in her religious and cultural identity.

5.4.8. Maros

Maros was destined to be a teacher as her parents were teachers and both her siblings aspired to be teachers. Further, she felt encouraged to pursue teaching as a result of encouraging relationships with her own teachers. With little opportunity in her country of origin, she pursued work abroad in another country prior to coming to BC as a caregiver. These experiences enabled her to see different perspectives in working with children. She has incorporated the student-focussed system and adjusted her identity as a teacher in BC. She wishes she had been able to adjust her identity similarly when she first started teaching, but recognizes these perspectives were not available to her then. Although she values the professional identity she has developed here, she still questions her ability. She is conscious of the perspectives she encountered through her recertification process and judges herself accordingly; she is very conscious of how others perceive her language abilities. She sees her identity as a teacher reflected through other's perceptions of her, and continues to question herself on the basis of her language and accent.

5.4.9. Lea

Lea, growing up as the oldest of five, naturally took on the role of teacher, and absorbed her mother's perspective on the value of education. Lea was also strongly encouraged by mentors who placed her in teaching and learning opportunities. Surrounded by poverty in her society, Lea grew to appreciate the importance of relationships in her role as a teacher and continues this aspect as a core value in her professional identity. Lea had difficulty with a cultural transition in her move to BC. For, she was unable to find individuals with similar cultural backgrounds, and more importantly similar perspectives to her own. She had difficulty incorporating new cultural perspectives, but has determined to be comfortable in her own identity. However, as a result of her natural affinity to connect with students, Lea easily adjusted her teaching to a student-focussed system and has ingrained this new perspective into her sense of herself as a professional teacher in BC.

5.4.10. Diana

Diana has felt she has successfully integrated her past perspectives with those she encountered here. She has been capable of doing so only as a result of maintaining strong connections with a spiritual and cultural community here, where she is able to converse in her own language and be with people of similar perspectives. She had extensive experience as a teacher in a teacher-directed system, but has valued the influences of learning in a student-focussed system of teaching. She has incorporated new perspectives, but still sees value in maintaining many of her previous perspectives. She believes she has developed a professional identity that provides her with the best of both worlds.

5.4.11. Ines

Ines' strong roots in a Christian upbringing have formed her beliefs in helping others. Raised in a privileged lifestyle surrounded by societal poverty, Ines has worked since a young age to help others less fortunate. She believes through education she can accomplish these goals. She connects readily with students in the BC school system and has had no difficulty moving from a teacher-directed system to a student-centred system because of her core values of focussing on the needs of others. Her professional identity has easily incorporated new perspectives encountered through her training here. However, although she is infinitely comfortable in her role with students, she does question her professional identity with adults; she questions herself in light of their response to her accent. Although fluent in English, Lea cannot distance herself from what she sees as others' judgements of her competence.

5.4.12. Kay

After 20 years, Kay has distanced herself from her previous spiritual and cultural background and has integrated her previous perspectives with new ones encountered as a Canadian teacher. She feels she was positioned as a teacher early in life by her parents and the pragmatic demands of living in a Communist system. When she first immigrated connecting with perspectives similar to hers was crucial to her well-being; she was immersed in the church and social events with others of the same background. She completed a degree in addition to a teacher training program here. She believes

she was well prepared for the program which she feels was minimal compared to her extensive previous training. She sees that she is surrounded by ethnic diversity in the BC school system, and reflects that a truly Canadian identity may not exist; leaving her able to reconcile differing perspectives and adjust her professional identity accordingly. She feels that she has maintained her role as a structured and efficient teacher with the incorporation of building relationships with students. She feels she has developed an ideal professional identity by integrating the best of her previous teaching identity with who she is now.

5.5. Conclusions

This research explored the question, “How is a foreign-trained teacher’s sense of professional identity affected by work experiences in British Columbia K-12 schools?” The application of a modified LPA framework (Martin, 2011) has offered an understanding of the stories of foreign-trained teachers in repositioning themselves in new sociocultural contexts through consideration of the influences of particular and generalized others.

Participants have commented that through their efforts repositioning themselves as teachers in BC schools, they have developed a new professional identity. Many have noted, however, when visiting their country of origin that they no longer ascribe to their old identity but neither do they feel they are perceived as having a Canadian identity. For many, they see they have been positioned as a blend, an integration of varying perspectives, and they feel they are stronger teachers as a result. As one participant has stated, “I can do more, because I have more support here, so I can use all those here, and I can blend them, a good mix of the East and the West, so that is what I think.”

The stories participants have shared have shown them to be strong and resourceful women as they have persevered in their goals regardless of the challenges they have faced. Many spoke of the hardships they have endured, leaving behind family and friends, only to encounter an often less than welcoming system. All participants spoke of deep spiritual beliefs and cultural traditions that have supported them across both psychological and physical adjustments in their lives. Many have been burdened by the financial costs of their efforts, as well as experiencing difficulties in their

relationships and their health and well-being. However, they have all noted that there have been particular individuals who have been beacons of support in the midst of their journeys.

Relationships have played a significant role in the lives of these women. Connecting with a similar community of perspectives, after leaving family and cultural connections behind, was acknowledged as important in how well these women have been able to integrate into new sociocultural contexts. Further, relationships with particular or general others have had strong influences on their professional and personal identities. Participants have offered that their paths have not been easy and have recommended that others following be certain that teaching is their passion.

5.5.1. *Participant-Researcher Relationship*

The data accumulated herein were received through interviews with twelve participants. Participants were contacted through professional development programs at a local university or were referred to the study by someone who participated in the research. Participants were reminded often of their rights as participants in research and were given the option of withdrawal at any time. Interviews typically spanned over an hour and a half; participants often lingered afterwards, offering additional information or stories.

The women who participated in the interviews found they were comfortable with the relationship provided by the researcher. As a practicing counsellor, the researcher has a background in soliciting stories and in providing a nonjudgmental supportive relationship. Although the interviews were semi-structured, the researcher allowed participants opportunities to explore related concerns. Participants willingly shared their stories, often to great detail. Participants seemed to be grateful for the opportunity to story their experiences. Several commented that this has been the only time someone had cared to find out what they had been through in striving to become teachers in BC.

Through transcription of these interviews, efforts were made to reproduce participants' stories intact. However, through the LPA there inevitably exists bias as their stories are interpreted through the researcher's perspective. As understood through the theoretical basis for this research, the relationship between the researcher

and participant has dialogical bearing on how stories are told. Participants openly expressed that they felt comfortable in the interview relationship, and in telling their stories. When participants received the stories rewritten from the interview data, many comment openly about an emotional connection to the analyses; all recognized the analysis they received as an appropriate representation of their experiences.

In telling their stories, many participants appreciated reflecting on their past in light of where they are now in their lives, and through the narrative acknowledged how far they had come. It seemed common that many felt they had been treated poorly by a system that does not value or recognize their backgrounds, and their previous education or experience. For many of them, these perceived injuries and/or barriers were extensive. Several commented that they hoped others reading their stories may be moved to “right the wrongs” in the system.

5.5.2. *Limitations of the Research*

As this research sought to understand the experiences of foreign-trained teachers in repositioning as professionals in BC classrooms, the sample was necessarily purposefully chosen. Participants were selected because they possessed certain similar characteristics: they had some connection to professional development programs at a local university, they all had previous training and/or experience in another country, and they all had experiences working as teachers in school districts in the lower mainland of BC. As well, although it was not the intent of the research to limit gender representation, all participants were female--perhaps as a result of the gender bias already existing in the profession (more women than men choose to become teachers), or perhaps due to other factors such as time and cost in seeking recertification in BC.

Otherwise, participants reflected experiences of immigration from eight different countries, and participants ranged in age, years of education, and years of experience teaching in their country of origin. The sample used for this research was relatively modest (n=12) as the research sought to apply Life Positioning Analyses to a suitable number of cases in an effort to extrapolate common themes. Although each individual reflected a unique cumulative history, as expressed through the Life Positioning Summary, it became clear that the experiences of foreign-trained teachers have commonalities.

Although foreign-trained teachers would seem something of a homogenous population, due to the diversity of backgrounds and stories, caution is noted in attempting to extrapolate generalizations from the data analyzed. However, whenever possible, findings in this research were reflected in light of conclusions drawn from other research with foreign-trained teachers. Presently little research in this area exists, and this research comprises the only examination of professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers in the lower mainland of BC. Thus, relating details from these findings to research in the field is convoluted by the diversity of ethnic backgrounds and sociocultural contexts found in BC schools.

As participants self-selected for this study, there may exist bias in their representations. They may have had particular motivations in providing their stories, thus the generalizability may be questioned. Further, as participants are retelling their stories in light of a dialogical relationship, the validity of the telling comes into question. Participants may have adjusted their stories to appear more favorable. Also, as many of them are reflecting back over some time, their memories are likely mediated by other factors that have influenced the retelling.

Finally, although transcription endeavoured to provide an accurate detailing of participant stories, this process was convoluted by accents and irregular word choices. Through the researcher's interpretation, the Life Positioning Analyses were developed in an effort to accurately reflect participant stories. Direct quotations were used amply throughout in an attempt to allow participants' stories to be as authentic as possible and to mitigate or curtail researcher bias. However, through the retelling, even the selection of quotations offers some bias of interpretation. As the primary researcher completed all transcription and analyses, the bias that exists rests solely through the interpretation of the researcher. However, member checking, where participants were given an opportunity to review their LPAs, assured the accuracy of the participant accounts in assessing that the analyses were complete and authentic. One participant requested that a large percentage of her words be removed from her analysis as well as any reference to her country of origin; although this limited her voice and the richness of her story, the researcher complied by revising the analysis.

Triangulation of the data was not completed and this may be seen as a limitation of the application of LPA in this research. Martin's (2011) intention with LPA was to include multiple perspectives from secondary sources; including different data sources enhances the accuracy of the analyses and serves to validate findings. In departing from the intentions of LPA by using only primary interview data, the researcher limits the extent of the analyses provided herein. Thus, evidence to support the thematic analysis within the current research is constrained by the use of data received through a single interview with each participant. Triangulation with secondary source materials was beyond the scope of this research which sought a general interpretation of the life positioning experiences of a group of foreign-trained teachers in an effort to inform current practices.

The researcher sought to maintain the privacy and respect for the stories of participants as a research priority throughout the study. Every effort was made to reflect participants' accounts as accurately and detailed as possible while withholding personal details that may have jeopardized participant confidentiality. Life Positioning Analyses were provided to each participant allowing their comments and concerns on the interpretation to be addressed. Further, providing the participants with a copy of their story allowed them to ascertain that their privacy was protected, and that their experiences were valued as well as told to others.

5.5.3. *Implications for Research*

This research was descriptive in nature in seeking to describe the barriers and affordances to professional identity development for foreign-trained teachers. Primarily it sought to explore the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers repositioning in the BC school system. This research suggests that LPA is a resourceful and applicable method of narrative analysis of the stories of foreign-trained teachers. The theoretical assumptions of PET, where relationships with others are based on developmental histories embedded in direct experience with others, is a strong theoretical base for research in this area. Foreign-trained teachers move from histories that have formed professional identities through experience with others, personally and professionally, into new contexts in the BC school system that challenge previously held perspectives.

The narrative analysis framework used was a modified example of the method proposed by Martin (2011). It was a modified representation of this method as it did not incorporate multiple perspectives through the use of secondary source material. Martin's (2011) previous published exemplar of the application of LPA considered a substantial amount of material collected from various texts, biographies, and reports. Without access to secondary materials in the present research, the LPAs of foreign-trained teachers presented herein rely solely on the information provided through the interview process. As well, the sample size of 12 was too unwieldy given the time and resource constraints to complete a full LPA on each participant by incorporating secondary source material. However, future application of LPA—using secondary sources and an analysis that extended a period of time with multiple cases—would provide clearer understanding of the generalized perspectives foreign-trained teachers encounter within the teaching community and how the impact of these may dissipate with time.

This research is unique in its orientation, looking at foreign-trained teachers within the lower mainland area of BC, and specifically at professional identity development. As such it offers a new perspective and adds to literature in the field. Previous research on foreign-trained teachers has considered immigration and recertification experiences in Canada, within the United States, the United Kingdom, and in Australia, but has not specifically focused on professional identity development (i.e., Bascia, 1996; Beynon, Ilieva, & Dichupa, 2001; Deters, 2011; Galindo, 1996; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Phillion, 2003; Quiocho & Rios, 2000; Schmidt, 2010b; Su, 1997; Zhao, 2010). As research completed in the lower mainland of BC has determined that the “two most populous visible minority groups in British Columbia” are not pursuing teacher training programs as teaching is seen as neither lucrative nor prestigious” (Toohey et al., 1998, p. 57), further research specific to immigrant populations within the lower mainland would provide a more thorough explanation of the discrepancy between ethnic minority student populations and the number of ethnic minority teachers within the school system.

There is no doubt that employment of foreign-trained teachers has not kept pace with changing demographics in the student population. Research has shown that ethnic minority teachers are likely to act as role models for ethnic minority students, reversing

the marginalization that youth of diverse ethnic backgrounds may feel in educational settings, and act as agents of social change in an educational system that currently reflects dominant race and class norms (Beynon et al., 2001; Phillion, 2003; Su, 1997; Walsh, 2007). Further research considering the barriers to incorporating foreign-trained teachers may seek to redress this imbalance.

As research has shown that foreign-trained teachers negotiate previously held perspectives with perspectives encountered in new positioning, they negotiate new professional identities (Britzman, 2003; Duchesne & Stitou, 2011). Britzman (2003) confirms that identity development is socially constructed as teachers construct their own professional identities so do others facilitate this construction. These findings support the application of neo-Meadian theories in offering an understanding of identity as developed and continually mediated by and within sociocultural contexts. As these theories provide a foundation for understanding professional identity development as embedded within activity with generalized others, further research in applying these theoretical premises to the experiences of foreign-trained teachers would provide an appreciation for the barriers they face.

Finally, although this research sought to explore the experiences of foreign-trained teachers from a diverse range of backgrounds and through a continuum of experience and educational backgrounds, it did not incorporate the experiences of men in pursuing repositioning within the sociocultural context of BC classrooms. An exploration of the experiences of foreign-trained teachers who are male would provide insight into experiences that may be gender related. As well, these stories were provided in one snapshot of time, further research over a longer period of time with multiple interviews and triangulation of data would provide a more robust base of information from which conclusions could be drawn.

5.5.4. *Implications for Practice*

In the field of education in BC there lies a dichotomy. There is an increase in the ethnic diversity of the student population, however, the teaching force is slow to follow in increasing its ethnic diversity. Increasing the ethnic diversity of the teaching profession can lead to improved relationships between students and teachers within the school system--a school system that claims to be student-focussed. As has already been

noted, foreign-trained teachers are three times less likely to be employed in their matching profession than are other professional immigrants to Canada (BC Stats, 2011d; Statistics Canada, 2006b). There is a moral, ethical, and social imperative to incorporate ethnically diverse teachers into the teaching population, specifically in the lower mainland of BC's five largest school districts where ethnically diverse students now comprise the majority of the student populations.

Systemic

Foreign-trained teachers report facing systemic discrimination when seeking certification and employment in BC schools. Foreign-trained teachers state that information received through the BCCT has been convoluted and difficult to understand. Documents assessed by the BCCT have been processed without dialogue with foreign-trained teachers. As a result, they are often left confused as to how equivalency has been granted or, more often, not granted. At present, the BCCT has been replaced with a new governing body and it is hoped that these processes can be made more transparent in future.

The process of recertification is an arduous path. Foreign-trained teachers find the financial and time commitments needed to pursue re-education and retraining are barriers to their professional repositioning. Often already financially burdened through emigration, foreign-trained teachers may be unable to afford the tuition costs of the teacher training program. To incorporate foreign-trained teachers, there perhaps needs to be governmental support through grants or loans with extended payment timeframes to alleviate these concerns.

Most importantly, provincially established seniority pay scales need to be adjusted to acknowledge previous experience. Foreign-trained teachers may be coming with years of teaching experience that are not valued by the BC school system in the form of increment levels on pay scales. In practice this needs to be addressed. The BC school system needs to recognize that foreign-trained teachers bring a wealth of knowledge and experience highly relevant to teaching in the multicultural context of BC's classrooms. Presently foreign-trained teachers' experience in other countries is undervalued by our school system.

Social

The best way for the teaching profession to redress the social barriers faced by foreign-trained teachers is through incorporating more ethnic diversity within the teaching profession in BC. Until the ethnic diversity of the teaching profession comes close to reflecting the ethnic diversity of the students they teach, foreign-trained teachers might not overcome feelings of 'otherness' in relation to the teaching majority. Until this discrepancy is adjusted, the teaching profession needs to be aware of the challenges facing foreign-trained teachers, and experienced Canadian-born teachers sensitive to ethnic diversity should be enlisted as mentors.

Mentorship with a culturally-sensitive and experienced teacher could provide a system of support for incorporating foreign-trained teachers. As previously noted, previous research affirms the importance of mentorship for foreign-trained teachers. Many come from systems where mentorship was an integral aspect of their teacher training. Goodson and Cole (1994) conclude that for foreign-trained teachers "the process of redefining what it means to be a teacher and their developing sense of new professional identity were contextually dependent on their developing notions of professional community" (p. 102). These findings support the theoretical assumptions underlying the current research that professional identity develops through social relations with others, in sociocultural contexts, and is an ongoing interpretive process (Mead, 1934, p. 172).

As a professional body, BC teachers need to be aware of the important role mentorship plays in identity development for foreign-trained teachers. This research has substantiated the applicability of a neo-Meadian approach and the LPA methodological framework in understanding that professional identity for foreign-trained teachers is developed through social interactivity.

General

Foreign-trained teachers in this research all noted that their language abilities were judged by the colleagues with whom they worked. Although foreign-trained teachers felt accepted by students, and even found their accents opened opportunities for relationship-building with students, they often felt their language abilities a detriment

to their relationships with their colleagues. Teachers in the BC school system would benefit from being aware of their biases in relation to working with teachers from diverse ethnic backgrounds; more in-service professional development in the area of ethnic sensitivity might also be helpful for teachers to appreciate these differences. Many teachers may not be aware that their relationships with foreign-trained teachers are perceived as judgmental. It may be conducive for school boards to recognize these internal biases and train specific staff members who are impartial and culturally competent to act as liaisons for foreign-trained teachers, so that they are offered culturally sensitive mentoring support in this area.

5.5.5. *Final Comments*

I am indebted to these twelve women who openly shared their stories for the purposes of this research. I was often left at the end of an interview, at the end of a transcription, and again through the analyses of their stories, in awe of their journeys and their resiliency. As a teaching profession, we have a great deal to learn from their experiences, and even more to gain through their incorporation into the teaching community.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Study Information for Potential Participants

Study Information for Potential Participants
Study ID: 3673/Study Number 2012s0702

Title: **PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: LIFE POSITIONING
ANALYSES OF FOREIGN-TRAINED TEACHERS**

To Whom It May Concern:

As a doctoral student at Simon Fraser University in the Faculty of Education, Educational Psychology Ph.D. program, I am conducting a research study regarding the experiences of foreign-trained teachers. You are receiving information regarding this study through your involvement with Simon Fraser University's Professional Qualification Program or Professional Development Program; however, in no way is this research affiliated with PQP or PDP.

My research seeks to understand the experiences of foreign-trained teachers in repositioning themselves within the context of the BC school system. Foreign-trained teachers entering the BC school system encounter new sociocultural contexts that pose challenges for previously held perspectives and professional identity. Specifically, this research proposes to answer the question, "How is a foreign-trained teacher's sense of professional identity affected by work experiences in the BC school system?"

I am hoping that you will participate in this research study as your experiences could be valuable in facilitating an understanding of the experiences of foreign-trained teachers, such as yourself, as they seek employment, or are employed, as teachers in BC. The path you have travelled and the challenges you have overcome could offer insight into the experiences of foreign-trained teachers. Through an analysis of your immigration, recertification, and most specifically, work experiences, this research hopes to understand how significant people and events have altered how you see yourself as a professional.

I would be very grateful if you would be willing to participate in this research. Your research commitment would involve granting me an interview that would take between one to two hours of your time. If I need to clarify your responses from the first interview, if possible, I may request a second interview that will generally take between 30 to 60 minutes. The time and location for the interview would be arranged at your convenience. The interviews will be audiotaped for the purposes of data collection and all information shared with me will be held in strict confidence. You will be requested to provide a pseudonym by which your information will be identified, as your name will not be connected to the data from your interview in any way.

At the outset of the interview, I will be asking demographic questions such as your age, background, country of origin, and previous professional history. Then you will be interviewed with questions concerning your immigration, recertification, educational, and work experiences. For example, I may ask you: "Can you describe your experiences in becoming a teacher?" "What are some of the challenges you face teaching in the BC school system?" "Who and/or what helped you adjust to teaching in the BC school system?" and "How have your experiences affected how you see yourself as a teacher?"

I want to thank you for considering being a part of this research. I am excited about the possibility of learning more about your experiences and would be honoured to have you share them with me. If you consent to participate, you will be welcome to share as much information as you would like, but in no way are you pressured to do so. Should you feel uncomfortable or experience discomfoting thoughts on recollecting previous experiences, you will be free to discontinue at any point and offered to complete the interview at another time. You may withdraw your participation

at any point in the research process and I will not include any information you would like removed.

I appreciate you considering being a part of this research and I look forward to learning more about your experiences. As you probably have a busy schedule, I would be pleased to arrange an interview time and location convenient for you. If you are interested in sharing your experiences through participating in this research study and would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Thank you very much for your interest in participating in this research.

With kindest regards,

Monica Frank, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate
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Appendix B.

Pre-Interview Questions

PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
TITLE: PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: LIFE POSITIONING
ANALYSES OF FOREIGN-TRAINED TEACHERS
Study ID: 3673/Study Number 2012s0702

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the current research study!

The current study seeks to answer the question, "How is a foreign-trained teacher's sense of professional identity affected by work experiences in the BC school system?"

The following questions serve only as a guide to the interview in which you have agreed to participate. The purpose of the interview is to understand your experiences as a foreign-trained teacher either seeking employment, intending to seek employment or currently teaching in BC classrooms. These questions will provide you with some possible points of discussion, however, please feel free to share information about your experiences, your background, and the people who have been important influences for you.

Once you have had an opportunity to read this guide, and should you chose at this time, or any time during the study, to withdraw your participation please email me at [REDACTED].

Personal History – Prior to Immigration

What was your life like prior to emigrating?

Can you describe where you lived?

Could you talk about the people who were important to you in your previous country?

Can you tell me about your cultural background?

What were the circumstances behind your immigration?

Can you describe your educational training?

What was your teaching background prior to emigrating?

How would you describe yourself as a professional in your previous country?

Personal History – Immigration and Orientation

Can you describe your immigration experiences?

Who immigrated with you?

Were there any individuals who helped or hindered your immigration process?

What made you decide to pursue teaching in BC?

How did you go about seeking certification in BC?

What was your certification experience?

Did you seek further educational training in BC?

What were the biggest challenges you faced in pursuing a career in teaching in BC?

Current Experience – Teaching in BC

What are your experiences teaching in classrooms in BC?

How are these experiences different from what you experienced before coming to BC?

How does the education system differ from the system in your previous country?

In what ways is teaching in BC challenging for you?

In what ways is teaching in BC appealing to you?

How would you describe yourself as a teacher in BC?

How do you see yourself changing as a professional?

Who and/or what has been a source of support or provided challenges for you?

Appendix C.

Informed Consent

Monica Frank, Principal Investigator
Permission for this study has been obtained through
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Education

Study ID: 3673/Study Number 2012s0702

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Title: Professional Identity Development: Life Positioning Analyses of Foreign-Trained

Teachers

Introduction: You are being invited to participate in a dissertation research study regarding the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers in their work experiences in BC. Specifically, this study will explore the life experiences that have affected the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers as they seek professional repositioning in the BC school system.

You are asked to participate in this research study because you have immigrated to British Columbia, are an ethnic minority within the teaching profession in Canada, have previous educational experience and/or teaching experience in another country and are presently working, seeking employment, or intend to seek employment within Greater Vancouver school districts. You received information regarding this research study through your involvement with Simon Fraser University's Professional Qualification Program, or someone with whom you are familiar recommended you; in no way is this research affiliated with PQP. As part of the process of informed consent, you are reminded that participation is completely voluntary and you will not be penalized if you choose not to participate or if you choose to withdraw at any time. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

The researcher, the principal investigator, is Monica Frank (B.A. 1983; TQS 1984; PBD 1990; M.A. 1995; Ph.D. Candidate 2009). The principal investigator is a doctoral student within the Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. She is supervised in this research by Dr. Nadia Gill of the Faculty of Education of Simon Fraser University. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study at any time, please contact the principal investigator, Monica Frank (██████████ or at ██████████) or the supervisor/dissertation committee chair, Dr. Nadia Gill (██████████ or at 778-782-9075). No funding has been received for this study and neither the researcher nor the advisory committee expects to receive any compensation.

Purpose: This research seeks insight into the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers through their work experiences in the BC school system. By conducting this research I hope to learn more about the influences encountered in establishing yourself professionally as a teacher in BC, how you see yourself as a teacher in BC, as well as why and how your perceptions of yourself as a teacher have changed.

Procedures: On agreeing to participate in this research study you will receive Pre-Interview Questions, which will serve as a guide to an interview to follow.

You are requested to participate in an interview; the amount of time for the interview will vary depending on your interest in discussing the interview questions, but will likely be one to two hours in length. Interviews will be held at a time convenient for you and at a private location of your choosing: your residence, a university office/study room at Simon Fraser University, or the principal investigator's office. Interviews will be audiotaped.

At the outset of the interview, the researcher will collect demographic data from you regarding your age, personal background and previous professional history. Interview questions will request that you describe your personal and professional experiences in relation to establishing yourself as a teacher in the BC school system and ask you to consider the important influences in this process. For example, you might be asked: "What influenced you to seek employment as a teacher in BC?" "What challenges have you faced in working in the BC school system?" "How have your experiences affected how you see yourself as a teacher?"

A second interview may be requested to clarify responses and/or to address questions not completed during the first interview; the second interview will be 30-60 minutes in duration and will again be held at a time and location of your choosing. All interviews will be completed prior to June 2013.

Risks:

To the best of my knowledge, there are minimal risks associated with your participation in this study. However, should you experience discomforting thoughts or emotions on recollecting previous experiences you will be instructed that you are free to discontinue at any point and/or offered to complete the interview at another time. If you find you are overly uncomfortable, your involvement in the study may be terminated. The principal investigator will provide you with external counselling referral information.

Benefits: Through participation in this study, it is hoped you will enjoy and benefit from the opportunity to share your personal and professional experiences. You may experience indirect benefit from your involvement in addressing issues raised in this study. Otherwise there is no direct benefit to you. Through a greater understanding of the obstacles you have faced and the journey you have taken in establishing yourself as a teacher in BC, the findings of this study may serve to support future foreign-trained teachers on their path to employment in BC. Results of this research will enhance current knowledge within the profession of the obstacles foreign-trained teachers face and may inform foreign-trained teacher education programs.

Costs/Compensation: In agreeing to participate in this research study, you are reminded that participation is completely voluntary, and you will not be penalized if you choose not to participate or if you choose to withdraw at any time. In no way does participation or lack of participation in this research study have any bearing on your current educational or employment practices, nor on your future employability. There will be no cost to you in participating in this research study, other than your time. There will be no compensation for your participation.

Concerns and/or Complaints: To report any concerns or complaints regarding the study, please contact the research supervisor, Dr. Nadia Gill, at nadia.gill@sfu.ca or at 778-782-9075; or, secondly, Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director of the Office of Research Ethics, at hal_weinberg@sfu.ca or at 778-782-6593.

Request for Study Results:

If you would like a copy of your interview transcripts or the final study report, please contact the principal investigator, Monica Frank, at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Confidentiality:

This research study is committed to complete participant confidentiality. You will be asked to provide a pseudonym which will be used so that identifying information will not be linked to you. This Informed Consent document and all other print and digital materials generated during the course of this research will be kept in a locked cabinet in the principal investigator's office until 2017, after which time all materials will be destroyed. Audiotapes will be transcribed and your information will be identified only through the pseudonym you will be asked to provide. Digitally stored information will be password encoded. No one other than the principal investigator will have access to the Informed Consent Form, the Demographic Form, tapes, transcriptions, and analyzed materials. Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law.

Certification:

I have read and understand this Informed Consent document. I believe I understand the purpose of the research study and the nature of my participation. I have been given opportunity to ask questions and receive satisfactory answers. I fully understand that I may stop my participation in this research study at any time and that I can refuse to answer any question(s). I agree to the audiotaping of my interviews, and I understand that all information will be kept confidential, my identity and privacy will be protected, and my information will be stored securely and then destroyed. I have received a signed copy of this Informed Consent document for my personal reference. I hereby give my informed and free consent to be a participant in this study.

Signature:

Signature of Consent of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Note: I have received a signed copy of this Informed Consent document for my personal reference: (please initial) _____

Principal Investigator contact information:
Monica L. Frank, M.A., Ph.D. candidate
Department of Educational Psychology
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University – Burnaby campus
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6

Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Appendix D.

Demographic Form

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Participant Name_____

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Date (DD/MM/YY)_____

Study ID: 3673/Study Number 2012s0702

DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

**Title: Professional Identity Development:
Life Positioning Analyses of Foreign-trained Teachers**

Personal History:

What is your date of birth? (DD/MM/YY)_____

What is your gender? _____

In what country were you born? _____

From what country did you emigrate? _____

What is your first language/the language spoken in the home in which you were raised?

What language is currently spoken in your home? _____

In what other languages are you fluent? _____

What is your ethnicity? _____

What is your marital status? (Single/Married/Divorced) _____

If you have children, what are their ages? _____

With whom do you live? (Spouse/Partner/Parents/Children) _____

How many years have you been in Canada? _____

How many years have you been in the Greater Vancouver Region? _____

What/who influenced your choice to immigrate to Canada?

Why did you locate in the Greater Vancouver Region?

Professional History:

Did you attend post-secondary school(s) in your country of origin? Yes No

If Yes, for how many years? _____

What program/diploma/degree did you complete? _____

Did you undertake a teacher training program? _____

Were you employed as a teacher in your country of origin? Yes No

If Yes, for how many years? _____

What grade/level/did you teach? _____

What subject(s) did you teach? _____

Did you undertake post-secondary studies in Canada? Yes No

If Yes, how long did this take you? _____

What institution did you attend? _____

What program/diploma/degree did you complete? _____

Were you required to undertake academic upgrading for certification in BC? Yes No

If Yes, when did you receive certification in BC? _____

How long did it take you to receive certification in BC? _____

Are you presently employed as a teacher in BC? Yes No

If Yes, with which school district are you employed? _____

Are you employed as a teacher full time/part time/on call? _____

What grade/level/subjects do you currently teach? _____

If No, are you presently seeking work as a teacher in BC? Yes No

To which school district(s) have you applied? _____

For how long have you been seeking employment as a teacher in BC? _____

Have you been employed as a teacher in any other province in Canada? Yes No

If Yes, in what province other than BC have you taught? _____

For how long did you teach in provinces other than BC? _____

Are you presently employed in an occupation other than teaching? Yes No

If Yes, with whom are you employed? (Business name/Self-Employed)

In what occupation are you employed? _____

How long have you been doing this work? _____

How did you begin this work? (Advertisement/Family Business/Friends)

Appendix E.

Interview Protocol

**Title: Professional Identity Development:
Life Positioning Analyses of Foreign-trained Teachers.**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the current study regarding the professional identity development of foreign-trained teachers in the BC school system. You have been requested to participate in this study as you have unique experiences to share in regard to immigration, previous training or experience as a teacher in another country, and working or seeking work as a teacher in the BC school system. Most specifically, I am interested in understanding how you currently see yourself as a teacher, how this may have changed, and what or who has affected those changes.

I expect that this interview will last approximately one hour. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover, however, please feel free to add any information that may clarify your experiences. There are no right or wrong answers; I am interested in your opinions.

I would like to remind you that your participation is entirely voluntary. At any time, you may refuse to answer any questions. If at any time you are not comfortable, we can end the interview and continue another time if you so wish. I will be audiotaping this interview so that I am able to later transcribe your information; after transcription, the audiotape will be deleted. However, if you are uncomfortable at any time, you can ask that the interview be stopped and the tape erased. All of the information you provide will be kept confidential and I would ask at this time that you choose a pseudonym to protect your privacy (record pseudonym: _____).

Again, I want to thank you for your time and effort in participating in this research study. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

Interviewee Background:

Can you please tell me about your background?

Probes: Where are you from? What is your ethnicity? How would you describe your cultural background? Could you tell me about your family? What role does religion/spirituality play in your life? Are there important people in your life outside of family?

Could you describe your immigration experiences?

Probes: Why did you immigrate to BC? With whom did you immigrate? What has been positive/negative about this experience? Who/what influenced your immigration decision/experience?

What is your educational and professional background?

Probes: Describe your previous professional experiences? Why did you originally enter this profession? How did you see yourself as a teacher? What did you like/dislike about teaching in your previous country? What did you know about/expect to encounter teaching in the BC school system?

After Immigration:

Can you describe your experiences in becoming a teacher in the BC school system?
Probes: What influenced you to seek employment as a teacher in BC? Please describe any educational upgrading you may have undertaken? What were your recertification experiences? How have these experiences affected how you see yourself as a professional?

What are your work experiences as a teacher in the BC school system?
Probes: Could you describe your efforts in seeking employment in the BC school system? How long have you been working in the BC school system? What and/or who has helped or hindered your efforts to seek employment as a teacher in BC?

Professional Identity Development:

What are some of the challenges you face teaching in the BC school system?
Probes: What are the areas of conflict that arise for you in working in BC? How are these different from what you previously experienced teaching in your previous country? How are these different from what you may have expected in teaching in the BC school system? How do you negotiate these conflicts?

Who and/or what helped you adjust to teaching in the BC school system?
Probes: Describe the roles your colleagues or coworkers have played? What are the barriers and affordance to becoming a teacher in the BC school system? How can barriers be overcome? What would have helped your transition to teaching in the BC school system? What recommendations would you suggest to improve the systems you have encountered?

How have your experiences affected how you see yourself as a teacher?
Probes: How have your views of yourself as a teacher changed? What has affected these changes? To what or to whom do you attribute these changes? What type of support have you encountered? What type of supports do you wish you had in place? How has teaching in BC affected your life, personally and professionally?

Final Questions:

If you could go back in time, is there anything you would do differently?
Probes: How would that have change things for you? Would it change how you see yourself as a professional?

If you had any advice to offer foreign-trained teachers, what would that be?
Probes: What do you wish you had known then that you know now?

This concludes the questions I have; do you have anything you would like to add to what we have already discussed?

This concludes the interview aspect of this research. I want to thank you so very much for participating in this study. The audiotape will now be transcribed and the information recorded will then be deleted. Should I need to clarify or request any further information of you at that time, I may contact you to request a follow-up interview. Should you wish to receive a copy of the transcribed interview please contact me, my contact information is on the Informed Consent document you received.

When completed, I will provide you a copy of the analysis from your interview to get your impressions and comments. This gives you a chance to check that the analysis both protects your privacy and is a legitimate interpretation of your experiences.

Appendix F.

Letter of Introduction

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Study Information for Potential Participants

Study ID: 3673/Study Number 2012s0702

Title: PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: LIFE POSITIONING
ANALYSES OF FOREIGN-TRAINED TEACHERS

To Whom It May Concern:

As a doctoral student at Simon Fraser University in the Faculty of Education, Educational Psychology Ph.D. program, I am conducting a research study regarding the experiences of foreign-trained teachers.

My research seeks to understand the experiences of foreign-trained teachers in repositioning themselves within the context of the BC school system. Foreign-trained teachers entering the BC school system encounter new sociocultural contexts that pose challenges for previously held perspectives and professional identity. Specifically, this research proposes to answer the question, "How is a foreign-trained teacher's sense of professional identity affected by work experiences in the BC school system?"

I am hoping that you will participate in this research study as your experiences could be valuable in facilitating an understanding of the experiences of foreign-trained teachers, such as yourself, as they seek employment, or are employed, as teachers in BC. The path you have travelled and the challenges you have overcome could offer insight into the experiences of foreign-trained teachers. Through an analysis of your immigration, recertification, and most specifically, work experiences, this research hopes to understand how significant people and events have altered how you see yourself as a professional.

I would be very grateful if you would be willing to participate in this research. Your research commitment would involve granting me an interview that would take between one to two hours of your time. If I need to clarify your responses from the first interview, if possible, I may request a second interview that will generally take between 30 to 60 minutes. The time and location for the interview would be arranged at your convenience. The interview will be audiotaped for the purposes of data collection and all information shared with me will be held in strict confidence. You will be requested to provide a pseudonym by which your information will be identified, as your name will not be connected to the data from your interview in any way.

At the outset of the interview, I will be asking demographic questions such as your age, background, country of origin, and previous professional history. Then you will be interviewed with questions concerning your immigration, recertification, educational, and work experiences. For example, I may ask you: "Can you describe your experiences in becoming a teacher?" "What are some of the challenges you face teaching in the BC school system?" "Who and/or what helped you adjust to teaching in the BC school system?" and "How have your experiences affected how you see yourself as a teacher?"

I want to thank you for considering being a part of this research. I am excited about the possibility of learning more about your experiences and would be honoured to have you share them with me. If you consent to participate, you will be welcome to share as much information as you would

like, but in no way are you pressured to do so. Should you feel uncomfortable or experience discomfoting thoughts on recollecting previous experiences, you will be free to discontinue at any point and offered to complete the interview at another time. You may withdraw your participation at any point in the research process and I will not include any information you would like removed.

I appreciate you considering being a part of this research and I look forward to learning more about your experiences. As you probably have a busy schedule, I would be pleased to arrange an interview time and location convenient for you. If you are interested in sharing your experiences through participating in this research study and would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED]. Thank you very much for your interest in participating in this research.

With kindest regards,
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