

**Instructors of Adult English as an Additional  
Language (EAL) in British Columbia:  
Shared Experiences in the Contact Zone**

by

**Fiona J Shaw**

B.A., Victoria University of Wellington, 1999

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

in the

Teaching English as an Additional Language Program  
Faculty of Education

**© Fiona J. Shaw 2014**

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

**Fall 2014**

All rights reserved.

However, in accordance with the *Copyright Act of Canada*, this work may be reproduced, without authorization, under the conditions for "Fair Dealing." Therefore, limited reproduction of this work for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, review and news reporting is likely to be in accordance with the law, particularly if cited appropriately.

# Approval

**Name:** Fiona Janet Shaw  
**Degree:** Master of Arts  
**Title:** *Instructors of Adult English as an Additional Language (EAL) in British Columbia: Shared Experiences in the Contact Zone*  
**Examining Committee:** **Chair:** Dr. Sepideh Fotovatian  
Limited Term Lecturer

**Dr. Roumi Ilievia**  
Senior Supervisor  
Associate Professor

---

**Dr. Ena Lee**  
Supervisor  
Lecturer

---

**Dr. Kelleen Toohey**  
Internal/External Examiner  
Professor  
Faculty of Education

---

**Date Defended/Approved:** December 9, 2014

## Partial Copyright Licence



The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the non-exclusive, royalty-free right to include a digital copy of this thesis, project or extended essay[s] and associated supplemental files (“Work”) (title[s] below) in Summit, the Institutional Research Repository at SFU. SFU may also make copies of the Work for purposes of a scholarly or research nature; for users of the SFU Library; or in response to a request from another library, or educational institution, on SFU’s own behalf or for one of its users. Distribution may be in any form.

The author has further agreed that SFU may keep more than one copy of the Work for purposes of back-up and security; and that SFU may, without changing the content, translate, if technically possible, the Work to any medium or format for the purpose of preserving the Work and facilitating the exercise of SFU’s rights under this licence.

It is understood that copying, publication, or public performance of the Work for commercial purposes shall not be allowed without the author’s written permission.

While granting the above uses to SFU, the author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in the Work, and may deal with the copyright in the Work in any way consistent with the terms of this licence, including the right to change the Work for subsequent purposes, including editing and publishing the Work in whole or in part, and licensing the content to other parties as the author may desire.

The author represents and warrants that he/she has the right to grant the rights contained in this licence and that the Work does not, to the best of the author’s knowledge, infringe upon anyone’s copyright. The author has obtained written copyright permission, where required, for the use of any third-party copyrighted material contained in the Work. The author represents and warrants that the Work is his/her own original work and that he/she has not previously assigned or relinquished the rights conferred in this licence.

Simon Fraser University Library  
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

revised Fall 2013

## Ethics Statement



The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

- a. human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics,

or

- b. advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University;

or has conducted the research

- c. as a co-investigator, collaborator or research assistant in a research project approved in advance,

or

- d. as a member of a course approved in advance for minimal risk human research, by the Office of Research Ethics.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed at the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Simon Fraser University Library  
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

update Spring 2010

## **Abstract**

In this study, I examine the lived experiences of English as an additional language (EAL) instructors who are teaching adults in private language schools, immigrant English programs and post-secondary EAL programs in British Columbia (BC), Canada. I conceptualize EAL teaching as a contact zone (Pratt, 1992), where multiple forces (such as neoliberalism and professional and educational discourses) collide and force instructors to (re)negotiate their teacher identities (Singh & Doherty, 2004). I use autoethnographic data and teacher narratives, combined with demographic survey results and existing literature, to create a rich and complex picture of this under-examined teaching context. Patterns of struggle for instructors emerged in relation to: wages and working conditions, marginalization within programs and institutions, teaching observations, professionalism, and the use of teacher work for “infinitely scalable” profit. I offer implications for individual instructors, professional organizations, and EAL teacher education programs, as well as for further study. Lastly, I suggest possibilities for instructors to create change for themselves and for our profession in the contact zone of BC EAL education.

**Keywords:** EAL; teacher lives; contact zone; autoethnography; identity; neoliberalism

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to the passionate English as an additional language instructors of British Columbia, whose courage and commitment inspired this research.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my study participants who generously shared their time and thoughts about EAL. Thank you for your passion, dedication and courage and for trusting me with your experiences.

My very warm thanks go also to my supervisors. To Dr. Roumi Ilieva for her unwavering patience, guidance and support throughout this process. To Dr. Ena Lee, who inspired, encouraged and listened to me. Together they have been the 'dream team' of committees and I will always be indebted to them for helping make this thesis both possible and enjoyable. Thank you to my friends, colleagues and classmates in the Faculty of Education, Department of Linguistics and Teaching and Learning Centre at SFU. Thank you also to the board at BC TEAL for their support and for their unwavering dedication to EAL instructors throughout our province.

Lastly, to my family, I offer my profound gratitude. Thank you to Jan and Marc, who supported and cheered me on from the beginning to the very end. Thank you to Alison, Megan and Kirsty. Although we have shared many challenges as a family, I am so proud and grateful that we can stick together and still laugh through it all. To my boys Felix and Lucas, thank you for all of your best hugs exactly when I needed them. Lastly, to my husband Ben, whose quiet support, unwavering love and patient understanding has meant the most to me during this process. Thank you.

# Table of Contents

Approval.....	ii
Partial Copyright Licence.....	iii
Ethics Statement.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
List of Acronyms.....	x
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. English as an Additional Language in British Columbia: Economics and Education.....	1
1.1.1. Many learning contexts, many forces.....	3
1.1.2. EAL in the global contact zone.....	6
1.1.3. The British Columbian context.....	8
1.1.4. Into the light of who we are.....	10
1.1.5. Why we need to know.....	11
1.1.6. How will these questions be answered? The stories we can tell.....	13
1.2. Chapter Summaries.....	15
<b>Chapter 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1. Instructor Identity.....	17
2.2. Marginality.....	19
2.3. Professionalism and Being a Professional.....	24
2.4. Neoliberalism.....	29
2.5. The Contact Zone.....	30
<b>Chapter 3. Methodology.....</b>	<b>34</b>
3.1. What I Did and Why.....	34
3.2. A Mixed Method Start.....	35
3.3. Quantitative Survey Data.....	35
3.4. Qualitative Data.....	37
3.5. Ethnography.....	39
3.6. Autoethnography.....	40
3.7. Grounded Theory and Data Analysis.....	43
3.8. Ethical Concerns.....	44
<b>Chapter 4. Data and Discussion.....</b>	<b>47</b>
4.1. Marginality.....	49
4.1.1. Space and place.....	52
4.1.2. Tools and resources.....	57
4.2. Professionalism.....	60

4.2.1.	Legitimacy .....	63
4.2.2.	Autonomy .....	64
4.2.3.	Internal Conflict .....	66
4.3.	Marketization.....	68
4.3.1.	Teaching observations .....	70
4.3.2.	Students as customers.....	72
4.3.3.	Low wages .....	75
4.3.4.	Contract instability.....	77
4.3.5.	Teacher work that is infinitely scalable.....	81
4.4.	Conclusion .....	84
 <b>Chapter 5. Conclusion and Implications .....</b>		<b>86</b>
5.1.	Quantitative Findings .....	87
5.2.	Qualitative Findings.....	89
5.3.	Implications .....	92
5.3.1.	Implications for instructors .....	93
5.3.2.	Implications for teacher education .....	95
5.3.3.	Implications for professional organizations .....	98
5.3.4.	Implications for further study .....	100
5.4.	Final Thoughts .....	102
 <b>References .....</b>		<b>103</b>
Appendix A.	Survey Results .....	111
Appendix B.	Call Out for Participants.....	115
Appendix C.	Semi-structured interview questions .....	116

## List of Acronyms

BC TEAL	British Columbia Teachers of English as an Additional Language
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ELL	English Language Learner
ELSA	English Language Services for Adults
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other languages
ESL	English as a Second Language
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
TEAL	Teaching English as an Additional Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

### 1.1. English as an Additional Language in British Columbia: Economics and Education

According to the 2012 BC government Jobs Plan, in 2010, international students in British Columbia were responsible for injecting 1.2 billion dollars into the provincial economy and continue to account for about 7% of our gross domestic product (GDP) (BC Jobs Plan, 2012). Yet, English as an additional language (EAL) instructors, who are responsible for teaching many of these incoming students to BC, remain a little-understood group. Their position in the education system and as an occupation, in general, is difficult to categorize. Most often, their work falls outside of the K-12 education system; at times, it falls within the private training sector or in job-skill programs for immigrants, and, at other times, within public post-secondary institutions. It is perhaps this diversity in teaching contexts that can account for the lack of knowledge about EAL instructors in BC. Although there is little research that has sought to understand this field here, it is clearly both an educational and economic force in our rapidly changing province. Thus, the BC government states that:

For British Columbia to benefit from growing opportunities in International Education, we need new initiatives and a targeted, coordinated strategy that builds upon our strengths and leverages the expertise that already exists in our education system. Increased coordination and collaboration are essential. (BC International Education Strategy, 2012, p. 12)

Clearly, EAL instructors, in all contexts, make up part of that existing expertise in our educational system, however their numbers, working conditions, teaching programs, and institutions remain largely unaccounted for.

Despite limited research about adult EAL and the English language teaching field in general in BC, ambitious plans for the expansion of international education in the province are being made. In 2012, the provincial government announced a goal of doubling the number of international students in BC by 2016 (BC Jobs Plan, 2012). As these expansion plans are currently rolling out, the work of English language educators, across all contexts in BC, is implicated in this growth. According to the report, the BC economy will add nine thousand jobs because of this educational expansion, and some of those jobs will certainly be in EAL.

For many EAL instructors, private language schools are a common first teaching context in BC, yet this educational setting remains a largely undocumented domain in our province. Unregulated schools, offering low pay and demanding few qualifications of instructors, make for precarious employment conditions in some cases. Instructors working in private language schools are acknowledged as “the lowest of the low” (Breshears, 2004, p. 23) in EAL because of their marginalized positions and are on the furthest periphery of education in BC.

In contrast, perhaps because of higher instructor pay and proximity to academia, public post-secondary EAL programs are considered the most prestigious EAL teaching and learning context. According to reports, BC public post-secondary institutions host 28,000 international students throughout the province. Typically, international students pay for that privilege—three-and-a-half to four times the tuition that a local student pays (BC International Education Strategy, 2012)—making it a very lucrative enterprise for the institutions and creating layers of spin-off value for the province.

At the same time, recent cuts to the English as a second language (ESL) program at Vancouver Community College (VCC), a program which, until 2014, was funded by the federal government through the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, will result in around 100 EAL faculty layoff notices being issued. According to the local media outlet, the *Vancouver Courier*, VCC has long been the largest provider of ESL training in Western Canada, but these cuts will leave 3,000 immigrant adult EAL students without classes (Rossi, 2014). These examples underscore the volatile nature of the professional context of EAL instruction in BC and the challenges this context

presents for novice and veteran instructors alike, who are seeking to build professional careers in this place at this time. It is increasingly important for BC EAL educators to understand ourselves as a field and how we are impacted by these changes. I argue that without a critical understanding of our position in the educational structure of BC, both private and public, we are unable to effectively self-advocate, identify professional opportunities, or grow as a profession.

In order to understand what exponential growth and change will mean for EAL instructors in BC in the future, however, we first need to better understand where we are today. What are the contexts and conditions under which we teach right now? How do EAL teachers themselves understand this work as they experience it today? Although these questions are too big to be answered completely in a master's thesis, they demand our attention and need to be explored. In this thesis, I hope to shed some light on the professional experiences of EAL instructors as they relate to their daily work by examining themes of marginality in employment conditions, such as wages and contracts, instructors' impressions of professional respect, and the influence of employment and educational policies on their teaching practice. The following section introduces how the powerful forces that surround and permeate our EAL classrooms will be theorized in this work.

### **1.1.1. Many learning contexts, many forces**

As mentioned in the section above, there are a variety of teaching and learning contexts for English language education in the province of BC. According to the BC International Education Strategy (2012), approximately 13% of international students temporarily in BC are children who study in the K-12 system. But English is also taught to children for whom English is not the primary language of communication in the home. Both public and private schools for children in BC are highly regulated by the Ministry of Education, whereas adult EAL in BC is left unregulated. This lack of government oversight, in part, creates the void of empirical understanding that I am seeking to fill with this thesis.

Over the years, much scholarship has been devoted to the examination of EAL instruction in K-12 in BC (see Early, 1991; Garnett, 2010; Norton & Gunderson, 2002; Toohey & Derwing, 2008; Wyatt-Beynon, Ilieva, La Rocque, & Toohey 2001; Yoon & Gulson, 2010). However, the same cannot be said for institutions and English language learners (ELLs) in BC outside of the K-12 system. Only on rare occasions has adult EAL teaching in post-secondary contexts been examined (see James & Templeman, 2009; Marshall, 2010), and, even more rarely, private EAL (see Breshears, 2004; Hodge, 2005). My focus in this thesis is on English teaching and learning for adults, rather than K-12, to shed some light on these neglected and less understood areas of EAL education in BC.

There are three major teaching and learning contexts for adults in BC EAL, which I will broadly call public post-secondary institutions, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes, and private language schools. I will describe each in more detail below.

First, the public post-secondary context includes both domestic and international students bound for and currently studying in BC's public post-secondary programs, including English for academic purposes (EAP) programs, EAL adult basic education programs (often connected to job skills and trades) as well as bridging programs leading into undergraduate admissions. Found at colleges, technical institutes and universities, these programs are located around the Lower Mainland and throughout the wider province. As to the exact numbers of students in this context, few official figures are available, perhaps due to the wide variety of program offerings at different institutions. Language courses in this context are often taught by EAL professionals who hold graduate degrees, although that is not always the case.

The second context is known as LINC, which is a program run by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, a department of the federal government. Until recently, this program was known as English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) and was run by the Province of British Columbia. LINC is designed to teach language skills and provide information about Canadian society and institutions to adults. It is intended to reach recent immigrants to Canada who have settled in BC. LINC programs include non-profit,

public, and private agencies in 47 locations around the province and serves nearly 19,000 students (ELSA.net.org). According to recent government reports, this represents a 63% increase in programming since 2005/2006. Beyond that, the province reports spending 57.9 million dollars on English language training for immigrants and refugees to Canada in BC in 2011/2012 (Welcome BC, 2012). These numbers represent a substantial investment in the citizenship and language training of newcomers to Canada. This investment, as inferred from the report, can be seen as a way to boost newcomers' ongoing economic contributions to the country and can therefore also benefit the economic growth of Canada, making it an important program for both social and economic reasons.

The remaining teaching and learning context discussed here is private, for-profit language schools. This group serves mainly short-term international students who arrive to study English in BC, often for language learning holidays combined with an overseas travel experience. Located outside of public education, growth has accelerated for these unregulated, educational institutions in BC. According to the BC International Education Strategy (2012), almost half (45%) of all international students visiting the province in 2010 studied in private language schools. This, however, is only an estimated figure, as the report states, because there are no official statistics around the number of private language institutions currently in operation in BC due, in part, to the lack of regulation surrounding their operation. The number of schools fitting this "private language school" description, however, was estimated in a government report in 2008 to be between 150 and 200 in the Lower Mainland (Watson, 2008). Today, the province estimates approximately 43,000 international students are currently enrolled in such programs. Although this sector accounts for almost half of the students who arrive annually to study in BC (BC International Education Strategy, 2012), very little is known about how these students learn or who teaches them (see, however, Breshears, 2004).

Instructors, programs, and institutions in each of the above-mentioned contexts are undoubtedly varied in their motivations for teaching English, as are the students who arrive to study in their classrooms. Concurrently, both present and historical economic, political, social, and cultural forces, which bring teachers and students together, can impact the success or failure of language teaching and learning. Each of us as

individuals is subject to the conflicting forces that come to bear on our successes, failures, and experiences in a socially situated place. The forces that press upon what can be called the contact zone of BC EAL, to be discussed in detail below, can have real consequences for the lived identities of both learners and instructors. As Singh and Doherty (2004) point out in their discussion of international students in the contact zone of modern Australian universities, “what matters increasingly is how culture and cultural identity are evoked, and by who, for what purpose and with what potential consequences in specific locations” (Singh & Doherty, 2004, p. 10). These and other concepts are further expanded upon in the section below.

### **1.1.2. EAL in the global contact zone**

Teaching can be a complex undertaking. It does not happen in a vacuum. As a language teacher myself, I understand that my work, the forces that bear upon it, how and where it happens, and the manner in which it impacts the lives and progress of my students, also impact my own sense of professional identity. Pratt (1991) calls the social spaces where various powerful forces come together “contact zones”—places where “cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other” (p. 34). How this coming together of forces takes place influences our classrooms and ourselves, every day, in ways both subtle and profound. Beyond this, the clash Pratt refers to suggests that the meeting of cultures in the contact zone does not occur in a neutral or egalitarian way. Rather, the many competing forces at work create asymmetrical relations of power and the necessity of dominance and subordination (Pratt, 1991). As these forces are brought to bear on the contact zone, different influences are foregrounded while others are hidden—although their invisibility does not negate their power.

Our classrooms are social spaces where influencing forces are contested and re-enacted daily—where the making and remaking of identities take place (Singh & Doherty, 2004). In each case, the instructor and students must (re)negotiate their position within the contact zone. They are influenced by the powerful discourses of colonialism, globalization, marginality, and privilege, both historically and presently enacted in these specific contexts (Pratt, 1991).

As an EAL instructor, I am interested in how these powerful discourses impact my own and others' identities in the EAL classroom. I understand the identities of language teachers and students, indeed everyone, to be fluid, contested, and discursively constructed in a specific context (Norton, 2010). As individuals, we may have some power in negotiating our own identities, but we are also constrained by the institutions that surround us. Understanding the ways professional identities are influenced and negotiated will help us to understand how teachers do being EAL teachers (Norton, 2010) within a specific place, such as BC. But first we need to understand the wider context of EAL teaching in the world.

In 1991 Pratt conceptualized the contact zone to describe the historical clashing of European colonizers with pre-existing cultures of the New World. Since then, the concept has been more widely applied to social contexts where different cultures meet. Smagorinsky, Jakubiak, and More (2008) argued that “more nuanced versions of a contact zone are often in evidence in schools, where a host of relationships—often involving people of disproportionate power—intersect in complex ways” (p. 443). EAL classrooms also typify this description.

Globally, English language teaching now happens on every continent in the vast majority of countries. The force of English in the world today cannot be denied. English language teaching makes up a strong portion of the estimated multi-trillion-dollar international education industry worldwide (Watson, 2008). In each context where English is taught and learned, the multiple forces of globalization, neoliberalism, marginality, and colonialism are at play (see Block, 2004; Flores, 2013; Gray & Block, 2013). These forces highlight the increasing connectedness of our world. Singh and Doherty (2004) argue that because the conditions of how language teaching and learning happen are fundamentally changed by globalization, “teachers of EAP, ESL, and foundation studies need to critically engage with assumptions about teacher, student, and cultural identities.” (p. 10). Beyond that, EAL instructors need to be aware of both the obvious and invisible forces at work in their classrooms.

What this critical engagement and awareness means for English language instructors (and their learners) depends greatly on where and why they are learning,

what their personal and cultural histories are, what is happening in the present contexts, and how they imagine their futures (Norton, 2010). These competing influences come together in our EAL classrooms instantiating a contact zone of English in the globalized world (Singh & Doherty, 2004), in classrooms from Vancouver to Tokyo to Riyadh. But what happens to our sense of ourselves when cultures and competing interests clash in our classrooms and global forces collide with the local?

### **1.1.3. The British Columbian context**

British Columbia, as its name implies, draws its modern history from deep colonial roots. From the first European contact with our Pacific shores, there have been EAL learners and teachers here. Seeing BC as a contact zone helps us to understand these first encounters and how power, subjugation, and dominance came to bear on even our earliest classrooms. Although many years have passed from the days of early colonialism, its influence lingers. Thus, I argue that contact zone remains a powerful theoretical lens through which to examine EAL education in BC.

British Columbia, considered the gateway to the Asia-Pacific, is a popular choice for English language learners looking to study abroad. The BC government touts our province as “well positioned to serve as a ‘social gateway,’ linking North America with the Asia-Pacific region and beyond” (BC International Education Strategy, 2012, p. 8).

According to the British Columbia Counsel for International Education (BCCIE), students arrive in BC motivated by superior educational opportunities and a cosmopolitan lifestyle in the clean, green, and friendly institutions of British Columbia (BCCIE.bc.ca). Through our colonial past and leading up to the present day, British Columbia has developed a reputation for high-quality education, in its public schools, colleges and universities. Linking economic advantage with educational prestige, a report commissioned by the provincial government states that “BC comes to [the international education] industry with a significant competitive advantage: our education system has a reputation for producing skilled and knowledgeable graduates with highly respected credentials” (Watson, 2008, p. 12).

According to a report on StudyinBC.com (2013), the government website designed to promote international education, our teachers and institutions are ranked among the best in the world. However, little is contained in this report about how quality of education might be measured, who these teachers are, and how program standards are rigorously upheld through, for example, external peer review or accreditation. In reality, few EAL programs in BC are accredited by external bodies, academic or otherwise. Beyond that, it is in the government's best interest to promote a rosy view of the quality of international education in the province as growth in this sector means increased tax revenue. International students may also be motivated by desire to improve themselves and their economic advantage in our increasingly globalized world (Singh & Doherty, 2004). It is the instructors who must navigate these complex and competing forces in their daily classroom lives.

BC has also drawn immigrants to our shores in increasing numbers and has stood to benefit from an unprecedented boom in global migration. Providing for the linguistic needs of these newcomers can be a complex undertaking and is a responsibility borne by many parties. In this context, the private sector competes with charitable organizations and public post-secondary programs for funding to teach English to qualifying immigrants. Other immigrant students must pay for their own language classes entirely out of their own pocket depending on their proficiency, motivation and need. The system—who qualifies for lessons, who provides these services to whom and for how long—is not in any way transparent. Nor is the government ideology that drives the allocation program funding. Students, instructors, and often whole programs are at the mercy of the whims of government (and disagreements between different levels of government) leading to increased uncertainty for those with the least information and the least power within the system. Within each context of adult EAL in BC, there are many competing influences clashing together, creating pressure for instructors and students alike. Clearly, the contact zone of EAL in BC is a highly contested space.

#### **1.1.4. Into the light of who we are**

As EAL instructors, we are at the forefront—at “the chalk face” of international education and EAL instruction for immigrants in both private and public institutions. We teach where the established educational system in BC meets the global reality of the students who arrive here to live and to study. Here, as in any marketplace, there are economic forces in play that profoundly influence our work.

Despite being stakeholders in the expansion of EAL teaching in BC, little mention of instructors, EAL or otherwise, is made in the government documents consulted for this study. Given this omission, it is likely that BC EAL instructors are not viewed by those in power as having a stake in the economic plans for our field. As an EAL instructor in BC, I find this omission personally disappointing, but I am not surprised by it. I know, from my own experience and from conversations with many colleagues, that EAL instructors often feel left out of the wider conversations about education, immigration, and economics in BC. Yet these wider issues can impact how we define our work and frame, for ourselves and others, who we are and what we do.

It is clear to EAL instructors that forces greater than ourselves, many of which go unacknowledged, unexamined, or unquestioned, influence us. We also understand that these discourses influence our classrooms and may impact how we see ourselves as professionals and educators. As already mentioned, there is little research, though, that addresses teachers’ of adults in EAL experiences in the BC context and this study attempts to contribute to filling this gap.

Instructors also struggle with their own internal and external challenges. Auerbach (1991) argued more than 20 years ago, “[i]t is a fact of life for ESL educators that we are marginalized; college ESL instructors are often hired as adjunct faculty on a semester by semester basis to teach non-credit preparatory courses in academic skills centers” (p. 1). This continues to be the reality of EAL teachers in BC in all contexts as we teach from positions of insecurity, vulnerable to the forces of politics, global economics, and constant change. But without a clear picture of who we are in EAL in BC today, how can we move forward from here?

Without critical reflection on where we are as EAL instructors in BC, it is not possible for us to make change for ourselves. Because so many questions remain about who we are in BC EAL, through this work, I hope to get a better sense of who we are in this important yet underrepresented field in BC education. Understanding EAL in BC as a contact zone for global education, in this study, I will examine some of the many competing forces that come to bear on the everyday practices of EAL instructors, here and now, and the ways those forces influence the instructors' claimed and lived identities in this context. In order to best explore these issues, the research questions below were used to lead this investigation.

- What might a limited descriptive statistical picture of EAL instructors in British Columbia tell us and how might it inform our understanding of the identity negotiation and lived experiences of EAL instructors in this context?
- How do the lived experiences of instructors in this context help us to make sense of our contested identities amongst the competing forces in the contact zone of BC EAL?
- How might this research expand and/or reveal opportunities for instructors to make change for ourselves and EAL teaching in the contact zone of BC EAL education?

### **1.1.5. Why we need to know**

The importance of this study, guided by the questions listed above, is both in furthering our knowledge about how EAL teaching to adults happens in the specific and complex context of British Columbia and how the lived experiences of teaching in that context connect to theoretical understandings of power at work in this place.

In order to understand this complicated contact zone, created by competing local, global, personal, and public interests, a certain amount of background information is required. As mentioned previously, very little is known about EAL instructors in BC. Because of the lack of regulation surrounding teaching certifications and accreditation of programs and schools, who actually does the teaching in BC EAL is somewhat of a mystery. A true census of instructors and their work would require an organized, prolonged, and coordinated effort. It would perhaps best be undertaken by those with

enough clout and resources to facilitate such a project, like a government department or a funded university research initiative. Not having access to sufficient resources or time to conduct a full survey does not negate the need for such background data. Therefore, as part of this thesis, I first attempt to provide a limited statistical picture of who we are in BC EAL, offering the first quantitative snapshot of at least a small portion of EAL instructors in BC. Quantitative data can only tell us a tiny fraction about the complex, rich, and diverse lives of instructors in BC EAL, yet it can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the subject (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2009).

As I have argued, as a professional group, it is important for us to better understand ourselves and our work amongst the forces of the contact zone. We need to create our own definition of what it means to be an EAL instructor in this place at this time rather than to have it defined for us by others. To do this, we must also investigate the competing forces in context in which our identities are negotiated.

Current theoretical understanding of language teachers acknowledges the social contexts of our classrooms and the importance of teacher identity to understanding what is taking place during language teaching and learning (Varghese, Morgan, Johnson, & Johnson, 2005). Understanding the relationship between teacher and student as well as who teachers are in the social, political and cultural context in which they teach is vitally important to our overall understanding of language learning. This point leads to the second research question regarding how BC EAL teachers' lived experiences might help us to better understand our professional identities. According to Johnson and Golombeck (2002), narrative inquiry, including speaking as a fellow teacher to instructors one-on-one, is a powerful research tool for teachers. The authors argue that "as teachers re-story their lives, they recount not only episodes of a particular place and time but also the conceptions, values and goals that affect each new experience and contribute to their development" (Johnson & Golombeck, 2002, p. 133). In this way, as EAL instructors in BC, we can learn and grow from the sharing of these experiences. Narrative inquiry and lived experiences, then, have "the potential to create a new sense of meaning and significance for teachers' experiences and thus [bring] new meaning and significance to the work of teachers within their own professional landscapes" (Johnson & Golombeck, 2002, p. 3).

Lastly, conversations about language teaching should not be separated from conversations about teaching context, nor opportunities for change in that space. If understanding how teachers construct and negotiate their identities in specific places helps us also to better understand the forces at work within that context (Singh & Doherty, 2004), it might also help us to better understand our positions within that social space. Developing critical awareness of how we are positioned within the contact zone of EAL in BC allows for possibilities for change to emerge from that knowledge. Instructors should be able to see beyond their own experiences, as recurrent patterns are illuminated and interpreted through both theory and literature. From this, the third question arises, what are ways that instructors might seek and find opportunities for change, for themselves and the EAL field, in this context? The complex and multiple overlapping results of the first two questions will guide me in thinking through the implications of this study. These implications, to be discussed in the concluding chapter, will provide an answer to my third research question. This convergent understanding, established by my three research questions, will, I hope, deepen our understanding about the wider nature of language teaching as it happens beyond the theoretical realm, in real time and in real places.

#### **1.1.6. How will these questions be answered? The stories we can tell**

Collecting quantitative data requires a precise tool. In this case, the demographic nature of the first research question lent itself well to a survey. I designed an easily distributable online survey which, as will be further discussed later, was sent out to BC teachers of English as an additional language (BC TEAL) to create a statistical snapshot of some of the instructors teaching in BC EAL. I used an online survey tool to derive the resulting statistics from the data provided by my participants. This procedure helped to answer my first research question by generating a limited statistical picture of BC EAL instructors and some of their teaching experiences. However, this approach was not sufficient for creating a fuller and richer understanding of complex constructs such as identity negotiation and power in the contact zone of BC EAL because it only captures one-dimensional demographic data. For a richer, deeper, and personal account of

classroom lives and the ways instructors navigate the powerful forces at play there, satisfactory answers to my research questions required a more nuanced tool.

Using qualitative research is a natural fit for understanding the complex convergence of human relationships as it happens in the classroom. Qualitative research helps us to know about the everyday ways that people learn, know, and understand ourselves (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Semi-structured interviewing can allow for natural conversational patterns to develop with participants and for immediate clarification of any misunderstanding on the part of either party. It can help the researcher to follow the lead of participants and to ask important clarification and follow-up questions to their replies. Through the process of asking and answering questions, we can come to best understand the themes of everyday lives from the subjects' own perspective (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). If we understand knowledge to be socially constructed, then interviews with those you would like to understand make the best sense for co-creating knowledge. One-on-one interviews allowed for a more nuanced examination of the ways that instructors experienced their teaching lives.

Beyond this, I also see my own voice, as a member of this highly connected community, as a valuable addition to this research. Understanding the value of autoethnographic research helped me see that my own voice can also be a valuable and legitimate tool of enquiry into this topic. By adding this approach, which, in essence, seeks to describe and analyze personal experiences to help understand a cultural experience (Ellis, 2004), I am able to add another layer of richness to this work. Ellis and Bochner (2000) argue that “the cycle of enlightenment, reflection and action as a critical process of self-analysis and understanding in relation to cultural and social discourses makes autoethnography a valuable tool in examining the complex, diverse and sometimes messy world of education” (p. 734).

To appropriately merge these understandings became a paramount goal for my research. By using this approach, I was able to blend my own story with those of my peers, and by connecting it to other salient data, theory and literature, I thereby created a more nuanced, richer picture of EAL instructors in BC.

## 1.2. Chapter Summaries

Following this introductory chapter, subsequent sections discuss theorizing, literature around, and lived experiences of EAL instructors, which combined will help illuminate who we are as instructors in BC EAL. In Chapter 2, I will discuss at length the contact zone and how this theoretical construct has been applied to EAL settings in previous literature, addressing what makes the BC context specifically appropriate to this lens. With so many competing forces within the contact zone, the length of this project necessitated that only the most salient themes from the data be foregrounded in this study. Thus, I start Chapter 2 by reviewing literature surrounding concepts of teacher identity and neoliberalism, as well as perceptions of marginality, professionalism, and marketization, which reflect the main themes in the study that I will refer to in Chapter 4 to illuminate the narratives and struggles of instructors in this context.

Chapter 3 will more closely examine autoethnography. This chapter highlights its value as a research methodology and how it best demonstrates the interconnectedness of me as a researcher, a teacher, and colleague with my participants as co-constructors of knowledge. In addition, Chapter 3 will include detailed descriptions of the online survey process, interview procedures, participant descriptions, and potential ethical concerns.

Following that, Chapter 4 will be dedicated to the presentation of data and analysis, using emergent and salient themes from my own and participant narratives. Beginning each section with an introductory narrative, three major themes will be discussed and connected to the theory and literature: marginalization, professionalism, and marketization. As patterns emerged from the data illuminating convergences within these themes, they are also triangulated with autoethnographic narratives and survey data.

Finally, Chapter 5 will be dedicated to a discussion about what this study might mean for EAL teachers in this context and for EAL teachers in general. I will present my conclusions in relation to the above-mentioned themes, followed by implications for instructors, professional organizations, teacher education and further study. By shedding light on an arguably quiet yet important corner of education in BC, I hope to add to the

knowledge and understanding of our field here, and also to the broader discourses of EAL instruction beyond our own immediate context in British Columbia.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

In this section I will expand on the literature that informs this study, which includes works on key concepts such as identity (Norton, 2010), marginalization (Auerbach, 1991), professionalization (Hargreaves, 2000), and neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007). I will then elaborate on the theoretical framework of the contact zone (Pratt, 1991) and expand on how these key themes will fit within it. These concepts will be used to better understand the data presented in Chapter 4.

#### **2.1. Instructor Identity**

To understand the concept of identity, it might be best to ask, “how is it that people do ‘being a person’” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 418)? Norton and Toohey (2011) see

identities as fluid, context-dependent, and context-producing, in particular historical and cultural circumstances. From this perspective, personalities, learning styles, motivations, and so on are not fixed, unitary, or decontextualized, and while context “pushes back” on individuals’ claims to identity, individuals also struggle to assume identities that they wish to claim. (pp. 419-420)

As they describe, each of us has a complex identity that is in constant flux, because of the situated nature of this negotiation. The ongoing work of identity (re)negotiation is conceptualized as a “struggle to become” (Norton & Toohey, 2011), in which the individual is an active agent in this process.

Beyond the internal struggle, however, identity work is also seen as a process of ongoing negotiation with both our immediate and wider context. The context in which we find ourselves at any given moment can also push back on us as individuals, and thus

we struggle to claim identities that are both put on us by others and imagined for ourselves (Norton, 2010). Furthermore, Duff and Uchida (1997) argue that:

Identities and ideologies that become foregrounded depend in large measure upon the institutional and interpersonal contexts in which individuals find themselves, the purposes for their being there, and their personal biographies (e.g., Heath & McLaughlin, 1993; Johnson, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Louden, 1991). (p. 452)

So, how wider external discourses come to bear on our identities and our contextualized location is important in multiple ways. According to Reeves (2009), “these dialectic relationships between the self and others, between internal and external lie at the heart of identity work” (p. 35). Additionally, identity theory highlights the importance of the historically and physically situated context in how we perceive not only our personal identity, but also our professional identities as teachers, and more specifically as language teachers. EAL teacher identity likewise is fluid and influenced by many intersecting factors. Thus, understanding identity helps us to understand “being a language teacher” in a specific time and place.

In order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are: the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them. (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005, p. 22)

In addition, a teachers’ positionality, beyond their teaching context, including their gender, race, and sexual orientation, are seen as influencing factors on a teacher’s identity (Varghese et al., 2005). Each positionality is continually (re)negotiated over the course of a teaching career, with a (re)examination of what the teacher feels they should be doing and “being” as their ideal expression of a successful EAL teacher.

Parker Palmer, who writes about teacher integrity and identity, adds that knowing yourself as an instructor is as crucial to good teaching as knowing your students and your subject (Palmer, 1997). He argues:

Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. In every class I teach, my ability to connect with my students, and to connect them with the subject, depends less on the methods I use than on the degree to which I know

and trust my selfhood—and am willing to make it available and vulnerable in the service of learning. (Palmer, 1997, p. 16)

Beyond this, if identity is “co-created with interested others,” as Reeves (2009) suggests, a teacher cannot claim a “good teacher” identity or a “professional” identity alone. This needs to be confirmed and supported by others around them. Professional colleagues, students, institutions, the professional community, and those who share in the wider discourses in the teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) field, as well as public discourse about educational activities, all influence a teacher’s identity as a “successful EAL instructor” or “worthy professional.” How these forces come together and how they conflict or create tensions in our classroom influence our sense of ourselves and our identities as language teachers. Understanding this collision and negotiation and the powerful forces that come to bear on it requires exploration.

If “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1997), it is clear that our teacher identity is integral to understanding teaching in a specific context and to understanding how teachers see their own experiences in that context. Instructors must be able to interact within various groups and institutions, and at the same time continuously develop their own personal and professional identities (Mantero, 2004). As mentioned, little research has been done into how BC EAL educators negotiate their own identities in this complex, contested context. By drawing on current theorizations of identity in this work, I hope to contribute to filling this gap in our understanding here in BC.

## **2.2. Marginality**

To begin this discussion of marginality I turn to a useful description offered by Charmaz that helps to illuminate what it looks like, beyond the theory, in the real contexts of our professional lives. Charmaz (2008) sees marginalization as “boundaries or barriers, distance or separation, and division or difference. Disconnection, devaluation, discrimination, and deprivation exemplify experiences of marginalization” (p. 9). She goes on to argue that “marginalization depends on norms—what people assume is the rule, routine, and right—normal. These assumed rules reside in social structures and reflect institutionalized values” (p. 9). Beyond that, however, Charmaz contends that

“[a] view from the margins may emanate from difference; it may also offer significant differences in knowledge, meanings, and priorities—a distinctive view, another course of action” (p. 10), offering an interesting place to begin thinking about EAL instructors and their position in wider educational discourses.

In the United States, EAL educator Denise Murray writes about her personal experience of marginality, recounting her experience of immigrating to California from Australia. Despite her years of professional teaching experience, graduate degrees in applied linguistics and TESOL, being a published author and curriculum designer, she struggled to find full-time teaching work. After landing a part-time job in adult education that she enjoyed, she was soon dismayed to find herself bumped off the teaching roster by a more senior guitar instructor, who did not have any experience teaching EAL (Murray, 1992). It is, however, difficult to imagine the reverse of this situation.

Stories like the one Murray describes are common amongst EAL instructors and confirm a somewhat generally held belief that if you can speak English, you can teach it. Murray argues that “ESOL is a marginalized field, one in which both teachers and learners receive little recognition either by the general populace or within the broader field of education” (Murray, 1992, p. 179), as clearly shown by the above situation.

This example from California builds on Auerbach’s (1991) seminal argument that it is a fact of life for ESL educators that we are marginalized, due to our jobs, which are so often without benefits, living wages, and security. Auerbach further argues that this marginalization is not an accident and refutes many of the common reasons given for it: because the field is new (it is not); because we are less skilled educators (we are not); because of benign neglect by administrators (often they are strong advocates for EAL programs) (Auerbach, 1991). She argues this marginalization is because EAL teaching continues to be seen by those with power as remedial work where our job as EAL educators is to prepare our students for the “real work” of university or contributing to society. Auerbach further argues that we are marginalized because our students continue to be, and that this serves the status quo. “We are service workers to the academy” (Auerbach, 1991, p. 2), rather than rightful members of it.

Freeman and Johnson (1998) expand on this point while looking at how TESOL educators have been trained, stating that “language instructors are often seen as the conduits to students, rather than as individuals who think and are learning in their own right” (p. 407). Positioning EAL instructors as conduits rather than as thoughtful professionals reinforces Auerbach’s point about the “EAL instructors as service workers” ideology. Freeman and Johnson (1998) go on to compel instructors to be “fully aware of and develop a questioning stance towards the complex social, cultural, and institutional structures that pervade the professional landscapes where they work” (pp. 411-412), calling EAL teachers “bystanders” in the larger Second Language Acquisition (SLA) community.

Crookes (1997) also examines the position of EAL instructors and articulates the social and physical isolation that many EAL instructors endure in public school, in Hawaii specifically, and throughout the EAL teaching field. He cites the lack of classroom autonomy and limited professional development of EAL teachers compared with other instructors and professionals in their teaching environment as contributing factors. Crookes goes on to describe the lack of paid preparation time and the irregular scheduling practices that disproportionately impact EAL instructors in schools. He also discusses how unqualified instructors fill open EAL positions because there are no permanent jobs for them, which results in “regrettably predictable program outcomes” (Crookes, 1997, p. 68). All of these corroborating points support the argument that EAL instructors are marginalized.

More recently in the US, there have been other studies looking at the marginalization of EAL teachers in the K-12 system. In her investigation of middle school EAL teachers, George (2009) finds that teachers experience marginalization in terms of both physical and social space. She sees them as “teaching from the back of the classroom” (p. 39) in contrast to “regular” classroom teachers who occupy the front of the room. She also found that they worked in isolated, comparatively smaller offices than their colleagues (George, 2009). Social isolation was reported in George’s study as well, as she describes teachers struggling to build and maintain supportive social networks with other teachers in schools. She concludes that teaching collaboration in her context actually serves to marginalize both ESL teachers and their students, instead of bringing

them into an inclusive climate of learning and respect, unless it is fully supported by proper planning and administration. She calls for finding ways to bring ESL students and their teachers “out of the marginalized corners of classrooms and into an inclusive and validating class climate” (George, 2009, p. 42).

Echoing those findings, in New England, Liggett (2010) found that the EAL teachers in the public school system she studied also taught in substandard spaces and were assigned offices that were make-shift, temporary or “not meant for teaching” (p. 224). Some taught in outbuildings or subpar half classrooms, shut off from school announcements, and “windowless boxes” provided to EAL teachers as an afterthought. Others taught in corridors “between the nurse’s office and the unused equipment stage room” (Liggett, 2010, p. 224). These details remain important because physical separation in our teaching institutions impacts how teachers experience their profession.

Beyond this, Liggett found EAL teachers were also socially marginalized from their teaching peers, through inconsistent planning and application of communication policies that were vital to their work. These served as further evidence of how teacher and EAL students’ needs were not important to the administration nor to other teachers, further bringing into question their commitment to the EAL programs. Liggett concludes that the descriptions of ELT (English Language Training) as being “at the bottom,” “a little bit marginalized,” or “shoved aside” illuminate the structures and processes that marginalize EAL teachers’ expertise and hinder the academic success and social integration of the learners they teach. She adds that understanding these processes helps us to see how this “discrimination is constructed and maintained in the school community” and warns against it becoming the “natural order of things” (Liggett, 2010, p. 229).

The marginalization of EAL in BC K-12 has been addressed as well in some literature. A study by Naylor (1994), published 20 years ago, in which the BC Teachers’ Federation surveyed the views of EAL teachers, staff, and parents on the adequacy of EAL support for students in the public school system, speaks volumes about the status of EAL at that time:

ESL is the subject of systematic discrimination in schools...epitomized by practices such as room allocation (when ESL takes what is left after other needs are met)...[I]n view of the respondents, ESL/ESD provision has a lower status than most other teaching areas in schools, among district administrators and as reflected in government priorities. (p. 2)

Elsewhere in Canada the marginalization of EAL instructors beyond the K-12 system is partly examined in a study from Ontario, where researchers observed the implementation of a new curriculum in the LINC program. As mentioned earlier, LINC are English classes offered to recent immigrants without cost. Haque, Cray, Ramanathan and Morgan (2007) find that there are so many constraints for the EAL teachers that many were unable to implement the new program in the way envisioned by the curriculum developers. They observe that “the constraints imposed on the LINC instructors interviewed were considerable; these included isolation, lack of job security, lack of professional development, underfunded programs, continuous intake, low wages and problems with professional accreditation” (Haque et al., 2007, p. 637). They interviewed 25 instructors and report that none of the classrooms were suited to the needs of the students, and that instructors complained they were not able to meet the needs of their learners because of the lack of resources, and preparation spaces to which they had access. These challenging circumstances, for many instructors, reflected the low priority of LINC learners and instructors to the province and funding authorities (Haque et al., 2007).

In her study looking at BC EAL, Breshears (2004) found that a hierarchy exists within adult EAL teaching here, with private language instructors occupying the most marginalized positions in our field or being “the lowest of the low” (p. 23). This hierarchy can be seen as an extension of what Lin, Grant, Kubota, Motha, Tinker Sachs, Vandrick and Wong (2004) argue is a pattern: “in TESOL, those who teach future ESOL professors and researchers are at the top, those who teach future ESOL teachers come next, and those who teach ESOL are at the bottom” (pp. 495-496). Breshears goes on to problematize many aspects of the EAL teaching profession, from employment conditions to credentials, to the role of professional organizations in the field. The results of her study reveal many questions about the workers who “exist on the periphery of the system” (Breshears, 2004 p. 36) in EAL, but who are actually the ones who do the work

of teaching. The real impact of this marginalization in BC will be explored further in the data and discussion chapters of this thesis.

Implications of this marginalization for our students are also discussed in some literature. Some authors claim that finding themselves on the periphery of established instructor communities, EAL instructors are vulnerable to negative identity shifts and consequently unsuccessful teaching (Curry et al., 2008). In addition, other studies argue that marginalized instructors have the potential to create poor outcomes for their students (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Therefore, beyond the impact that marginalization may have for the EAL teachers themselves, it also has real consequences for students, who may be already vulnerable to their own marginalization because of race, language, and social differences. It is troublesome to imagine the compounding effect of this double separation from mainstream education.

It seems that, as a whole, the profession is often sidelined—in the academy, in adult education, in the public school system, and finally, as the “lowest of the low” in private EAL schools. The causes of this marginalization are complex and multiple. Yet they come to bear in different ways on each individual, each student, in each teaching context, and are deserving of our deeper understanding.

When discussing the theme of marginalization of EAL instructors, it is also important to contrast it with the concept of professionalism. If we are professionals, like others such as doctors, lawyers, or even public school teachers, what does that mean in EAL? Again, this is a tenuous construct that has been questioned in the literature (Johnson, 1997; Varghese et al., 2005) and is the next theme that I shall examine here.

### **2.3. Professionalism and Being a Professional**

“People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves, and then try to act as though they are who they say they are” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 2003/1998, p. 3). Part of what we tell ourselves about who we are in the world of work is associated with the idea of professionalism. This section will look at how

concepts of professionalism impact our understanding of teachers in education generally, in EAL and in the province of BC specifically.

To understand how professionalism is theorized in general educational contexts I turn to Hargreaves (2000). Although there are many clear differences in how teachers in K-12 are perceived as professionals compared to EAL instructors, there are enough similarities that it makes a useful place to start. First, it is important to contrast “professionalism” with “being a professional.” Professionalism for Hargreaves is what teachers talk about when discussing the quality of the work that they conduct, their demeanour, and the standards that guide them. Being a professional and professionalization are used when discussing “how teachers feel they are seen through other people’s eyes, in terms of their status, standing, regard and levels of professional reward” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 151). Both of these terms have the potential to impact the way that EAL instructors understand and negotiate their identity.

Outside of education, Hargreaves notes, professionalism is associated with having a highly specialized subject knowledge, a common standard of practice, an exclusivity of service, high levels of training, a commitment to client need, and high levels of autonomy, which all serve to separate it from the work of “regular” workers. This is a useful definition to keep in mind, as it is a commonly held understanding. In EAL, which operates in some ways outside of the regular frameworks of education, this idea may be reflected or contested in the instructors’ own sense of professionalism.

Hargreaves (2000) goes on to offer four ages of professional development that make up a useful lens through which to understand the development of a sense of professionalism in EAL instructors. They are the pre-professional (or para-professional) age, the age of the autonomous professional, the age of the collegial professional, and the post-professional or postmodern age. In some sense each of these are reflected in the experiences of EAL professionals in the data portion of this study, so a brief description of each follows here.

In the paraprofessional age, according to Hargreaves (2000), teachers are seen primarily as transmitters of knowledge and behaviour managers, and teaching is seen as “technically simple” (p. 155). Good teachers are “devoted to their craft” (Hargreaves,

2000, p. 156), need little ongoing training or preparation time, show loyalty and commitment, needing only to “carry out the directives of their more knowledgeable superiors” (p. 156). In BC EAL we see this attitude reflected in the teaching contexts where teachers are not allowed release time for professional development or paid sufficiently for the hours they put into preparing their classes.

Professional autonomy is the “golden age” of teaching, because professionalism becomes synonymous with autonomy in the classroom, job security, professional dignity, pedagogical freedom (Hargreaves, 2000, p.161). This period may perhaps be linked to the stage when many of the early-recognized EAL professionals in British Columbia began to formalize their positions in the field. The formation of BC TEAL in 1969 ([bcteal.org/about](http://bcteal.org/about), n.d., para 1) can be said to have occurred at the forefront of this golden age. During the age of the collegial professional Hargreaves argues that teachers turn to a more collaborative model of professionalism to help them cope with the rapid changes and new demands in the world of education. Within the context of EAL in BC this might be linked to an emphasis on the use of technology or developing job skills, depending on the context of EAL instructors.

In the postmodern or post-professional age, Hargreaves describes an assault on teaching professionalism. He argues:

Market principles have become embraced so strongly by many governments, that schools (like many other public institutions) have been rationalized, cut-back, made more economically efficient, less of a tax burden and set in competition against one another for clients...teachers, their salaries and their working conditions (such as preparation time and professional development opportunities) have been made a major target for economies. (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 168)

The result of this is that instructors are increasingly being held accountable to standardized testing, centralized curricula, measurable results, corporate style micro-management. In terms of EAL in BC, evidence of this kind of accountability is shown in testing pressure found in the data of my study, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Looking at a different context, in the UK, Bathmaker and Avis (2013) question how English instructors perceive professionalism in the post-secondary system. Their examination of constructions of professional identities of English instructors addresses competing discourses around “organizational” and “personal” professionalism. They observe that organizational professionalism came from a “top down” discourse of control. Organizational professionalism draws on an increase in standardization of work procedures, practices, and managerial controls, and relies on externalized forms of evaluation and accountability measures (Bathmaker & Avis, 2013), much like in Hargreaves’ (2000) post-professional age. In contrast, personal professionalism features a strong commitment on the part of the instructor to the students and to the specialist field. Personal professionalism is demonstrated by a strong service ethic, a deep personal investment, and teacher’s commitment to their work.

In the literature, issues of professionalization have occasionally been discussed and studied in the field of EAL. In California there has been some political action on behalf of the profession of EAL done by California Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL) (Murray, 1992). In Canada, studies that address professionalization in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) have most often addressed standards and accreditation (Eddy & May, 2004; Thomson, 2004) or the professional development of instructors (Farrell, 2013). Outside of these studies professionalization has generally been discussed by professional organizations, such as TESL Canada with regards to accreditation of EAL instructors, and TESOL International, which primarily provides professional development in the United States.

Breshears’ (2004) work on professionalism in BC EAL addresses many of the above mentioned themes. Breshears looks at the nature of professionalism and exclusion in private language schools in BC. Her work found the role of BC TEAL wanting, especially in the case of instructors working in private EAL, (who make up the majority of EAL instructors in BC, according to the BC Job Plan, discussed in Chapter 1). She asks, “Am I professional? Do I count?” (Breshears, 2004, p. 24) in the context of BC EAL, and found that for the most part, the answer is no.

Breshears' (2004) study looks at private language school instructors in an attempt to understand professionalism and professionalization in this context. Her work challenges the notion that professionalism is primarily the work of the instructor, because many of the conditions that define instructors as professionals in BC reside outside of our own control (as illustrated by Hargreaves, 2000). She focuses her work on both the university and professional organization as the providers of professional status and argues that, essentially, instructor professionalism is contingent on the professionalization of the field as a whole (Breshears, 2004). She examines how universities are the traditional holders and producers of expert knowledge, essential for professionalization, are the granters of socially recognized credentials and already serve to legitimize and credential other groups, such as in medicine (Breshears, 2004). She argues that with the 'university as gatekeeper of professionalism' model, an additional benefit for BC EAL instructors would be the exclusion of those who do not have the appropriate accumulation of knowledge. Breshears argues that this is an issue in the unregulated private language sector, which has a documented reputation of hiring under qualified instructors.

The drawbacks, however, to the university as gatekeeper model for BC EAL is that, within the university structure, EAL teaching continues to be seen as remedial work and can be viewed as solely a means for students to acquire more "worthwhile" knowledge elsewhere in the university (Auerbach, 1991; Breshears, 2004). Therefore, as a field, we would be seeking legitimization from an institution that already marginalizes our practice. As a further complication, the university as gatekeeper model would require us to record and examine our current teaching practices, including exposing the work of under qualified teachers already practicing in our field. As a result, because of the prevalence of private for-profit language schools, we as a profession do not control who teaches EAL in the province, but rather the business sector does (Breshears, 2004).

Thus, as outlined in the literature, professionalism can therefore be described in a variety of ways useful to understanding how EAL instructors in BC negotiate their identities in this place at this time, and current professional discourses are important positioning forces in that negotiation. The market forces pervading those discourses can also be seen as acting on the larger context of EAL in BC in general. These market

forces are understood here, in fact, to be part of the larger global forces of neoliberalism, which will be examined below.

## **2.4. Neoliberalism**

The so-far unaddressed undercurrent of much of EAL instruction in BC is the rise of neoliberalism. A global phenomenon, it arguably now influences EAL in every teaching context in the province. According to Harvey (2007), “[n]eoliberalism is a theory of political economic practise proposing that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberties, unencumbered markets, and free trade” (p. 22). Or put another way, neoliberalism sees the world as a vast supermarket where the citizens are consumers (Chun, 2009). Block, Grey, and Holborow (2012) argue that neoliberalism specifically positions students as customers in instructors’ classrooms, and schools as entrepreneurial endeavours that compete for students as customers. Further, Arshad-Ayaz (2007) observes that education has undergone a fundamental shift from concerning itself with “social justice, inclusion, empowerment, equality and production of democratic citizens to managerialism, accountability, efficiency, privatisation and profit-making” (p. 62). In post-secondary settings we see evidence of this as universities position themselves in competition for students and funding, deploying a business model of management (Chun, 2009). Indeed neoliberalism has changed the pure function of education from production of knowledge to production of wealth (Arshad-Ayaz, 2007; Block, et al., 2012), thereby impacting every aspect of the institutional functioning of modern Western universities.

In discussing neoliberal ideologies in TESOL, Phillipson (2009) laments, “in education, the corporate and governmental elite who value learning only in terms of its contribution to economic growth use high-stakes tests to ostensibly assess and hold accountable instructors and students and yearn to privatise education so that profits might be gained” (p. 172). Indeed neoliberalism is an all-pervasive part of our current sociohistoric period (Flores, 2013). As Flores (2013) argues, until recently works discussing TESOL and neoliberal ideology have been limited to arguments around how the dissemination of English has benefited multinational corporations, increasing their

profits and reinforced existing hierarchies in Anglo-American nations and other states. This, it can be argued, is one part of the rising development of the “information economy,” often positioned by its supporters as being a benign or even positive trend that moves developed economies away from factory or resource-dependent jobs towards ones reliant on “human capital” (Flores, 2013).

However, beyond the institutions, neoliberalism has important connections to the individual. Neoliberalism also entails the corporatization of the individual subject. Foucault (2008) refers to this corporatized subject as the enterprising-self. The neoliberal enterprising-self is flexible, autonomous, and in a constant state of upgrading, making themselves easily adaptable to the economic and social realities of our time (Phillipson, 2009). This positioning has ramifications for both instructors and students, when education has become a commodity that “can be considered economically akin to a consumer durable...inseparable from its owner” (Gordon, 1991, p. 44). The economic pressure on the enterprising-self impacts how teachers may perform and how they might understand their roles within the institutions in which they teach. The forces of neoliberalism and marketization are a real and powerful part of education in the globalized marketplace of EAL, including BC. How teachers understand and operate within and around these forces may have profound implications for their practice and are, therefore, worthy of further investigation.

The pressure of the open market on EAL instructors and their classrooms in BC will be explored in fuller detail in the data chapter that follows. Bringing together the themes of identity, professionalism, marginality, and neoliberal discourses frames a complex space for EAL teaching in BC. How these competing forces come to bear on EAL instructors, how they (re)negotiate their unique instructor identities in this specific time and place, as I have argued here, can be best understood through the lens of Pratt’s (1991) contact zone, which is described in detail below.

## **2.5. The Contact Zone**

When Mary Louise Pratt first conceptualized the contact zone, it was to name the place and manner in which cultures come together, as a clashing of histories, ideas,

power, and ways of understanding (Pratt, 1991). Her work described the colonial contact of one dominating culture meeting another, and the complex power relations that emerged from that meeting. It is this initial framing of contact zones as places of tension and change that is most useful to this work in understanding BC EAL. Later, Pratt went on to describe her own teaching experience in the lecture hall more specifically as a contact zone where “one had to work in the knowledge that whatever one said was going to be received in radically heterogeneous ways that we were neither able or entitled to prescribe” (Pratt, 1991, p. 39). Thus, for some time now classrooms have been framed as contact zones. Pratt goes on to propose that teaching in the contact zone was the hardest but also the most exciting teaching she had ever done. Similarly, in my view, the work of balancing and navigating the clashing forces at play in the EAL classroom can be very exciting, but are also full of unexpected and difficult challenges.

Examining international education in the Australian context, Singh and Doherty (2004) investigate the global university as a contact zone. They describe how the contact zone creates moral dilemmas for EAL instructors, who have to navigate the multiple demands of their professional ethics in balance with the linguistics-cultural orientation of western higher education. The authors consider how instructors manage these dilemmas and change how they teach, reconfirming the impact the contact zone can have on instructor identity negotiation. Singh and Doherty find that although none of the instructors in their study engage overtly with discourses of globalization, they did struggle with the internal conflict of their positions within this system, and their own moral and professional code as instructors. Further Singh and Doherty caution that although these discourses are often framed as inevitable forces, already so powerful in our “globalized” world, instructors continue to exercise agency with their own attitudes and actions in their classrooms and programs. The authors conclude that:

The growing policy discourse of internationalisation may give TESOL professionals a valuable window of opportunity to turn informer and take the role of provocateurs within their institutions. By reflecting on how they themselves have been affected by the contact zone, TESOL professionals have much to share with the Western global university as such institutions face up to their new demographic constitution. (Singh & Doherty, 2004, p. 36)

Singh and Doherty stress the important point that there are no passive participants in the contact zone. They argue that both instructors and students who meet there are “active agents who produce, construct, and challenge the design of [TESOL] programs in and through day-to-day pedagogic interactions” (Singh & Doherty, 2004, p. 4).

Additionally, around the world, classrooms and other complex spaces where competing forces intersect have been theorized as contact zones. Examples below illustrate how specific geographic contexts undergoing rapid cultural change can be better understood through the lens of the contact zone. In the United States, Smagorinsky, Jakubiak, and Moore (2008) examine college composition classes as contact zones. Competing forces around the students’ and instructors’ own beliefs about teaching and learning, the curriculum and the pedagogy advocated by supervisors are seen to collide. Smagorinsky et al. (2008) find that the impact of this collision has profound effects on the instructor during what they called “a critical period of socialization” (p.12). Understanding how forces beyond an instructor’s control may collide with their own beliefs may help us to better understand teaching and learning in BC EAL as well.

Shi (2009) argues, “the global education Contact Zone provides opportunities for TESL practitioners to reexamine and reorientate their teaching practices from diverse perspectives” (p. 60). Beyond that, understanding the forces that influence our work here in the contact zone of BC EAL, such as how neoliberal ideologies might influence our professional discourses and illuminate patterns of marginalization within our institutions, help us to better understand our own complex identities and how they are negotiated in this context. Thus this framing provides a fertile place for exploration of adult EAL in BC.

In conclusion, the contact zone is a place where multiple forces come into play. These forces impact classroom and learners as cultures collide. It is my contention that EAL teaching in BC is an educational contact zone where the forces of globalization collide with instructors’ own sense of identity as well as their deference to the wider discourses of education. The purpose of this thesis is to give voice to such instructors who recount how they navigate the contact zones of their classrooms and institutions.

Before delving into their experiences in the data analysis in Chapter 4, I will discuss in the next chapter the methodology that I found most useful to gain insights into EAL instructors' understandings of these experiences.

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

### **3.1. What I Did and Why**

Doing research is a human activity (Kirby & McKenna, 2004) and therefore is complicated by all that makes us human: our emotions, our memory, and our lived experiences. Studying social phenomena, such as how EAL teaching happens and how those who do that work understand it, is indeed a complicated undertaking. In addition, adult EAL in British Columbia is a broad field. It encompasses many differentiated teaching and learning contexts, which vary greatly in their program funding models, academic goals, and teaching and learning expectations. Despite these differences, there are also a number of similarities, which fundamentally bind the field together: a common government, a single professional organization, and specific historical context.

There is very little information to draw on when investigating adult EAL teaching in BC. Thus finding patterns in the vast variety of experiences EAL instructors have in our workplaces and classrooms, without basic demographic facts, was extremely challenging. This gap compelled me to seek to create a data set that would add to our limited knowledge of who we are in BC EAL. However, a quantitative survey alone could not provide adequate opportunity to explore and share the richness of teacher experiences. A thoughtfully selected combination of methods that generated quantitative, qualitative, and autoethnographic data offered a much better opportunity to attempt to properly capture this complexity. As this thesis evolved and developed, from the initial planning process to the results presented here, I am reassured that academic research is rarely conducted in a straight line from point A to point B. According to Locke, Silverman and Spirduso (2004), it more resembles an “evolving set of questions and responsive tactics rather than the execution of a fixed plan” (p. 211). In the following sections I provide details of how and why I undertook this research, using the

methodological tools that I did, beginning with my start using mixed methods, but ultimately finding that analytic autoethnography offered the strongest methodological fit.

### **3.2. A Mixed Method Start**

While it is important not to exaggerate the differences between quantitative and qualitative research (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2009), as mentioned above, a single research methodology was not enough to tackle the complicated and nuanced instructor perspectives and experiences in the contact zone of EAL in BC. Like any good partnership, a combination of paradigms allows the strength of one method to overcome the weaknesses of the other (Locke et al., 2004). A qualitative enquiry into the lived experiences of teachers in this context could be weakened without the wider quantitative demographic data that a demographic survey can produce. However, as mentioned, a quantitative survey alone could not generate rich, nuanced narrative details of teacher experiences to be analyzed and shared. Beyond that, I early on understood that numbers alone cannot speak to the complex (re)negotiation of identity work I sought to examine in this context. Using a mixed method approach to data collection, beginning with quantitative survey data collection, and then qualitative interviewing with a smaller sample of participants, allowed for triangulation and the “use of quantitative research to corroborate qualitative research findings or vice versa” (Bryman et al., 2009, p. 287). Below I describe the first stage of my study, the online survey.

### **3.3. Quantitative Survey Data**

I began my data collection phase by designing a short survey for EAL instructors. It was planned with questions offering true and false responses and Likert scale replies, for ease of analysis as well as for timely participant completion. Acknowledging this method’s limitations, as well as my own as a novice researcher, the survey was designed to provide some sense of instructors’ demographics and their attitudes towards the profession in our EAL teaching community.

Once drafted, the survey questions were sent to the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University and the survey was determined to be low risk to the participants. The survey was designed to be completed anonymously; however, participants were able to provide their email contact details in the very last question, if they so chose, to indicate their willingness to participate in a one-on-one interview at a later date. The survey was set up on a Canadian survey hosting site Fluid Surveys (fluidsurveys.com), which holds all of their data on Canadian servers.

I began by sending the survey link to my network of EAL teacher-friends and colleagues in BC, and asked them to also pass it on to other teachers in their own professional networks. Then, with the permission of our professional association, BC TEAL, I handed out paper “invitations to participate” to instructors attending the BC TEAL annual conference, held at Douglas College in March 2013. Following that, BC TEAL sent an email to its membership (approximately 800 members) encouraging them to participate (see Appendix B). The survey was open for approximately eight weeks and I closed it on the website when I had reached 50 completed responses, as that represented in my view a satisfactory round number for the sample.

The Fluid Survey software generated the statistical results of the survey, creating a small, descriptive, statistical snapshot of responses. The quantitative data presented in Chapter 4 reflect some of the key results. (For full survey results see Appendix A.) Although I had set out to create an online survey of EAL instructors in BC that could add concrete information to our understanding of the field, the sample size is likely insufficient for statistical reliability. At the same time, without better demographic details about the field it is impossible to know what percentage of EAL instructors actually belong to BC TEAL. It is therefore impossible to know what percentage of the true EAL teaching population this kind of survey might represent. However, this is only one of the limitations that I saw to relying on quantitative data alone to address my research questions. In an attempt to balance the etic positioning of quantitative methods with the emic position of qualitative inquiry, I outline below the qualitative portion of the study, which represented the second stage of data collection.

### 3.4. Qualitative Data

Brinkmann (2013) argues, “[p]eople talk with others in order to learn about how they experience the world, how they think, act, feel and develop as individuals and in groups” (p. 1). Thus speaking to instructors one-on-one offered a chance to enhance the statistical demographic data generated from the online survey. Interviews are a common methodological tool for qualitative studies as they offer the opportunity to interact with participants, respond to their answers in real time and allow for clarification and elaboration of salient points, in real time. Additionally, one-on-one interviews allow the interviewer and participant to develop rapport, which may facilitate openness and build trust, thereby generating opportunities for richer, more varied data.

One-on-one interviews are an ideal methodological tool for speaking with participants who are not hesitant to speak, who are articulate, and who can share their ideas comfortably (Creswell, 2012). This was certainly the case with the teachers who volunteered to participate in the study. I selected interview participants from the first respondents who provided their email at the end of the online survey and agreed to meet with me. I contacted nine volunteers and, in the end, had eight participants for the interview portion of the study.

Although I acknowledge that being an interviewer always comes with a degree of power, as you are the person asking the questions, my position as a fellow EAL instructor and graduate student may have mitigated that power imbalance during the interviews. Although the positionality of qualitative researchers with regards to insider/outsider status when interviewing participants in certain social groups is still debated (Herbert & Rubin, 2005), I found that my status as an insider in the EAL community was very helpful in establishing the quick rapport needed to explore complex issues with participants. During the interview process I was conscious about how empathetic I was with my participants. Herbert and Rubin (2005) advise:

When interviewees tell you in detail about their experiences, they expose themselves to you and trust that you will not violate their confidence or criticize them. They deposit a part of themselves, an image of who they are, into your safekeeping and in doing so end up feeling vulnerable. You have an obligation to show concern with the emotional impact of the

interview, perhaps by making the interviewee more comfortable about revelations by exposing what you feel in turn. (p. 6)

I found the conversations easy and comfortable and did not sense a hesitation from the participants in sharing their experiences with me.

Participants met with me at a mutually agreed upon time and convenient location. I recorded the audio of our discussions for transcription using a digital recording device. These recordings were stored according to the ethical research practices set out by the university and transcribed by me at a later date.

The interview questions were designed to be open-ended and allow for the participant to speak about what they felt was most important around the topic of EAL in BC. The complexity and variety of data this kind of interviewing creates is a challenge for later coding and analysis, however, it allows the participant a sense of control and empowerment towards the direction of the interview and best facilitates the co-construction of knowledge. (The list of questions used to guide the interviews is included in Appendix C.)

According to Brinkmann (2013), “conversation in its Latin root means ‘dwelling with someone’ or ‘wandering together with’” (p. 3). During the interview process I found that often the interviews seemed much more like a conversation than strict investigative interviews. I did, in a sense, feel like we were wandering together through a defined personal topic (our teaching work), in which we both had shared experiences. I sat with the participants in quiet offices, on park benches and in the corners of coffee shops. In reflection, at the end of the sessions, I wrote that many interviews seemed a bit like therapy sessions. I had the sense that, in some cases, participants saw the interview as a way to unburden themselves from many of the challenges that they had faced in their professional teaching lives. Perhaps having those experiences validated by another teacher/researcher felt good, beyond the regular sharing that might happen in a teacher lounge or staff room.

I noted that each of the eight teachers I spoke with expressed how much they enjoyed teaching and how their students were a constant source of happiness in their classrooms, despite the sometimes very challenging and emotional discussions we

shared. Overall, I felt extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to speak with these eight dedicated, experienced instructors and grateful that they would take time out of their busy teacher lives to share their experiences with me.

There are, of course, also limitations to interviewing as a means of data collection. Participants are only able to speak with you for a limited amount of time and they are only sharing with you their impressions as they are willing and able to do so, on that day. However, through the triangulation of the multiple data sets and through the volume of data collected, a rich picture of the complex and contested spaces of adult EAL in BC has emerged.

As the interview process progressed, I found myself reminded more and more about my own experiences as an instructor in BC EAL. I often nodded in knowing agreement with many of the stories relayed over the course of our conversations. My participants were all aware that I was an EAL instructor, just like them, who had likely heard stories similar to theirs, or had experienced similar working and teaching situations. My positionality as an insider in this group allowed me to quickly build a relationship with my participants and, I sense, added to the richness of the data. Building on that premise, I will expand on how I decided to add an autobiographical lens to my study. Before delving into that more fully, however, I will first address briefly ethnography as a method commonly employed in qualitative studies.

### **3.5. Ethnography**

Ethnography, according to Atheide and Johnson (1994), allows researchers to “see first hand what occurs through observation over a sustained period in a specific context” (p. 487). Using ethnography is useful for looking at groups who share a common culture, such as teachers working in a specific domain, like EAL education in BC, and helps us to understand patterns in the group’s culture, sharing behaviours, beliefs, and language (Creswell, 2012).

Ethnography is at its root the study of “the other” (Starr, 2010), however. While I was an insider in the group I was studying, I therefore felt ethnography could not

accommodate my desire to acknowledge my own positionality in this research. Because of that, I sought out avenues to include my own experiences in the study, as an additional source of data and another way to triangulate the information. Indeed understanding my own reflexive position in this work was key to gaining a deeper understanding of the data and authentic representation of myself within it. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), “a combination of methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry” (p. 4). Adding autoethnography allowed for that possibility and is described in greater detail below.

### **3.6. Autoethnography**

Canagarajah (2012) writes:

Whereas traditional positivistic research traditions perceive anything based on the self as subjective and distorting valid knowledge claims, autoethnography values the self as a rich repository of experiences and perspectives that are not easily available to traditional approaches...[T]his approach acknowledges that knowledge is based on one’s location and identities. It frankly engages with the situatedness of one’s experiences, rather than suppressing them. (p. 260)

Autoethnography is essentially the study of the self in a specific context, and it is useful for examining the author’s experience of the research problem at hand. According to Ellis (2004), autoethnography is “systematic sociological introspection using emotional recall” (p. xvii) to come to know more about a particular cultural event or context. Beyond that, autoethnography allows the researcher, while also practicing disciplined inquiry, to “bridge the tensions between personal/social, theoretical/practical, and the self/other, to inform theory and to highlight the lived experience and the struggles within it” (Starr, 2010, p. 2). Autoethnography is often written as a story that is complex, emotional, situational, and discloses details of private life. In addition, evocative autoethnography, specifically, follows the pattern of a traditional narrative, with plot points, characters, dramatic tension, and, finally, a moral or point to the story (Ellis, 2004). Autoethnographies can also be relational and institutional stories, affected by history and

social structure (Ellis, 2004). This is important for this thesis, as autoethnography demonstrates how individual experiences, narrated through a personal lens, can illuminate resonant patterns within a wider context. It helps readers understand how personal stories tell us about social, historical contexts, in this case BC EAL. These aspects of autoethnography make it a fruitful methodological tool to add to my survey and interview data, in order to better explore teacher identities and the complex landscape of EAL in BC.

Anderson (2006) observes that there need not be a mutually exclusive relationship between the emotionally resonant experiences commonly narrated in an autoethnography and the sociologic and analytic roots of the genre, and thereby advocates for analytic autoethnography as a variation within the autoethnographic style.

Others, such as Atkinson (2006), critique ethnographic studies in general, autoethnography included, stating that in them the value of sociological fieldwork may turn into a quest for self-fulfillment by researchers. He argues that autoethnography can come off as self-absorbed rather than socially critical, noting that “the personal is political, but the personal does not exhaust or subsume all aspects of the political” (Atkinson, 2006, p. 403). Taking those criticisms into account, it is therefore important to be cautious when using such a deeply personal methodology, to be sure that the work does not descend into “navel gazing.” In this study I have tried to abate this risk by using careful analysis, drawing on multiple sources of data and triangulating my own experiences with the varied responses of my participants.

Autoethnography’s purpose, however, is also partly in the sharing of the author’s personal experience, giving participants and readers an experience to which they can compare to their own (Ellis, 2004). Ellis writes that the need for this kind of work is in the profound sense that other people have experiences similar to the writer. Or in the case of this research, that I have experiences similar to those of other people (my participants). Again, this is how autoethnographic studies find resonance with a wider context and are useful for illustrating how one narrative can tell the story of many. In this thesis, a methodology that deliberately went beyond the author’s introspective gaze, to

include multiple, triangulated perspectives, yet allows for full inclusion of the researcher's voice seemed most fitting to me and compelled the use of analytic autoethnography.

Unlike Ellis and Bochner's (2000) call for autoethnography to be "narrative text [that] refuses to abstract and explain" (p. 744), analytic autoethnography expands what is seen as useful in understanding a phenomenon or context under investigation beyond the personal, to understanding a complex research context with the inclusion of other data and analytic lenses. Anderson (2006) outlines five key features of analytic autoethnography: (1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher's self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis. With regards to Anderson's five key features of analytic autoethnography, this thesis meets all of the qualifying stipulations he puts forth. To begin, I am a full member participant in the EAL teaching community in BC, as I have experience teaching and working in a number of contexts and programs in adult EAL in the province. Secondly, I have engaged in analytic reflexivity with regards to my role and experiences in this community, and how it connects to this work. My own voice is clearly visible in this thesis. In subsequent chapters I will report on the extended dialogues that I shared with my participants, which went far beyond the self, to exploring our shared experiences in BC EAL, as well as my participants' own thoughts and perceptions about their experiences. Lastly, as detailed in Chapter 2, I have a firm and detailed commitment to theoretical analysis, using the multiple and complementary lenses of identity, marginality, professionalism, and neoliberalism all in relation to the concept of contact zone. I note that Anderson's characterization of analytic autoethnography does not call for narrative or literary features, or for emotive resonance with the reader, although it does not preclude them, either. By utilizing this autoethnographic methodology I have consciously moved away from the narrative demands and foregrounding of my own experience required by an evocative autoethnography. However, analytical autoethnography allows for situated thematic analysis of multiple nuanced data sets, including my own experiences, which are impossible to legitimately separate from those of my participants. Although it is my hope that this work will resonate on an emotional level with the reader, my own goals go beyond this, to add to our understanding of the complex context of EAL teaching in BC

and how instructors understand and negotiate their own identities within it. Analytic autoethnography best allows for the richest exploration and examination of this context.

### **3.7. Grounded Theory and Data Analysis**

How we collect data and what we do with it matters (Charmaz, 2011) and using grounded theory as a first step in qualitative research analysis has many advantages. Going into a complex social situation, asking personal questions, and attempting to make connections to established theoretical frameworks in some ways assumes a level of prejudgment of the context. In this case, although as a member participant I do have insider status in the community that I am investigating, it was important to me as a researcher to remain as open as possible to the data, to hear my participants' teacher narratives with care and empathy and to stay as close to the material as possible. In essence, grounded theory allows researchers to simultaneously collect data, analyze it, and complete inductive coding to organize the data while gathering it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

During the course of this study, I relistened to the narratives and performed preliminary thematic analysis on interviews as they were completed. This gave me the opportunity to explore emergent themes more deeply in my subsequent interviews. Although perhaps more challenging for a novice researcher than linear coding practices, a grounded theory approach has allowed me to sort large batches of data into tentative categories, some of which later became major themes, while others were combined together. The process made both the interviewing and the coding an iterative rather than a static process.

For Charmaz (2011) the ability to ask "what is happening?" in small segments of the data allows grounded theorists to take a fresh look at their data and leads to innovative analysis. I found this point was key, especially as it lead me to explore the impact of neoliberal ideologies manifested in the lived experiences of instructors in BC EAL, as will be detailed in Chapter 4.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, using grounded theory, as Charmaz argues, is a strong match for researchers interested in social justice, as I am. She argues that practitioners of grounded theory:

Become attuned to the nuances of empirical worlds that elude researchers who assume a unitary method and a unitary knowledge and thus, are ill equipped to grasp such nuance as the unheard voice of dissent and the silence of suffering. (Charmaz, 2011, p. 361)

In this case, using grounded theory allowed me to carefully listen to and closely examine the narratives share by my participants. Through this careful listening I could better identify patterns of marginalization and the tangible impact of powerful discourses (such as neoliberalism and de-professionalization) that emerged from participants' narratives, as they sometimes quite quietly conveyed their marginalization and exploitation.

### **3.8. Ethical Concerns**

It is important for ethical researchers to embark on their data collection with the possible impacts of the research for their participants at the top of their minds (Creswell, 2012; Starr, 2010). Gathering data in the most ethical manner, with thoughtful attention to the community and tenuous teaching positions many of my participants work in, was of central concern to my research. Ensuring the confidentiality of my participants' stories was paramount at each stage. During the online survey, participants' responses were gathered anonymously. Participants only provided identifying contact details if they chose to, at the end of the survey. For the interview, new consent was sought from each participant, and the process for protecting his or her privacy was explained. Each participant agreed to have his or her interview audio recorded, and the data was then transferred to a password-protected hard drive, which is securely stored. All interview data, once transcribed, was coded to conceal the identity of the participants, and for ease of transcription each was assigned a pseudonym for the purpose of this study.

During my contact with the study participants I was conscientious and open about the purpose of the study and how I was going about gathering the data (Creswell,

2012). Because the community of EAL instructors in the province is relatively small and highly networked, and because many instructors teach in tenuous and itinerant positions, it was very important to anonymize the names and institutions of my participants. I was clear about promising participants that I would respect their wishes with regards to what I would include and exclude in this study.

Ethical research demands that inquirers collaborate with study participants in their meaning making and are careful that their work does not contribute to the participants' marginalization (Creswell, 2012). In this case participants had the opportunity to review the data from their interview that was included in this report through a process of member-checking, and could choose to withdraw any part of their participation at any time during this study; however, none did.

My position as a teacher/researcher in this study does also create an ethical concern that I am occupying a privileged position, representing the academy and the power that it holds in the domain of EAL teaching. As mentioned earlier, according to Lin et al. (2004), there is a clear hierarchy in TESOL, where instructors occupy the lowest position, and researchers are the most privileged. In addition, Creswell (2012) cautions that interviews can be more difficult than they appear for novice researchers and that data can be deceiving if the participants are telling the interviewer what they think the interviewer might want to hear. In counterbalance to that positionality, however, I am also a student and an EAL instructor. I was able to relate to many of the experiences the participants shared through first-hand and recent experiences. Brinkman (2013) argues that "not just interviewees, but also interviewers have something at stake in the interaction, and sometimes a lot" (p. 149). As we are members of the same networked community, in some ways we share the risks of this endeavour together. However, the above-mentioned steps taken to mitigate these risks allow us to proceed with this opportunity for exploration and sharing of our common experiences in the contact zone of BC EAL.

Lastly, below is a table that provides details of the participants who I spoke with during the qualitative stage of this study. It illustrates some key demographic details

about the participants accounting for the variety of background, years of experience and qualifications of those who were interviewed.

**Table 1. Participants' Details**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Highest Qualification</b>	<b>Teaching Context</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Wendy	BA, TESOL diploma	Public postsec, LINC	5	F
Karen	MEd TEAL	Public postsec	14	F
Mandy	MA Theatre	Public postsec	11	F
Harriet	MEd TEAL	LINC	12	F
Mary	BA, TESOL Cert	LINC	5	F
Beth	MEd Adult Education	Public Post-sec	6	F
Amy	MEd TEAL	Private Lang	5	F
James	BA, TESOL Cert	Private Lang	2	M

In the next chapter, the data for this study will be presented, beginning with an introductory personal narrative within each subsection in italics. This section opens with a discussion about my own start with teaching EAL and how that lead me to this thesis.

## Chapter 4.

### Data and Discussion

“I never wanted to teach ESL,” my friend Annie told me. “I never wanted to be part of that machine.” She sipped her coffee and looked me in the eye. We were having coffee to discuss her recent thoughts around teaching English. She had watched rafts of newly minted graduates fly off to Asia to “teach English” with dollar signs in their eyes, and hopes of rich contracts in their hearts that would wipe them free of years of student debt. They had shared stories of teaching classes with her where their students (presumably children) would “just brush my hair” for the length of the lesson or play games until it was time for the teachers to go drinking. Now as Annie finished graduate school and had a new-found passion for teaching, she wanted to know, should she learn to teach ESL?

*Annie's question drew my mind back to my own beginnings in the world of teaching ESL. It was 2001 and I had been working in the travel industry in San Francisco, trying to figure out what to do with my life after university. After “September 11” no one wanted to fly any more, and business had slowed down at the travel agency. The events of that day changed so many lives, and in a small way changed mine as well. I took the opportunity to reassess what I really wanted to do with my life. Remembering the advice I had received from an English professor at university, I looked up ESL teaching certificates. By the end of January 2002 I was teaching English as an additional language in a private language school in the Bay Area. I was hooked! I loved the freedom that I was offered in my classes. I taught using music and novels. I designed multi-staged Business English projects, trained interns, created an American Culture Club where I took students to jazz clubs, art museums, rodeos, and powwows. I worked 50-hour weeks and I made 26,000 dollars a year, with no benefits. After the heady honeymoon period started to wear off, I looked around to my colleagues and wondered what had led the rest of them here? And how did they survive? I knew for me this was only the first stop on a long teaching journey, but thought that some of my*

*colleagues could surely be making more money elsewhere. I felt inside that the work I was doing was important for my students and that I was developing personally as an instructor. But with such low wages, I was also beginning to feel disrespected as a professional. I was torn between what I thought being a good instructor was all about, and what value my institution placed on it. Thinking again about Annie's hesitation to get into the field reminded me of my unresolved internal conflict about the work we do in EAL teaching, and how I have personally navigated my career in the contact zone.*

Pratt (1991) argues that a "Contact Zone perspective emphasises how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other" (p. 8). As discussed in Chapter 2, framing EAL in BC as a contact zone highlights these conflicts, both internal, for individual instructors, and external, in how instructors navigate their professional relationships. These conflicts often involve unequal power dynamics in institutions, as instructors are positioned at the nexus of competing values and interests (Smagorinsky et al., 2008). The narratives and analysis included in this chapter address the real experiences of instructors in the social space of the contact zone and examine how the powerful intersecting forces come to bear on the identities and actions of instructors therein. After close analysis of the data, the overlapping themes of marginality, professionalism, and marketization emerged as most salient from the participant narratives. Underlying all of these themes, however, is the often unacknowledged influence of neoliberalism. Although in many cases neoliberalism is most closely aligned with marketization in education, here I found that it is also influential in each emergent theme. How neoliberal ideology is overtly or covertly at work is discussed below, along with the analysis and connections to relevant literature, within each section.

As already mentioned, in this chapter I begin each section with a narrative that helps to set the initial context for the analysis that follows. I begin by addressing the theme of marginality, which emerged from narratives around how EAL instructors can be sidelined both within their programs and by their institutions. I explore the concepts of physical and social space, as well as how access to tools and resources impacts instructors' abilities to do their best work for themselves and their students.

Being denied access to proper tools, resources, and space leads me to questions about professionalism, which is the second major theme I examine. In analyzing narratives and literature on the influential forces that position EAL instructors as either legitimate or illegitimate, I discuss professionalism, focusing on factors leading to that positioning. I look at marketization, beginning with teaching observations, which appear here to be more closely related to neoliberal demands for employee accountability than instructor professional development. Following observations, I examine the recurring dichotomy of “students versus customers,” and the struggle to marry these seemingly competing concepts through both original narrative and scholarly corroborations. I then turn to the issues of low wages and short contracts, where both are concretely linked to neoliberal ideology, in contrast to instructor professional identities. Finally, I examine the interplay of the scalability of work to EAL teachers, with a narrative exploring the pressure instructors face in helping to build more profitable companies in order to ensure the security of their own work.

It should be noted that although all of the narratives included in this chapter are true, first-person experiences, the names and identifying details of institutions and people have been changed for the purpose of anonymity. I begin below with the most pervasive and convergent theme, marginality.

## **4.1. Marginality**

*It's 8 p.m. on a cold, dark, and rainy Friday night in November, and I am rushing towards the dry warmth of a building on the outskirts of a university campus. Once inside, I shake off the rain and unpack my teaching bag alone in the teachers' room. The door opens quietly and Abigail comes in clutching a pile of assignments and books. "Happy Friday!" she says brightly. Abigail is finishing now while I am just coming on to teach my class. Abigail and I have become fast friends. We needed to. She and I were both new hires for this term and subsequently given the worst teaching assignments. Tonight's class for me begins at 8:40 p.m. on a Friday night, and goes to 9:50 p.m.*

*Abigail complains "The students are tired tonight; it's hard to keep them awake and focused." I wonder about my own class only now about to get started. How will they*

*feel when we get to the second half after 9 pm? She asks, "Do you know where the forms are that we need to fill out if students are not completing their assignments?" I shake my head. Abigail and I have had only the lightest support from our supervisors since starting here in September. Everything, from grading and attendance (Online! Mandatory! Counterintuitive!), to assignments and exam planning, has been a mysterious and stressful process for us because we are never here when anyone else we can ask is. We are cautious, too, about being "the new ones" (as we were dubbed by one veteran instructor, barely making eye contact) who ask too many silly questions. We have heard that instructors start here and often don't get hired back for another term.*

Pratt (1991) argues that contact zones are "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (p. 173). In the narrative example above, the culture of EAL education as I had previously understood and experienced it conflicted with the culture of the program I joined. Specifically, my expectations for clear direction regarding course curriculum, for support in understanding vital administrative processes to perform my job, for a social or standard time for courses to take place, and for some level of collegial support from my peers also teaching in the program, together with my perhaps naive assumptions about what teaching at a university might be like, collided with the established patterns and culture of the program I was hired into. This program was governed by an institutional culture, which had developed over time and was swayed by a number of outside influences (such as the market forces of international education at this institution, the public-private partnership that was responsible for this program, and the remedial positioning of the program outside of credit subject courses). This social culture was in direct conflict with my own and Abigail's expectations and beliefs about how good programs functioned and how good teaching happened, resulting in what Singh and Doherty (2004) term "moral dilemmas" (p. 10).

The results of the social and administrative isolation that we experienced, by teaching late at night, by the culture of employment insecurity, which either led to hostile interactions with other instructors or to being ignored, and by the sense that we had been "dropped into the deep end," impacted how and what we taught. As discussed in Chapter 2, Pratt's (1991) theory, beyond describing the contact zone as a place where cultures meet and collide, also includes the construct of "unequal power relations." In the

narrative example above we instructors are positioned in the weakest power position, as the newest instructors with the least access to the social and physical resources needed to succeed in this place. The situated practices dominated over us, controlling our access to these resources, as well as our current and ongoing employment.

According to Singh and Doherty (2004) and Canagarajah (1997), who in their respective works theorize English for academic purposes (EAP) programs in western universities as contact zones, the institution, instructors, and students in such programs are all active agents in producing, co-constructing and challenging the design of those programs through their day-to-day interactions.

Beyond that, as discussed earlier, contact zones are also places where identity negotiation takes place (Singh & Doherty, 2004). For example in the following semester, Abigail, despite being offered another contract with the same program, declined, and went to work for less pay and less status at a private school in another city. She just could not stand the idea of another term of disconnected, conflicted, and marginalized positioning. It was too much at odds with her identity as a successful, professional instructor that she had crafted through years of teaching experience and study.

Together with being a social space impacting our identity negotiations, the contact zone is also, as mentioned earlier, a space of unequal power, which privileges some, while helping to move others to the periphery, thus creating conditions for marginality. My analysis of this narrative draws on Charmaz (2008), who argued that “disconnection, devaluation, discrimination, and deprivation exemplify experiences of marginalization” (p. 9). These qualities are shown in the story above, as Abigail and I were disconnected from our peers, devalued by having to teach late at night and deprived of the support and tools to do our jobs properly.

As outlined earlier, despite the marginalization of EAL instructors being well documented in other contexts, (Auerbach, 1991; Crookes, 1997; Varghese et al., 2005; Willet & Jeannot, 1993), it remains a rarely examined aspect of the teaching lives of instructors in British Columbia. This marginality has been around us for so long that it is almost part of the air we breathe. The consequence of this reality is that tension is

created when our identity as professionals is at odds with the everyday realities of our work.

According to Crookes (1997), it is particularly important to note that EAL teachers are in fact isolated in a number of different ways: by their subordinate status, the physical and tight scheduling restrictions that limit interactions, and the exclusion of lesson preparation and professional development as part of teachers' paid professional responsibilities. Instructing adults in most contexts is generally thought of as a stable, secure job, done in organized spaces, designed with the needs of teachers and students in mind. However, the story above as well as the interview data revealed that this was often not the case, as teachers found tension between this common understanding of what teaching and learning spaces are, and how they sometimes experienced them. This tension between their everyday working realities impacted how they saw themselves and their identities in this work, as will be further elaborated upon below.

#### **4.1.1. Space and place**

*In anticipation of my interview I Google the school again to be sure I understand as much as I can about it before heading downtown tomorrow morning. I search the website for any pictures of the school, but most pictures are just generic shots of smiling youth with an eye-pleasing variety of young faces represented. I can't find any specific pictures of classrooms or even the school lobby. Finally I find the school address and Google that. "Wow!" I think, "It's a historic building in downtown Vancouver, near the water. It would be lovely to enjoy those views from my classroom! How inspiring!"*

*The next morning I head downtown and seek out the building. The lobby is even more beautiful than the outside! I look around for a listing of tenants and notice a sign with the school name on it and an arrow indicating a set of stairs leading downwards. The ESL school is actually in the basement. Sure enough, I was soon waiting for my interview in a cramped and windowless teachers' room below street level.*

My own personal experience in private EAL education in Vancouver reflects this tension between the expected and the realities of teaching adult EAL. In Vancouver, private language schools are often located in office buildings in the downtown core,

housed in spaces never designed to be schools. Classrooms are often knocked-together offices, hot, windowless and cramped, making them difficult spaces to do your best work.

A few years later, although my teaching context had changed, I continued to find my workspace to be an important factor in how I negotiated my identity as an instructor. In one post-secondary program we did not have offices to meet with students or even access to a private room. Because of the tight scheduling, we often had to hold student meetings in the busy open teachers' room, making it an awkward social place for everyone. In another post-secondary program, because our classes were not "for credit" in the department, we were at times bumped from our assigned slots in the computer lab by other for credit classes. We were also the last programs in our department to get classroom assignments. This meant that we were allotted any leftover space, often spread out around the building, too small, too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer. As these kinds of patterns keep happening to you and your students in your professional life, it can lead you to question the value of your position in programs and institutions, in addition to your own professional identity. Participants' narratives below illustrate this as a common pattern of EAL education in BC.

As stated earlier, in the contact zone of private EAL in British Columbia, there are many powerful forces that influence how instructors experience this context. Common discourses—around education, expectations instructors understand and have internalized as to what a school looks like, where it is housed, what physical resources will be available to instructor—clash with the lived reality of education for profit (Pratt, 1991). The reality is that private corporations, seeking to maximize the profitability of their business, are motivated to pay the lowest possible rent for a marketable address. Downtown Vancouver, with high-cost real estate and high rent, means that to keep the good address, schools are forced into marginal spaces, in my example, the below-street-level basement. Both physical "space" and the social idea of "place" and how they relate to marginalization in BC EAL will be further elaborated on below.

Returning to the case of LINC programs in Ontario, and as will be illustrated below through my data, I further argue that in Canada, adult EAL programs are often

housed in marginal spaces. As discussed in Chapter 2, Haque et al. (2007) found program spaces posed a significant problem for the proper implementation of program pedagogies. The authors observed classrooms where students did not have enough space to move around for group work, where external sounds were prohibitively loud, and other cramped and crowded teaching and learning conditions. Many teachers reported that this linked directly to their perceptions of the “low priority of LINC learners and teachers” (Haque et al., 2007, p.638).

My interviews echoed these experiences. Harriet spoke of her teaching situation in ELSA where she was teaching in a building across the street and down the road from the rest of her colleagues. Thus her classroom was physically separated from the school, the rest of the staff, teaching resources, photocopier, and colleagues. These situations occurred because, despite the program funding being allocated in April with plans to open in a new location in July, the instructors and classes had no permanent classroom spaces until January of the following year. Harriet described what it was like when she started:

When we first started I was actually out a satellite location. It was about a five-minute walk up the block, on the other side of the street. But I was there, and everyone else was at the other school, so I didn't get to meet people properly. We had a couple of staff mixers and things, but you know...I was sent to introduce myself because I was somebody that they [the other staff] never saw. And in fact, I talked to my coworkers just last week and she was saying, “yeah, I thought you were just a friend of somebody who works here. I didn't know you actually worked at the school.” Yeah, because I was never physically present, at the meeting location. (Harriet)

Where and how teachers prepare to teach impact how and what they can teach. Crookes (1997) refers to this kind of physical marginalization in space when he problematizes teacher isolation, arguing that EAL instructors are denied access to the social resource of their teaching peers when forced to teach in “off-site” campuses and physically separated spaces.

Wendy also referred to this challenge of separate spaces at her public post-secondary institution. When she started her job she was at a different campus from the rest of her colleagues. She was left on her own to “just figure it out.” She said:

At the time, I was sent to the [other] campus and so I don't see anybody. It's a huge campus, I'm just being thrown into it, and I find that I have to be very independent, in terms of learning everything and improvising—ha ha...because no one is there to help me, because the main office is downtown, actually. (Wendy)

Echoing that sentiment, Mandy discussed how at her institution the overcrowded teachers' room also fuelled teacher anxiety. The size of the program had grown so much over the past five years, but the space the teachers shared had remained the same and was now filled with many more bodies. Mandy explained:

So it went from a place that was very generous and very open and very back and forth, to being too many people in a small space rubbing elbows and then starting to hit elbows with one another. Mixed with the anxiety of never knowing if they can have a job at the end of that...I just didn't like the feeling of being in that workspace. It just felt very toxic. (Mandy)

It is hard to imagine this kind of tension and competition for personal space in a teachers' room where instructors should feel comfortable to prepare, meet with students, plan lessons, and mark papers. Indeed Haque et al. (2007) found that teachers' lesson plans were impacted by the physical space of where their work was carried out.

Amy shared how when she started at her job there was an unspoken rule as to who sat where in the overcrowded teachers' room. She described tensions developing between teachers when these unspoken rules about place were unwittingly violated. She said:

So, when I first started working there, I think it's really funny—because everyone has a seat. We couldn't sit in a spot unless nobody (else) sat in that spot. But nobody would tell you if you are sitting in somebody's spot, until they came up and it was going to be a problem. (Amy)

Curry, Jaxson, Russell, Callahan, and Bicais (2008) studied both the social place and physical space in how beginning teachers develop what the authors call “a micro-political literacy” of a school setting. They defined micro-political literacies as how a person understands the power and political interests at play in a particular context. The study addresses how novice teachers learned about the micro-political landscape where they were teaching (and new ideas may be resisted) and how gaining a better understanding through structured group support could provide access to this important

literacy. The study found that without community support novice teachers had little chance to develop micro-political literacy, and this could negatively impact their identity negotiations (Curry et al. 2008). In Amy's case, the micro-political literacy support provided to new teachers was clearly inadequate, as she relayed that her new coworkers were not assisted in finding out about important yet seemingly mundane workplace practices like seat allocation.

The connection of physical space and a sense of place (a feeling of fitting in to an organization) and EAL marginality are consistent in the literature. As mentioned in Chapter 2, in her investigation of middle school EAL teachers in North Carolina, George (2009) found that teachers experienced marginalization in terms of both physical space and social place. She described them as "teaching from the back of the classroom" (p. 36) while the "main" content teachers taught at the front or central place of their shared classroom. Her study participants talked about their own classrooms being in the "dungeon," meaning the basement, or offices in "a closet" (George, 2009). Echoing those findings, in New England, Liggett observed that the EAL teachers in the public school system she studied taught in substandard spaces. EAL teachers were assigned classrooms and offices that were makeshift, temporary, or "not meant for teaching" (Liggett, 2010).

It is clear from the above examples, in my experiences, the participants' narratives, and the available literature, that space and place impact our ability to teach, prepare and cooperate with each other to do our best work for our students. Mandy's and Amy's experiences of rising tensions in their crowded teacher rooms show the impact of feeling marginalized that EAL teachers live with each day in BC. Harriet's and Wendy's stories of the physical separation that they endured teaching at distanced locations from their colleagues illustrate how separation both in terms of space (physical location) and place (social location) is indeed a real part of marginalization as defined by Charmaz (2008).

EAL instructors find little to validate their experiences of this marginalization in the scant literature about our work in BC. However, it is these patterned, connected, and shared narratives that I hope will resonate with the experiences of others in BC EAL and

will illustrate to each of us teaching in subpar classrooms, below ground in fancy office towers, knocking elbows with each other in teachers' rooms, as the anxiety levels rise, that these are not simply analogous experiences. These are, in fact, a current and continuing reality of our teaching lives in the contact zone of BC EAL, where economic pressure meets basic professional expectations, in contested spaces and places, and where real conflict arises and needs to be acknowledged. These themes add to our understanding about how EAL instructors in BC experience their professional careers, thereby filling a small part of the gap in what we know about this context.

Together with teaching and preparing EAL in marginalized spaces, there are other deprivations that also add to our marginality. Another recurrent pattern in the participants' narratives is access to tools and resources, which I will discuss below.

#### **4.1.2. Tools and resources**

*On the first day of my new job I am lead into the book room. The air is warm and dusty, and it's dim because of the tall shelves blocking the light from the single bulb. "Here's your textbook," my boss says. "You can teach from this. We do have a class set, so when you want the students to use the book, bring them all out to the classroom." I look at the shelf with 20 copies of the textbook. All together they must weight 50 lbs. I quickly calculate how many I could carry in one trip back down the hall and up two flights of stairs to my classroom. "How long will that take me?" I think to myself. "Can the students take the books home?" I ask, remembering how we had been assigned books in high school. "No, we've found that they don't bring them back, so please keep a good count on them and return them here each night." My boss turns his back and heads for a shelf further into the book room. I follow, trying not to trip on boxes and broken bookends. "These are your other resources for teaching Listening and Speaking," he says, indicating a different half-filled shelf with dog-eared textbooks. I scan the titles; Jazz Chants leaps out at me. Some of the books are obviously falling apart, locally published, and/or hilariously outdated. He hands me a slip of paper and two whiteboard markers, which are blue and black. "This is your copy code," he says, "we track your copies, so keep them to a minimum. Here are two new markers. Don't lose them, we're on a tight budget here." I take the pens and make a mental note to find an office supply*

*store on my way home; I hope they're open late. It's obvious I'll be supplementing my own teaching resources, with my own pens and coloured paper, while working for this multinational corporation.*

As this narrative illustrates, beyond physical space and social place, EAL instructors' marginality is also revealed in our lack of access to the tools and resources needed to do our work to our own standards. In an example of the under-resourced conditions we teach in, Harriet expressed how thankful she was to have a coffeemaker and a photocopier, when they finally arrived at her new school: "There was a photocopier that was easy to use, and there was coffee. Just having coffee can make all of the difference. And the classrooms were fine." (Harriet)

This quip illustrates the pattern of instructors' expectations conflicting with the realities of our work in the contact zone of EAL. When neoliberal thinking, which privileges austerity over basic teaching tools, confronts teachers' sense of what a basic school or teaching environment should entail, struggle and conflict emerge between the instructor and how they are positioned by the institution.

Another recurring trend emerged from the narratives discussing tools and resources. Both Mary and Harriet, who taught in the ELSA (now, once again, LINC) program, discussed how teachers were expected to check their work email regularly to keep up to date with any changes or information from within the program. However, each complained that their administration was having trouble getting the instructors to stay on top of their email messages. Harriet reported that there was only one computer in the teachers' room and that nobody had computers in their classrooms. If they wanted to check their emails they needed to sign out a laptop from the portable computer lab (unless it was being used by a class) or use the shared one in the teachers' room. Other teachers complained that they were not able to access their work email on their phones, and sometimes that none of the emails were of relevance to them anyway, so they had never bothered to set it up. Without providing consistent, easy access to the appropriate tools, institutions cannot rightfully demand that their instructors stay up to date in their communication. By not providing those tools needed to correspond with program managers, in an age when timely information is power, instructors are left further

marginalized. Access to markers or photocopies or computers to check emails might seem like trivialities, but in North America they are the basic tools of our work, and we need them to fulfill our professional responsibilities as teachers. Without them we cannot do our jobs, and this contributes to our marginality (Crookes, 1997).

Participants also spoke about how they were separated from the resources they need to do their job well. Mandy explained that at one post-secondary institution the teachers' room and the resource room were located at opposite ends of the hall, which did not facilitate the use of the resources and made each instructor rush around more than was necessary between classes.

There is an office and there is a teachers' room. So to get to the resources, which are in the office you have to leave the teachers' room and go use the resources then come back to the teachers' room, so it is like a split environment. So there doesn't seem to be any cohesion within that, because it is split. (Mandy)

Returning to Charmaz's (2008) list of descriptives that illustrate marginality, each of the preceding examples shows a repeating trend of how EAL instructors fit these terms. For example, not having the proper supplies, such as felt pens and photocopiers, to do your basic work is a form of deprivation in a North American context. Having to work up the road and in another building, or as Wendy did, primarily at another campus, away from your program and colleagues causes disconnection, separation, and social distance. Having to use all of your unpaid preparation time moving from the teachers' room to the resource room and back again devalues the importance of the preparation work and the time it takes to complete it. Not having enough room in the teachers' room to be able to spread out, have your own desk with access to the space, technological, and physical resources that you need to mark, prepare, and perform the basic functions of teaching creates barriers to being able to succeed in your complex role as an instructor. All of these examples illustrate some patterns of how EAL instructors in BC are marginalized in their daily work.

Read in isolation these observations and participant narratives seems like a long list of complaints, perhaps common to most modern teaching in North America. However, when examined in conjunction with other ways EAL teachers' needs are

minimized and sidelined, it becomes apparent that these seemingly small issues combine to create clear, repetitive trends and a resonant picture of how EAL instructors' work is recurrently (under)valued in our institutions in BC.

Overall, the clashes of conflicting, powerful forces in the contact zone of BC EAL, which clash with our own sense of self and our expectations for our working and teaching environments, often remain unresolved (as they did for Abigail in the opening narrative) within the contested space of this context. In addition to tools and space, EAL instructors in BC are also often subject to fragile, insecure employment conditions, which also contribute to the marginal status of EAL instructors. This topic will be discussed in the section below, which first addresses the broader theme of professionalism.

## **4.2. Professionalism**

*“Do you want to teach level 4/5 next term?” my boss Chuck asks, a smirk on his lips. “OK,” I say, not really able to read his mood. What is this about? I think to myself. He goes on, “Well, I’ll ask the others about combined levels at the teachers’ meeting over lunch today.” OK, I think again. He seems wistful for a moment. “Do you ever ask yourself what you are doing here (at this ESL school)? I mean, I went to Brown,” he says. He can see that I’m more confused than impressed. I know what I’m doing here. I’m teaching international students English. I tell him I’ll see him later at the meeting, slipping out of his office and back to mine, troubled by his comment. Does having been to Brown mean you are too good for this school? For this work?*

*At lunch during the teachers’ meeting there is a lot of conversation and debate about how many classes we will be able to offer next term and what proficiency levels. My boss is suggesting that we may have to combine up to 3 levels into one group. The teachers are resistant because it would be difficult to effectively teach such a stratified group. Now Chuck is mad. He shouts at us, “If you think you are even teaching these guys, you are kidding yourselves! This is just glorified entertainment!” It’s one thing to wonder if your Ivy League education is being put to its best use in a private ESL school, but something else entirely if you tell your teachers they are not even teaching. The lunchroom goes silent.*

Palmer (1997) states, “We teach who we are.” (p. 15), but that idea becomes conflicted when what we think we are and what we are doing (instructors who are teaching) is openly contested by those in authority over our positions. The culture, discourse, and power that surround and position us as we negotiate our professional identity are an important aspect of the EAL contact zone in BC. Accordingly, as discussed earlier, a key part of identity for any working adult reflects their perceptions of professionalism, both for themselves personally and in terms of how they are positioned in their work. For instructors, professionalism can include a complex mixture of their own schooling history and teacher training, their sense of the profession in the wider world, and their own teaching experiences. Often EAL instructors are positioned as being part of a community, but for Pratt (1991), the contact zone stands in contrast to that neutral construction, to acknowledge the pervasive influence of power in our positioning. Professionalism in EAL, as will be shown in the narratives below, continues to be contested and challenged. In my online survey of EAL instructors in BC, results indicated that 50% of respondents did not feel respected by their institutions. Connecting this finding with my autoethnographic story opening this section, this would seem quite understandable if your supervisor claims that you are not even doing real teaching.

Beyond that, considering oneself a professional instructor in EAL is not as straightforward as having a professional designation. Organizations such as TESOL International, TESL Canada and BC TEAL act as professional organizations, which contribute to legitimizing instructors in EAL, but challenges remain for instructors in everyday practice. To understand EAL instructors and their complex identity negotiations in the contact zone of BC EAL, we need to also understand how they see themselves as professionals, outside of the official discourses of professional associations.

In California, Lorimer and Schulte (2011/2012) explained how recent TESOL graduates from graduate programs perceived “professionalism.” They found a clear difference between what the students reported versus how those already entrenched in the academic work of EAL defined professionalism. Faculty deemed professionalism to involve “keeping up with the field” (Lorimer & Schulte, 2011/2012, p. 33) by attending conferences and reading current journals. In contrast, graduate students were more likely to say that professionalism was closely aligned with having a degree in TESOL

and having “a paying job” (Lorimer & Schulte, 2011/2012, p. 33). Here professionalism seems to have multiple meanings and changes with experience, practice, and context. Like identity, it is not one fixed category, but rather a trajectory that does not start with a job, but builds over a career—if we do have a career.

In actuality, the very idea that EAL instruction can even be considered a profession has been problematized. Notably, Johnson’s (1997) study of EAL instructors in Poland sought to find out if they had careers. This study questions the notion that English as a foreign language (EFL) instructors in Poland, coming from countries where English is the dominant language, considered themselves professionals. Many saw their work as temporary, without a clear pathway forward to advancement, and had mostly stumbled into their positions as English teachers, without much intention. Johnson concludes that EFL instructors did not present themselves or identify as professional instructors at all, but more as expert language speakers. This position allows EFL teachers coming from countries where English is the dominate language to ignore other important aspects of English language teaching, such as professional development. The circumstances of their employment, like low wages and little job security further prevent the teachers in Johnson’s study from aligning their lives too closely with the idea of being teaching professionals. Thus, ultimately, their positionality contributes to the perpetuation of perceptions that the field of English teaching is a transient, short-term employment option that is not, in the end, a viable career (Johnson, 1997).

If EFL teachers in Poland do not have careers, do we have them in BC? I have often struggled with this question myself and even now wonder about the answer. I have sometimes felt an overarching sense of the illegitimacy of EAL teaching in our province. Perhaps this is due, in part, to the relative strength of “real teachers” in BC, in the K-12 system, whose professional experiences differ to a large extent from our own. Although many challenges remain for BC educators, including a recent labour unrest, for the most part, K-12 teachers have stable, union jobs, with built-in pay rises, recognition of professional degrees, opportunities for advancement, and a certain level of respect and understanding of what they do by the general public. This often is not the case for BC EAL instructors.

### 4.2.1. Legitimacy

In a pattern linking our narratives, Harriet's experience echoes my own, when she addressed the question of being a real teacher in our interview. Harriet is a very experienced EAL instructor, having taught for more than 12 years in both local and international contexts. She holds a master's degree in TEAL and is a frequent contributor to conferences at the local and national level. Nevertheless, the idea of the "illegitimacy" of EAL teaching still haunts her. She struggled with her own sense of professionalism in her daily life, with her parents, and with the public. She said:

My parents used to be like, when are you going to get a real job? And for crying out loud when I get my haircut, and I tell them that I teach ESL, I get the question, so do you ever want to be a real teacher? This is a pervasive thing.

I talked to somebody at a party and they've never met me before and I say, "Oh, I teach ESL," and they say, "Oh, do you ever want to be a real teacher?" By which they mean K through 12, which is the type of teaching culturally thought of as a teacher. K-12. (Harriet)

I asked my online survey respondents about professionalism in BC EAL as well. 81% of the respondents had five or more years of experience teaching EAL and 66% held a graduate degree. I asked respondents to agree or disagree with the statement: "I feel respected as an EAL professional." While 64% agreed, 36% did not. Although these figures might be explained in many ways, they do indicate a pattern in the level of dissatisfaction with the professional position of EAL instructors here.

Echoing and reinforcing these results, the professional organization BC TEAL conducted a recent survey (2013) that asked its members to indicate their level of agreement with this statement: "BC TEAL's focus should be on improving the status of the ESL/EFL profession." 76% of respondents indicated that this was very important and 23% said this was somewhat important. This indicates that the vast majority of BC TEAL respondents feel that the status of the profession does need to be improved, and it is part of the role of the professional association to do that.

Professionalism in the British Columbian context can also be linked to the high-stakes standardized tests our students are often preparing for or to the exit exams they

take in bridging programs for university entry. Standardized tests are often used to move students between levels in a school, program, or university setting, sometimes without other forms of input from teachers. Historically tests and their scores, and the ability of students to pass them and move through the program pathways, have been extensively used in EAL to monitor both student progress and, importantly here, teacher professionalism. How teachers get students to their desired test scores can be driven by a highly structured curriculum and pedagogy dictated by the program. This type of corporate accountability through standardized testing is rarely neutral, especially if it clashes with the professional identity of instructors. How this struggle can be negotiated by EAL instructors is illustrated in Amy's story below.

#### **4.2.2. Autonomy**

Amy is an instructor at a private language school. When the ownership of her school recently changed, the new owners brought in a new curriculum, which at first seemed promising, giving teachers flexibility about how and what to teach in their classes. But, over time, it became increasingly clear that the new ownership was not interested in teacher autonomy, a key feature of professionalism (as discussed in Chapter 2 [Hargreaves, 2010]). Amy explains that:

There was a workshop created for "How to Grade a Speaking Test" because [according to the management] the teachers were marking the students too high. That part is something that I fully disagree with. [The idea] that all of the skills should be around the same grade. [The students] should be getting the same mark, on all skills. [Administration is saying that] it doesn't make any sense that the student gets a high speaking grade and a low writing grade, they should be close to the same. You're directing the school and you're saying that to the teachers!?  
(Amy)

As Amy's narrative shows, a conflict soon developed between the teachers and management with regards to the standardized test used to move students between the levels. When the management did not like some of the testing scores for certain skills, Amy described how they held workshops on "how to better mark" these tests, passing this training off as professional development. These kinds of practices, forced on teachers in situations where they experience unequal authority over "what good speaking looks like" and are then positioned as needing retraining (framed in this case

as professional development), show how EAL teaching moves beyond a harmonious professional community into a highly contested contact zone.

Returning to Hargreaves' (2010) model of professionalism, when the school was taken over by a new company, teachers were optimistic that they had moved into the golden age of professionalism, where teacher autonomy is highly valued and respected. However, they soon found out that, with the managers' emphasis squarely on improving test scores and having teachers "score those correctly," instructors were again being positioned as "paraprofessionals" (Hargreaves, 2010). Positioning instructors in this way school management devalued their work, seeing it as the simple act of "transmitting knowledge" and perpetuating the belief that the main function of an instructor is to "carry out the directives of their more knowledgeable superiors" (Hargreaves, 2010, p. 156) (in this case, those who have made up the test). Palmer (1997) argued that "good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher." Indeed, Amy claimed that "good teachers know this is not right," speaking to a tension between what the company wanted and what instructors knew to be best assessment for their students.

Amy also discussed how the school's expectations for teacher preparation were driven by the amount of time it took teachers to prepare lessons. Teachers were increasingly encouraged to "use the textbook more," with managers saying "let me help you, have you heard of One Stop English? Or Open Door English? (websites offering free lesson plans for EAL)", essentially asking instructors to use materials downloaded from a free website, rather than plan their own curriculum. This illustrates how, in Amy's institution, "organizational professionalism" (Bathmaker & Avis, 2013) is in operation to increase the standardization of teachers' work. For Amy, the result is a questioning of whether her values are aligned with those of the institution. "That's supposed to be their lesson plan?" Amy asked. Her incredulity is a testament to the conflicted place she finds herself in, as a good teacher who knows better.

The results of this "other ascribed" view of professionalism for Amy are further shown in the passage below:

I have a lot of negative feeling towards the company because of the class test amounts. They are not helping! I guess they are helping the students

(clients) feel like they are getting the benefit from it, but with the theoretical knowledge from doing the master's program I feel like, God, really?? What are you doing?? And so, yeah, I have a problem with it. (Amy)

In the above emotional excerpt, Amy's negative feelings are clear. She feels conflicted because she knows the required tests are not helping her students' primary goal of language development but are designed for accountability for the customer. She knows that the students' needs would be better served by focusing on their actual progress rather than subjecting them to continual monitoring. Her dilemma also reflects Melles' (2010) observation that EAL teachers often have to decide between allegiance to institutional discourses (e.g., assessment and curriculum policy) and professional discourses. Here Amy is left to feel less like a professional because this practice is in direct conflict with her own expert knowledge and professional experience.

#### **4.2.3. Internal Conflict**

Amy's example and Harriet's story above illustrate a recurring trend among some teachers who feel less like professionals, despite possessing graduate degrees and having extensive teaching experience. In their study of TESOL graduates in California, Lorimer and Schutes (2011/2012) describe how "many TESOL graduates find themselves working in institutions where their theoretical and pedagogical training is not valued or understood" (p. 32), and this is clearly the case, especially for Amy.

The results of this misunderstanding and undervaluing of EAL instructors' training is that their professional identities are brought into question, creating a complex internal struggle, as exemplified in Amy's words, "I think anybody out there could be doing what I'm doing so long as they are putting in the work...I'm just providing some information for them." This statement shows the power of such discourses on instructor identities in how she has now internalized the intuitional positioning of being merely a provider of information, despite all of her teaching experience, specialist training, and postgraduate education.

Solidifying the "organizational professionalism" discourse promoted at her institution, Amy commented on teacher observations at her school (which will be

discussed more fully later in this chapter). She questioned who benefitted from inexperienced, non-teaching administrators observing classrooms (representing the externalized forms of evaluation and control that Bathmaker and Avis [2013] discuss). She asks, “What do they do with that information? You use it in a file and use it for a variety of purposes...Again it comes back to, is it really for my benefit? Or is it for you to check up on me?” (Amy)

As instructors negotiate top-down workplace processes that position them in service-worker roles (Auerbach, 1997) and as paraprofessionals (Hargreaves, 2000), they can use their own critical observation to question what is in this process for them as professional educators, as Amy’s statement shows. It illustrates some of the internal conflict and pressures EAL instructors feel in professional identity (re)negotiation in this context.

These examples, my own experience being positioned as an entertainer rather than a teacher, and Amy’s and Harriet’s struggle between what institutions want and what instructors know students need, highlight a clear pattern in the conflicted ways that professionalism is negotiated in the contact zone of BC EAL. The corporate world and “English for profit” tell us that we are here to better mark tests and to transmit knowledge to learners rather than acknowledge the complicated ways that language is learned and taught. Often our contexts do not respect our qualified and experienced interest in properly preparing for the students in front of us, leaving instructors to wonder if anyone who walked in the door could do our jobs. As Melles (2010) observes, “the institutional marginalization of ESL, has contributed to a body of ‘disempowered’ teachers” (p. 36), and this is clearly shown in the stories presented here.

The outside world, as Harriet’s interview reminds us, also positions EAL instructors as illegitimate when it asks if we would rather be “real teachers.” These pressures impact on our identity as educators and professionals. The recurring pattern among all of these forces, from public discourse to institutional positioning to internalized struggles, speak to the complexities in how instructors might negotiate their professional identities in the contact zone of BC EAL.

In the following section, the impact of market forces on the teachers' lives of participants will be discussed, including the positioning of students as customers and what that means for instructors. How instructor time is valued in wages and contracts, as well as the impact insecure working conditions have on EAL instructor identities, will also be addressed below.

### **4.3. Marketization**

*“Alright, so here is your contract. You can see that you have 12 contact hours, and you will be paid per 90-minute block, so the rate is \$34 per block.” I smile. It feels good to finally be making \$34 an hour. Wait, he said 90 minutes? I’ll work that part out later, I think to myself. I ask about prep time. “No,” he says. “Because we provide all of the materials, there is very little prep to do, so it’s rolled into your block rate.” OK, I think, since it seems like a good rate. “But, we do pay for marking time,” he says, “15 minutes per block. That gets paid at \$12 per hour.” Again, it sounds great to be paid for marking, but I’m not sure how much all of this actually works out to.*

*I don’t think about wages again until after my first two weeks on the new job are finished and I need to fill out a timesheet. Confused by convoluted administrative processes, the two pay rates and by being new to this school’s system, I ask another teacher for help. As she explains what information goes where on the timesheet, I think about how much time I actually put into these first two weeks. I’m exhausted from a full teaching load, getting to know all of my students and co-workers, as well as familiarizing myself with the materials, a new boss, and the program expectations. I had my first teaching observation, too, on top of all the regular lesson planning and marking. Now I finally have a chance to add up my pay. After a full 40 hours of time invested in these first 2 weeks, my pay actually works out to about \$4.50 an hour.*

Teaching English in a private language school can be a morally disorienting activity, as I found out. Many instructors, including myself, go into teaching because it is a helping profession. When I started, I personally saw English as something that I knew well and could offer to others. I have noticed over the years in private EAL that this helping instinct can be taken advantage of, by school owners and managers. It seems

many private language schools are made more profitable on the backs of the goodwill and helpful intentions of instructors. Schools count on instructors to do preparation in their own time, motivated by their devotion to their students. Market forces drive the wages paid to instructors in private EAL. As long as there is a steady stream of instructors available who will teach longer hours, who will work for less and without pay for planning, who will entertain students as much as teach them, who will dedicate weekends and evenings to facilitate fieldtrips and join in on pub nights, then these poor wage conditions will remain the norm.

There are, however, some instructors at private language schools in Vancouver who were not, or are no longer willing to accept this status quo. Breshears (2008) examined the unionization in private ESL schools in downtown Vancouver through the lived experiences of instructors. Her study provides a comprehensive look at the instructors' fight for fair wages and working conditions and the challenges and possibilities of unionization in private EAL. Because of the robust nature of that study and in acknowledgment of the history and complexity of the labour and union movement in education in BC, I have chosen to leave discussion of this aspect of EAL out of my study and instead direct interested readers to Breshears' (2008) master's thesis.

The ways our universities operate, the way our government plans and funds public education, and the way our teachers' lives are negotiated, all happen today within the shadow, or spotlight, of marketization. Arshad-Ayaz (2009) studies the impact of globalization on the organizing, administration, and policy principles of education in the global era. In the author's view EAL, like all education, is not immune to the ubiquitous power of money and globalization, as so few things are in our modern world (Arshad-Ayaz, 2009).

According to Levidow (2002), since the 1980s, universities have been under increasing pressure globally to marketize or practice "academic capitalism" (p. 1). That is, state-funded institutions are increasingly required to compete for external funding within the educational marketplace, rather than rely on full funding from government. This means increased competition for attracting students, higher demands on more

qualified yet lower-paid instructors, and money savings by delivering content online rather than face-to-face (Levidow, 2002).

Many of these features are represented in the emergent subthemes that are included in this section: teaching observations, students as customers, low wages, contract instability, and scalability of work. These subthemes will be explored in the sections below, including links to the literature surrounding neoliberalism and marketization.

#### **4.3.1. Teaching observations**

Oftentimes in BC EAL, teaching observations are not used to support good teaching practices, but rather as a form of product quality control, used by managers to monitor rather than encourage. Mindful of the complex and personal nature of the kind of work we do in teaching, Mandy explained that she resented how unhelpful it was that “your job is on the line depending on how you produce.” This comment also resonates with my finding in the literature.

Summarizing works done on teacher observations in EAL, Gray (2012) states that in modern practice of English language teaching, classroom observations are used for the following purposes: evaluating teaching with a goal of becoming more effective, appraisal for accountability purposes, learning to teach through watching more experienced others, and collecting data for research purposes. Beyond those purposes, observations have also been used to monitor quality and as a summative evaluation tool in language teaching. Although observations as a form of appraisal should not be at the heart of teacher observation, as Gray states, this is often the case. Among my participants, Mandy discussed how contracts in post-secondary EAL are often awarded based on teaching observations that take place over the initial contract period. Mandy termed observations “absurd and intense” because of their invasive and judgemental nature, and their function as both a gatekeeper and a legitimizer within the teaching community. Mandy expressed that “failed” observations were particularly damaging; that is, ones where the observing supervisor found serious faults with the observed class,

meaning contract renewal was jeopardized. For each instructor I spoke to, however, teaching observations were in some way a conflicted part of their teaching experience.

From early on in EAL literature, observations of teachers have been identified as “troubling events” for many teachers (Master, 1983). This was a recurring trend in the narratives. Some participant instructors had intense, emotional experiences of professional teaching observations. In contrast, other instructors had never been observed in their classrooms, such as Mary and James. Others like Harriet hadn’t been observed for many years.

Beth, an experienced instructor who holds a master’s degree in adult education recounted high levels of pressure around observations. She found that her temporary status at her public institution could last for up to a year of probationary time, leaving her employment status vulnerable and dependant on her successful observations. After a particularly awful first observation from a supervisor she received harsh and unhelpful criticism, such as statements about her students “not having learned anything at all” during the lesson. She described the high anxiety and tension she felt:

Heading into the observations...I almost fainted. Before my second observation, I was so anxious and so stressed. People said that ‘after my first observation I went home and made my resume because I was so sure I was getting fired.’ (Beth)

This pattern of traumatic experiences led Beth to question the purpose of the observations in general. “It left me with a lot of questions about the purpose of the observations, what is the purpose of this process? I feel like I am sort of being put in my place here.” These experiences contrast with the purposes of observations as a tool for teaching improvement as argued by Gray (2012). Beyond being put in her place, Beth also felt the impact of her marginal status, and vulnerability to the powerful forces at work in her own identity negotiation in a new teaching context. She said of the whole process, “I resented being constructed in this [unworthy] way. Having to be someone who has been in this profession for six years now and to be treated as someone who knows nothing, [like] such a provisional member of their community.”

Echoing this theme, as mentioned in earlier discussion, Amy also questioned the purpose and motivation behind teaching observations in her institution, wondering if they were being used as a formative or summative evaluation tool (Pennington & Young, 1989), or for something else. Amy said, “When you’re being observed it’s supposed to be for a teacher’s benefit. It’s not really because, what do they do with that information? You use it to put in a file. It is used for a variety of (administrative) purposes. Is it really for my benefit or is it for you to check up on me?” (Amy)

In the neoliberal marketized landscape of education, monitoring quality is an important value. As shown above, teaching observations can be seen in this light as a method of quality control of a product (Arshad-Ayaz, 2009), rather than as a tool for providing nuanced perspective for reflective practice and formative teaching evaluation.

The high-stake nature of teaching observations in BC EAL goes against the collaborative, supportive ideologies often associated with education and that many of us were taught to believe teaching is about. The contact zone of BC EAL is a place where these tensions are brought together and teacher identities are forced to be (re)negotiated in relation to the powerful positioning discourses of observations. When unqualified administrative managers evaluate teaching and their motivations are not to improve teaching but to improve their “product offering,” instructors are disempowered. When observations feel more like monitoring and your professional autonomy in the classroom is questioned again and again, instructors are reminded about how their work is valued by institutions despite who their students might be. Positioning instructors as service providers and students as customers impacts how and why we teach. This complex issue will be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.3.2. Students as customers**

So, there is sort of this balance that is trying to happen in the school with the teachers and with the administrators, with everyone. It is sort of a balancing act between understanding and knowing that the students are clients, so you want to make them happy, but they are still students, and unless they are doing the work and using the language and actually able to advance, I mean they are still students, they are still learning. But what ends up happening sometimes is that some students want to advance faster than their actual abilities. And so at times, if the student makes

enough noise, and causes enough trouble, then they will be moved up to another level, even though they might technically not be able to—they do not have the skills that are required to be at that level. Which then causes problems because they are trying to keep up with the level above them, but the same time they still want to move up so that they (the student) get upset that they're staying in that level for so long, because they were behind and now they are trying to catch up. (Amy)

In this passage, Amy explains the tension between seeing students as learners and students as customers, a daily struggle in most contexts of EAL. She illustrates the tension between wanting to make clients happy and what teachers might know is best for them. She argues that they are still students, who are engaged in the complex and often messy process of learning, which is not easily quantifiable, despite the industry's best efforts. Real problems arise from this conflict in that customer demands need to be met, and if those demands involve being moved up to a higher proficiency class, then oftentimes client complaints win over the professional recommendations of the instructors, resulting in the students being advanced beyond their capabilities. Far from solving the problem, such action exacerbates it by further stratifying class groupings, which presents even more complex challenges for students and instructors alike.

In the contact zone of BC EAL, professional knowledge and beliefs clash with the neoliberal discourses that position our learners as customers. This leaves instructors to negotiate their own subject positioning, between their employers, their students, and what that means for them as educators. This contested place is discussed in the literature and is also shown by patterns and resonances in the narratives below.

As Chun (2009) describes, neoliberalism and the drivers of marketization envision the world as a “vast supermarket” in which the “ideal citizen is the purchaser.” Subsequently, as Breshears (2008) argues, “when the student is situated as a consumer teachers become suppliers of a product” (p. 159), presenting a challenge for instructors.

EAL instructor Harriet also confronted this dilemma when she was reluctantly thrust into the role of program administrator at a local private language school. Part of her job was to deal with customer complaints. She reported that students often came to her requesting a change of classes and were asked for reasons for requesting this change. She described these customer complaints as often being, “This teacher is better

looking (than the one I have) or I want to be in my friend's class." Most common of all was asking to be "levelled up" or moved to a higher proficiency class, despite low test scores, in a pattern that resonates with Amy's narrative introducing this section. Pressure is on to please the paying customer or they can easily take their business elsewhere in our competitive local marketplace.

Beyond this type of struggle other neoliberal discourses also impact EAL instructors in other ways. Citing Foucault, Flores (2013) describes the features of the "enterprising self," who is autonomous, flexible, innovative, and able to rapidly adapt to the changing contexts. This individual must continually improve themselves to meet market demand for their skills. The concept of the enterprising self connects here with an observation made by Harriet, who described the burden of having to be an entertainer for students in the private language school sector, as well as an appropriate instructor. In a story echoing my own experience of having student entertainment valued over teaching, she said that soon after being asked to teach a grammar class as a new hire at a local school, she was brought into the director's office. The director said, "Yeah, the students think you're a little boring. Could you spice it up a little bit?" She goes on, "The teacher has to be the entertainer. They [the customer] really expected that."

This view of an instructor as always needing to improve the show, always entertaining the customer, is in sharp contrast to the negotiated identities EAL instructors develop in our teacher training programs (which counsel us on the importance of teaching sound linguistic content, including grammar) and our professional discourses around EAL (which state we are a serious profession with standards, articulated methods and teaching practices). The enterprising self, who is always changing to adapt to the demands of the market (in this case the students who would prefer to be entertained rather than taught serious grammar lessons) is asked to realign their teaching work towards a more market-friendly, spiced-up entertainer position. Conflict is inevitable between the competing power of employers, instructor training, students' demands, and professional discourses.

Amy also spoke explicitly about pressure to continually be better at her job. "I always feel like I could be doing better. It's a personal thing." Here, although Amy

positions this statement as a personal thing, it may be bigger than that. As a marginalized EAL instructor, subject to the positioning discourses that surround her work, Amy may have internalized the neoliberal concept of the enterprising self and her feelings of inadequacy can stem from the market pressure to always be improving as an educator. Flores (2013) further argues that one does not need to express overt acceptance of neoliberal ideology to be subjectified by it.

The demands on instructors in the above examples are made for and by students, with the full understanding that they are the paying customer. The students are seen as well within their rights to ask for what they want and to request better service from the program managers. As Melles (2010) suggests, as an instructor it is difficult to successfully navigate the line between making the customer happy and honouring your professional knowledge and identity in a contested space. Instructors may even internalize the powerful neoliberal discourses taking on the position of enterprising self without the critical awareness of that subjectification. What is clear from these narratives is that the conflict of students versus customers remains an active struggle in the contact zone of BC EAL. Following this, I now turn to a discussion of another major struggle here, the impact of wages on instructor identity in this context.

### **4.3.3. Low wages**

Harriet spoke with some pride about her wages for her full-time position teaching immigrants in suburban Vancouver. She said of her new job: “I can live my life, and I’m going on vacation and, you know, I’m probably earning close to \$45,000 per year teaching English, which I never thought I’d be able to do.”

Harriet has a master’s degree and more than 10 years of teaching experience. In contrast, if she had been teaching full time in a public school in British Columbia, with her level of experience and education, she would be making more than \$74,000 per year, according to a report by the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (2014). Moreover, \$45,000 a year, calculated at an hourly rate for a 40-hour week, comes out to just over 21 dollars per hour. This is the same figure that organizations such as First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, an anti-poverty organization, argue is the

minimum living wage for Metro Vancouver in 2014. First Call describes a living wage as the minimum requirement for people “working full-time to pay for necessities, support the healthy development of their children, escape financial stress and participate in the social, civic and cultural lives of their communities” (firstcallbc.org). It is remarkable that Harriet never thought she would be able to reach that minimum level of income for people to live productively in Metro Vancouver by teaching EAL.

Wages reflect an intrinsic indexicalization of how important an employee is to a company or an institution. The wages you are paid, and if you are paid in a transparent way, can also impact how you are seen as a professional, mirroring the close connection between issues of professionalism and market forces. Thomson (2004) argues that “higher wages should not be necessary for EAL instructors to be ‘professional,’ but low wages indirectly affirm the belief that ESL teachers are ‘unprofessional’” (p. 55).

Another pattern that emerged from close analysis of the interviews was the idea of equal pay for equal work. Harriet described a situation that took place in an institution that teaches the LINC program to immigrants in the Vancouver region. In this case the program was administered by a quasi consortium of public and private interest, ultimately a for-profit enterprise that was issued contracts with the federal government to supply English classes to immigrants. This consortium operated in collaboration with a local public post-secondary institution, which was contractually obligated to offer a certain number of hours to unionized faculty members.

According to Harriet, the highest paid faculty members could not teach all of the courses and therefore temporary instructors needed to teach classes as well, to meet the market demand for English classes. In addition the consortium (private enterprise) also hired instructors to teach its allocated courses. The result, according to Harriet, was that the same course was being taught on the same day by faculty members making over \$100 per hour, LINC instructors making \$31 per hour, and auxiliary contracted instructors making \$25 per hour. Which EAL instructor has the highest level of education or experience did not factor into this structure, but only the complicated contracts and (at time) negotiated wages of each subset of instructors. Yet each was essentially doing the same work. When such obvious inequalities exist in our workplaces this pattern of

contested representation and wage inequity highlights Pratt's framing of the contact zone as a clashing of powerful forces, rather than what we may tell ourselves about being members of a benign teaching community.

Personal accounts like these wage discrepancies for equal work contribute to our understanding of how EAL happens in BC and what shapes it, helping us to fill the gap in our knowledge. Beyond low wages, however, instructors also raised concerns about contract instability, which will be discussed below.

#### **4.3.4. Contract instability**

There is so much job security anxiety wherever I go, at any institution with this profession. That's what we talk about the most—that's what they (instructors) are most freaked out about....This anxiety is created by the short duration of many teaching contracts and by the lack of control instructors have over their own employment, in many cases. (Mandy)

The provisional nature of employment in EAL is a pervasive theme in the participant stories and throughout the literature (Crandall, 1993; Ganadana & Parr, 2013). Indeed my own work history reflects this. While working in public post-secondary EAL programs I was employed on short contracts with little employment security. Arshad-Ayaz (2009) argues that neoliberals propose increasing the role of market forces in the system of education itself, to be achieved through contracting out education to the private sector. The result of contracting out is made clear by how market forces impact the employment stability of EAL educators. BC TEAL's recent membership survey found that 53% of members were employed on limited term contracts. The implications of such findings will be further discussed in this section.

Some time ago I was employed to teach English skills and academic literacy to university-bound international students. When I applied for the position the posting gave the appearance of being a program run by a public post-secondary institution, but during the interview it became clear that I would be teaching in a program that was in essence a public/private partnership between the public university and a private company. My contract, indeed all instructors' contracts, were subject term to term enrollment numbers from the private company. If they were able to recruit enough students, then we would

teach them. Often the numbers did not come in until the last minute, leaving instructors wondering if their next contract would come in or not. In one case I was told I would not have a contract the next term in the weeks leading up to Christmas. I left the country to visit family over the holidays and got an email a week later saying I needed to be back in time to teach in the first week of January. My participant Mandy had the opposite experience in a post-secondary EAL program. She was promised a teaching contract before the new term, but it was expectantly revoked the week before it started, leaving her unprepared for sudden unemployment.

My own survey results indicate that, despite significant experience and professional qualifications, 50% of my respondents indicated that they had been in their positions for three years or less, and of that number, 23% indicated being in their current positions for less than one year. In contrast, only 34% of my respondents reported five or more years in their current positions. These numbers are even more troubling when seen in the light of the many years of experience that survey respondents reported. 78% indicated having more than six years of teaching experience, yet most had been in their current jobs less than three years. BC TEAL's survey results align with my own findings, with 67% of their respondents indicating six or more years of experiences as TESOL professionals (Williams, Dobson, Walsh Marr, & Shaw, 2014). These figures speak to the highly conditional nature of EAL employment in BC, of which contract instability is a big part.

How this manifests itself is demonstrated in the teaching communities themselves. Job loss-related anxiety, Mandy contended, prevents instructors from being willing to work together with other instructors, even from being willing to share resources and important tips about workplace politics. She said instructors are "too worried about themselves to be giving and social. They don't want to invest in others, they worry about what will become of them."

Job insecurity might also produce a competitive environment within the teacher community. Mandy said: "I feel like what we do is so not competitive, but in some places competition is really encouraged. When I feel supported I can give more and not feel like people are judging me." These feelings were echoed in my survey findings as well,

where 50% of instructors indicated that they wanted to “work more collaboratively with peers,” something that is not easily achieved in a competitive teaching environment.

Mandy described the result of marketization on her own teaching life, where she and many of her colleagues at local post-secondary institutions had been on a “certain number of weeks” contracts, renewable each term. This system gave the institution ultimate flexibility in terms of hiring and letting instructors go based on their performance (teaching observations, student feedback, and exam results) in each term and based on the registered number of students in the program. This “just in time” staffing allowed programs to be most agile in the market to respond to demand from the international marketplace of students seeking English language courses in BC, much like my own experience relayed in the opening section. The result of this staffing and hiring policy is a high level of job insecurity for the most educated and experienced instructors in BC EAL. This anxiety manifested in the performance of their identity as good instructors in that context. Mandy explained:

This [fragile employment status] would go on for years, people always worried about ‘being a certain way’ in order to get a contract. But the results were that you can’t concentrate on teaching and the process if you are worried about if in the next weeks you are going to have a contract or not. It was hard to be around that level of anxiety in my colleagues. People couldn’t focus. (Mandy)

Similarly, Wendy talked about how the whole structure of the EAL program at her public post-secondary institution was reworked to ensure that EAL instructors “could not be full-time employees. That could not happen.” She experienced open hostility in the staff room because of her position as the language lab assistant who had taken away the full-time hours of the instructors during the program’s administrative restructuring, thereby denying them full-time teaching status. She detailed how full-time EAL instructors refused to help her do her work or include her in social activities because of her position as a language lab assistant, reinforcing her marginal position at the institution.

Immigrant programs are not immune to this pattern of contract and institutional instability. With recent renegotiation of the way governments provide English language services to immigrants in the province, all ELSA (now LINC) programs had to reapply to

the government for all of their program funding. This policy change left schools and teachers in limbo while they waited to see if their proposals to supply services (classes) were accepted and they could carry on their work. Harriet pleaded in her interview for the government to “please give us a school, please let us keep the school we already have! I want to remain employed. That would be very nice!” However the allocation of said contracts was not without contention and controversy, leading to much more anxiety within the ranks of EAL teaching in the whole province. Again, this is not an unusual situation according to the literature, which reports adult EAL instructors’ marginal employment conditions in both the US (Crandall, 1993) and Canada (Haque et al., 2004).

Contract instability in the public, private, and immigrant language contexts continues to be an ongoing challenge for EAL instructors in BC. Not knowing if you will have a contract next term or have it revoked at that last minute drives a pervasive sense of anxiety through the teachers’ room, resulting in less collaborative teaching and a sense of being disrespected by institutions. As mentioned, survey results support the stories shared by instructors of how, although we are often experienced, highly qualified instructors, we do not enjoy basic stability in our work in this field. The recent cuts to the ESL program at Vancouver Community College (and other post-secondary institutions in BC) which resulted in numerous lay-offs for instructors and the recent hand-over from provincial to federal government control of contracts in LINC continue to exemplify this struggle. Although investigating these specific challenges lies outside of the scope of this thesis, these current examples show the ongoing impact of job insecurity in EAL.

Overall, the narratives in this section add to our understanding of the impact of employment instability in BC EAL and serve to document our lived experiences of this condition in this place at this time. I now turn to the final theme in this section, which is a newly documented phenomenon in the BC context and, perhaps, in EAL. In the section below I examine how marketization and exploitation lead to teacher work that is infinitely scalable.

#### **4.3.5. Teacher work that is infinitely scalable**

So as I say, we were talking about the curriculum. If you're being very cynical, someone might view it as being exploitation. Exploitative, in that you ask teachers to produce material, which is then turned into an online curriculum, which is then sold to other institutions around the world.

Of course it is scalable, you can sell it 1,000 times. There's only one cost, but you can sell 1,000 times. So the possible profit from that is huge. We are paid for the development, but there is no...umm...If it is successful the school's obviously, you know, reaping revenue from that, which we (the teachers) are not seeing. (James)

This narrative is an excerpt from my interview with James where he and I are talking about curriculum development at the private language school where he teaches. He has told me that the teachers are responsible for creating the entire curriculum for the program, for all courses, from Intensive English to Exam Preparation. The teachers create the materials and resources, which are all stored online. The teachers then access these materials and teach in their classrooms in a “blended learning environment,” where each student has a laptop to access the materials and the teacher is there to answer questions and lead the class. He is proud that their school does not rely on any textbooks or material developed outside of the school. He tells me, “this is one of the ‘main selling points’ of the program.”

James was new to EAL teaching when he was hired by this school and, by his own admission, unfamiliar with the high-stakes exam that he was asked to help prepare his students to take. He developed a 10-week course entirely, online for blended classroom learning, based on his hours of nightly unpaid research and lesson planning. He used newscasts and other authentic materials to create practice material in the style of the standardized test. He admitted that he was not good at this at first, that he found it to be a “challenge” and a “struggle” and looking back it was “not good work.” Despite all of these limitations, James was not offered any guidance or overt feedback from his supervisors.

This situation is troubling on a number of fronts. There is the pervading sense that James has been taken advantage of in this situation. According to our interview there were other teachers at his school who had been with the institution for many years,

who presumably would have been more qualified to do this work, but for some reason were not selected for this project. James was selected in part because he was pursuing an online, part-time master's degree in TESOL from an overseas university. As mentioned, James spent many hours each night doing unpaid prep time for this course, which he said was "an inevitable aspect of teaching" and that "we do it because we love it, don't we?"

These statements again show the conflicting forces that collide in the contact zone of EAL in BC. James' narrative reflects the "highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (Pratt, 1992, p. 4) that characterize contact zones, as he, a novice instructor, only recently acculturated into the practices of EAL, is set up against the power of marketed, for-profit EAL and the neoliberal discourses that form its deep undercurrent. In stating that we do this kind of work because we love it James gives voice to this internal struggle: we are professional instructors, we are asked to do work that is outside of our scope of responsibilities, for which we are not being paid. However, if we are dedicated to our students and our profession, we should do that work. Beyond that, we see as evidence of his having internalized this conflict, the statement that this is an "inevitable part of teaching." I argue that although unpaid extra work is a common practice in teaching, we must not think of it as inevitable. Otherwise, we have subjugated the inherent value of our work as professionals to the dominant market discourses that position us as flexible, eager, hardworking neoliberal subjects.

Fiona: *Is your name attached to any of those materials?*

James: *No. Not at all.*

Fiona: *There's no authorial credit that you would be getting for that (work)?*

James: *No, not at this point.*

Evidently, in the above excerpt James is explaining that although his original materials and curriculum are used and sold in his school and many times over throughout the world, he is not given any direct credit for this work.

Neoliberals believe that all human knowledge can be commoditized and can therefore be used for profit (Flores, 2013). In this case we can see that James' knowledge (and one could also argue the knowledge of his source materials) is being commoditized for the profit of the private school. Over and over again, as the curriculum is licensed to schools in Ukraine, Korea and Saudi Arabia, amongst other places, the company is reaping profits from James' knowledge, without any personal benefit to James.

The corporatization of knowledge is only one aspect of neoliberal economic reality. I argue that EAL instructors as also being positioned by neoliberalism discourses in terms of the enterprising self, as will be explained below.

As Flores (2013) states: "the corporate culture of neoliberalism has begun to demand flexible workers who are able to work autonomously and make informed decisions that are in the best interests of corporate profits" (p. 504). James, positioned as a flexible neoliberal subject, creates what the market demands of him. In this case, it is an exam preparation course, a subject that he knows little about, yet is able to dedicate his flexible production skills, as a researcher, content and curriculum producer, to satisfy the market demands, and thus increase the profits of his employer. He has learned to anonymously create useful materials, overcoming challenges of copyright and technology, to be of best use to his employer. His story exemplifies how "the ideal subject of neoliberalism is one that is constantly working to acquire new skills and accumulate more human capital that will be used to maximize profits" (Flores, 2013, p 506).

Fiona: *And if you move to another school?*

James: *Umm....Well, if you moved to another school, what the boss...I'm sure what the boss would very much like you to do, is to try and sell them the curriculum as well, so other schools are using it as well. He'd likely be happy about that.*

In examining the website that serves as a marketing tool for James' institution I found that the online curriculum is lauded for its forward-thinking slant on traditional education and progressive use of technology in the classroom in a promotional video

posted by the owner. However, there is no mention made of the instructors who have produced this material. Indeed under the webpage titled “our team,” listing all of the information technology staff and sales agents, not a single instructor is identified. They are the faceless, nameless creators of the entire product being sold, both in the local BC classroom but also to the rest of the global customers. Not only is James the perfect neoliberal flexible, autonomous, enterprising employee, he is also completely anonymous, thereby making him totally replaceable as well.

James: *But, that said, you asked about security and I'm perfectly happy that if that's what makes a school financially secure and therefore makes my position secure, I'm more than happy with that.*

In the above quote James explains that he does not have any qualms about his unpaid work being used to generate ‘infinitely scalable’ profit for his school. But what this means for James as an individual and his professional identity as an EAL instructor is debatable. Flores (2013) argues that “[The] corporatization of the subject does not necessarily have to be produced through an explicitly pro-corporate stance. On the contrary...it is also possible for a neoliberal subject to be produced without an explicit acceptance of neoliberalism” (p. 504). The concept of the EAL instructor as a neoliberal construction of the enterprising self does resonate with other examples from my interview with James. James stated that what helps him to justify what some may cynically think of as “being taken advantage of” in this way is the security he feels in the economic success of the company. However, in my view, being a flexible, autonomous, enterprising instructor, whose creative work contributes to the corporate profits of your institution, cannot guarantee employment stability when none of your contributions or even your existence within that company are publicly or financially recognized.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed three key themes that emerged from my conversations with participants and my own lived experiences as an educator in EAL, and, where useful, illustrated with results from my online survey. These are marginality, professionalism, and marketization. Each theme and its resonant narratives present a

clear pattern highlighting how BC EAL is not a largely invisible and benign community of instructors, quietly working away for their students, but is in fact a contact zone of powerful discourses that daily challenge these instructors' identities. The emergent themes listed above were explored in connection to that complex identity negotiation and how forces such as discourses of (non)professionalism, neoliberalism, and the peripheral positioning of English language education impact real EAL teachers' lives. In the next chapter, I draw conclusions from this study and reflect on how these might be useful in the context of both English language teaching generally and EAL teacher education. I also discuss avenues for further study that might confirm, support, and expand on this work.

## **Chapter 5.**

### **Conclusion and Implications**

I began this work motivated primarily by the lack of literature that reflected my own and my colleagues' experiences in BC EAL. My classmates in my graduate classes taught in a variety of contexts, some privately, some in LINC and ELSA immigrant programs, fewer in post-secondary programs. In our studies we were given the opportunity to openly discuss our daily teaching experiences in connection to the course work we were doing. For some classmates this seemed to be a powerful experience, legitimizing their daily work. What I noticed was that when a classmate shared their lived experiences, of the dire classroom conditions, unsociable teaching hours, the lack of resources, the inadequate remuneration and insecure contracts, my first reaction was often shock. How could it be that these intelligent, educated, passionate, dedicated and caring instructors could be treated in such a disrespectful manner? My second thought was often how actually something similar had happened to me, or to someone I knew.

I saw a pressing research problem: the fact that these experiences of our everyday teacher lives—the struggle and conflict, the crowded teacher rooms and unpaid work—were very difficult to find in the literature about EAL teaching, especially in reference to the Canadian and BC contexts. Perhaps because of their complexity, or because of the difficulty of access to specifically private EAL schools, but also other adult EAL contexts in BC, these experiences remain just a fraction of what we are telling each other and the rest of the academic world about who we are and what we do in EAL in BC. Here I argue that because of the marginalized position of EAL, perhaps there is little prestige in investigating the “lowest of the low” (Breshears, 2004) in EAL. In a discipline already on the margins of wider academia there is perhaps little ‘symbolic capital’, as Bourdieu would term it, to be gained in investigating this context. Nevertheless, it remains an important context to be investigated for education at large,

and EAL education more specifically, particularly given the BC government's current educational priorities.

Because of this gap in what we know about who we are in BC EAL, one purpose of this work was to contribute to increasing our understanding of this complex context. What we do know is that according to the government international education is a 2.3 billion dollar industry in BC, that it is a significant contributor to our growing economy, that international education (of which EAL is a significant part) is a part of both provincial and federal governments' economic plans (BC Jobs Plan, 2013). However, that dominant discourse of marketization, put forward by the government, is only one, reductive way to understand what we do in EAL. This uncontested framing commodifies our students' learning and makes invisible the rich and complex nature of our work and the struggles we undergo vis-à-vis market forces. In this thesis, I have sought to broaden our understanding and expand the conversation about who we are and what we do in BC EAL to include some teachers' voices and experiences. The results of this endeavour will be summarized in the following sections.

## **5.1. Quantitative Findings**

Returning to my first research question, an inquiry into who we are in BC EAL, required background demographic data and my online survey of instructors provided a small snapshot of that information. What we (still) do not know is how many of us here really are teaching EAL in BC. Before I started my study in 2013, we did not know what level of education we have, how much we are paid, where and when we work, whether our employment is secure, full-time or limited. We did not know what our first languages are or how long we have been teaching EAL. My online survey attempted to get a sense of some of these figures and in combination with the BC TEAL survey results (Williams et al., 2014), allows us to have initial ideas of what some of this demographic picture might be. But, there remain several limitations to the breadth and scope of both of these data sets. Both were (mainly) collected from the membership of BC TEAL, which is entirely voluntary for instructors to join. Without any kind of regulatory oversight, mandatory professional designations, or university qualifications, it is nearly impossible to collect anything close to a statistically relevant sample, across such a disparate,

complex, and varied context. Despite this lack of generalizability, however, it remains unacceptable that what I have generated here, along with the BC TEAL survey results, are currently the only quantitative data set that we have of EAL instructors in BC. Without this basic, fundamental knowledge of who does this work, where and under what conditions, collectively challenging the status quo becomes an almost insurmountable prospect.

What the survey results do offer is a useful starting point for better understanding ourselves in this place, at this time. I found that respondents to my online survey were overwhelmingly female (78%), which aligns with common patterns in education, and mostly considered themselves native English speakers (89%). Respondents were highly educated, with 49% holding graduate degrees, and highly experienced in a variety of teaching contexts, including overseas (61%), private language schools (67%), immigrant language programs (58%) and public post-secondary settings (38%).

The conditions of our work were another revealing finding from the online survey. Participants reported that although almost half of the respondents (49%) had more than 10 years of teaching experience, only 7% had been in their current jobs for that long. 50% reported having been in their jobs for three years or less. Only 50% of respondents agreed that they “felt secure in their teaching position,” and 50% disagreed with this statement. This seems to be an unusually high number for such a highly educated group of instructors, many of whom are employed in post-secondary and government-funded teaching positions. What these findings show is that for this group, education and experience is not translating into secure, long-term employment, as one might expect in other educational contexts (such as K-12).

Nearly 40% of respondents disagreed that they were happy with the level of professional and community support that they received in their teaching positions. Only 66% of respondents agreed that their “program had supportive teaching practices.” On questions of institutional and professional respect, many participating instructors did not feel they were adequately supported by their institutions (45%). More than a third (34%) did not feel respected as EAL professionals, and 32% did not feel respected by their institutions. These results reveal that some of us feel disrespected and unsupported in

our work as instructors. It is difficult to imagine being able to do your best, most effective work in the classroom whilst at the same time feeling unsupported by your employing institutions. The ramifications of this kind of job insecurity and sense of professional disrespect impact how we see ourselves and negotiate our professional identity. On one hand, we are educated and experienced professionals, but on the other, we are not experiencing the expected employment gains and professional respect these attributes should provide us. These results can help us make sense of how we understand our professional selves and the challenges we might face in the contact zone of BC EAL.

In contrast to the above-mentioned struggle, optimistically, some responding teachers did feel supported by their teaching communities and their peers with respect to solving problems, professionalism, and social support. This shows that although we continue to struggle with our marginal positioning in EAL and our negotiation of contested identities, we do share some will to come together as a community. Our challenge is now to build on this mutual respect and work towards more collaborative teaching models, where we can better share our strength and challenges with each other and can contribute to our positive, individual, and collective identity negotiations into the future.

## **5.2. Qualitative Findings**

My second research question considered how the lived experiences of instructors help us to make sense of our contested identities amongst the competing forces in the contact zone of BC EAL. The autoethnographic and narrative accounts, triangulated with quantitative survey data and existing literature in this work, detail the rich, complex, and often uneasy experiences of EAL instructors in the contact zone of BC EAL. All of these features woven together help contribute to our understanding of EAL instructors in BC and show us more clearly who we are in what we do (Norton, 2010), in this time, in this place.

Framing EAL in BC as a contact zone, where powerful forces collide (Pratt, 1997) and where identities are negotiated (Singh & Doherty, 2004), has been an important way to help illuminate competing powerful interests and how they come to bear on our

contested identities. When you work in substandard spaces, in tension-filled social places, without the tools you need to perform your work to your own professional standard, you begin to question your legitimate identity. Marginality is in part fed by the forces of the remedial positioning of EAL instruction within education (Auerbach, 1991), but also by the neoliberal discourses that privilege profits over people (Chun, 2009). These powerful forces combine to negatively influence collaborative, harmonious teaching environments, and create challenging conditions for instructors trying to work for the best interest of their students.

Drawing on Charmaz' (2011) definition of marginalization, I found examples of many of her descriptive categories, such as separation, distance, devaluation, and deprivation in the narratives of my participants, illustrating instances of marginality. Instructors recounted how they worked in substandard facilities, with restricted access to the tools and resources they needed to do their work. Instructors spoke about working in spaces that were separate and overcrowded. Marginalization of EAL instructors is well documented in American literature (Auerbach, 1991; Crookes, 1997; Varghese, Morgan, Johnson, & Johnson, 2003; Willet & Jeannot, 1993); however, it was a topic rarely examined in the context of BC, until now. Although the narratives suggested that there was tension and unease that emerged from this marginalization, the stories illustrate that beyond that there were more influential forces at work, which I summarize below, while discussing findings around professionalism and marketization.

Professionalism emerged as an important recurrent theme in the narratives. Here I found that what professionalism means, for each institution and person, impacts instructor identity in the contact zone. Participants reported that, in some institutions, EAL instructors were positioned more like unskilled labour, employed only to mark, test, and deliver pre-prepared lessons. Instructors described being monitored for product quality by unqualified managers, which positioned them more like paraprofessionals (Hargreaves, 2010) than as the educated, experienced educators that they believe themselves to be. Instructors were pressured to respond to the market demand that they be more entertaining in their lessons, and told not to think that their role was anything beyond that entertainment. In public discourse, the narratives showed that EAL instructors continue to be positioned as illegitimate professionals, when it is suggested

that we are not real teachers. Lastly, an instructor expressed that anyone could be doing her job, despite her years of experience and training. This is perhaps the ultimate reflection of an internalized, neoliberal discourse (Flores, 2013) influencing and pervading the contact zone of BC EAL.

The concepts of professionalism exemplified in some of the narratives I have presented position instructors as merely transmitters of information, and teaching as a technically simple activity (Hargreaves, 2010) thereby devaluing our complex and challenging work. These new and previously unexamined patterns of the work of instructors in BC brought forward here contribute to our understanding of the challenges in identity (re)negotiation we experience as instructors and professionals. Connecting, in concrete and tangible ways, the classroom and work life of instructors in BC to the theoretic concepts found in the literature broadens our knowledge of the British Columbia EAL context.

Marketization also emerged as a salient theme in autoethnographic and interview data and was analysed in relation to both the literature and survey results. Here, the impact of neoliberalism was shown through stories of low wages and short, intermittent contracts, through instructor struggles with positing “students as customers,” and through observational practices that seemed designed to benefit those student clients rather than the instructors in question. The morally disorienting activity of teaching in particular in a private language school was shown to be a complex negotiation of competing interests. Instructors faced pressure from the students (both as a client and a learner), the institution (as a place of both learning and profit), and from themselves (both as a worker and educator). How instructors navigated these complicated, situated experiences showed us how in this specific local context, instructor identities can shift, be re-imagined and be pushed, in the globalized era of education and language learning (Arshad-Ayaz, 2009). This new picture augments our understanding of what is happening here and now in BC EAL.

For example, Amy’s feelings that she could always be doing better illustrated how, for an EAL instructor in the contested space of the contact zone, identity (re)negotiation continues to be a tangible challenge. It shows how she may have been

grappling with internalizing the neoliberal subject positioning of the “always learning, flexible, autonomous worker,” despite not overtly subscribing to this ideology (Flores, 2013).

Further to that, I argue here that James’ story was a perfect illustration of these phenomena in action. His narrative showed how instructors’ work can be used to create infinitely scalable profit for private companies, without any authorial or financial credit, and how completely invisible the instructor can ultimately become in this process and in the wider success of EAL education in BC. While suggesting that his contributions add to the financial success of the school and thereby support his own job security, he, like Amy, demonstrated how the neoliberal concept of the ideal worker, one who is flexible, autonomous and always learning (Chun, 2009; Flores 2013,) has been deeply entrenched in some practices of EAL in this province. By shedding light on how the forces of neoliberalism and marketization come to bear on the lived experiences of instructors in BC EAL, this work contributes to our complex work of understanding ourselves better in the contact zone and, for the first time, provides a concrete example of how these powerful forces can be found to impact real classrooms and real teachers. The specific implications of all of these conclusions will be discussed in the following section.

### **5.3. Implications**

*“Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” (James Arthur Baldwin)*

The goal of this work has been to bring a better understanding of the lived experiences of ourselves as instructors in BC EAL—a complex teaching context brought to light. However, it is also important to move beyond the sharing of these narratives, beyond the tangible examples of connecting these stories to theory and literature, to the implications this work can have for the opportunity for change, for both individuals and for institutions in this place at this time.

### **5.3.1. Implications for instructors**

Starting with individuals, there are a number of ways that I see instructors, including myself, can take action in the future with regards to these uncovered trends in our province, regardless of specific context. My recommendations are framed below as advice to my colleagues.

The first is to recognize and articulate for yourself who you are as an EAL professional. If instructors know and understand their own motivations for what they do, their professional standards and limits, they will more clearly be able to articulate those standards to others, such as employers, program developers, and peers. While understanding the institutional limitations and challenges many of us face in our professional lives, if your own professional identity and standards are not clear to you, if you feel you do not deserve and cannot ask for better, then you may never get the professional respect you deserve.

This self-examination and self-knowledge can feel risky, especially to people whose life work is in the service of helping others. It forces us to ask hard questions of ourselves about our motivations, desires, and expectations. Palmer (1997) argues that “identity and integrity have much to do with our shadows and limits, our wounds and fears, as with our strengths and potentials” (p.17). But we must first be brave enough to face ourselves before we are able to do better for others and for ourselves.

The autoethnographic portion of this thesis in some ways still feels risky for me personally. However, because I was asking my participants, many of whom had experiences similar to my own in EAL, I felt I needed to be forthcoming with my own experiences as well, for their sake and for the sake of this work. As I asked them to examine and relay their strengths and limits in this context, I needed also to examine my own. Choosing to include autoethnography in this regard has helped me personally to (re)negotiate my own identity as an instructor, a researcher, and member of our professional community, while also contributing another strand to the tapestry of experiences presented here. Mantero (2004) asks, “if we believe that identity is created by both the self and society, then we must also ask ourselves if our purpose as teachers is to fit within a certain tradition or to try to expand the concept and goals of what it

means to be a language teacher” (p. 150). By using the variety of methodologies included in this study I hope this work has opened up this conversation for others in BC EAL, as it has for me personally.

My practical suggestion for instructors is to create a record of your own professional values and experiences. Some instructors today keep a digital record (like a blog or website), but it could also be done on paper in a binder or in journal form. In that place you can collect, keep and record a “personal teaching philosophy,” which in a way forces you to articulate who you are and what you believe as a teacher. This should be revisited often and revised with experience and new knowledge as your teaching career evolves. A record of all of your schooling, professional development sessions, courses you have prepared, successful lessons you have taught, ideas you are thinking about, and challenges you are facing could all be included as well, so that these might serve to remind yourself of the thoughtful, dedicated educator that you are and the complexity and depth of your practice. This practice of “active noticing,” as Dewey (1916/1985) suggested, will help instructors to see the value, energy, and effort we put into what we do, when our philosophies and hard work can be articulated and mirrored back to us in concrete ways. I acknowledge that reflective activities take time and are difficult to fit into the lives of busy professionals. However, keeping a personal record like this also serves as a way to keep a collection of your own work and ideas, over which you alone have control. That way our instructor work is not solely being defined by what our employers or institutions choose to record, retain, and value in our teaching, which may only be limited to student feedback forms, course outlines, and contracts.

It is important for instructors to continue their informal “hallway” networking with each other as well. In these conversations we build community with all of the social and emotional support needed in this intense and complex profession. As instructors we need to listen carefully to our peers and validate their concerns, challenges, and successes. Without each other, our shared identity as EAL professionals might be more deeply influenced by the external forces (of neoliberalism, the discourse of the wider educational community, or the impressions of the public) that may benefit from keeping us separated. Breaking down the taboos of discussing wages, contracts, and marginal employment conditions, and together recognizing these for the clear patterns that they

illustrate, allow us to also see opportunities to work together for change. This is a risky proposition, as it requires us to speak up against the institutional forces that control our employment, our professional status, or the power of the academy in a small and highly networked community. Our silence and separateness, in the hallways and in the teachers' rooms, in some ways makes us complicit in our own marginalization. Talking honestly and often with each other, acknowledging that we each have our own constraints, can only serve to benefit our collective position in the contact zone of BC EAL.

Lastly, it is important for individual instructors to recognize exploitation and think critically about what that means. We are often reminded at professional development events and in current educational literature about the importance of teaching our students critical thinking skills. But we must also turn our critical eye to our own professional practices and positions. Seeing ourselves, our position, and our profession through a critical lens allows us the possibility of agency. Agency need not be dramatic action; it can take many, sometimes subtle forms (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 2001). EAL instructors must try to see the opportunities for critical action and take them when we can. We can ask the hard questions when we recognize exploitation. With practice we will be able to demand better for ourselves, for our professional colleagues, and for our students. Below I will discuss the implications of this study for EAL teacher education programs, as perhaps most importantly, many of these habits can be highlighted for the next generation of EAL educators as well.

### **5.3.2. Implications for teacher education**

This study shows how the identity of EAL instructors in British Columbian teaching contexts can be impacted by the powerful positioning forces of professional discourses, public opinion, marginalizing institutional practices, and the marketization of EAL education in the province. My personal experience of EAL teacher training programs in BC, below the graduate level, was that I did not feel adequately prepared to deal with the everyday reality of classroom work, professionalism, and employment amongst the competing forces of this contact zone. The vast majority of my course work focused on the content of teaching, the mechanics of presenting discreet skills and the

best ways to utilize the textbook and resources available in one's institutions. I echo Block, Gray, and Holborow's (2012) calls for language teacher education to have an interdisciplinary knowledge base, drawing on many disciplines of the social sciences, where "political economy is given due consideration, without which teacher education runs the risk of giving teachers an apolitical view of teaching (and their positions) denying them the opportunity to locate their practice in larger social and theoretical frameworks" (p 142). These conditions would better enable novice teachers to construct a defined sense of what it means to practice as a professional, what acceptable working conditions are, and even perhaps how to advocate for better conditions, wages, and contracts. Programs must actively work against what Block et al. (2012) call the Macdonalized system of EAL teaching certificate programs that are designed to "produce teachers efficiently and predictably who can deliver a standardised product using the basic tools of the trade such as textbooks" (p. 141), thereby further encouraging EAL teacher positioning as service providers.

Johnson (2009) argues that current language education must lay the foundation for teachers to be lifelong learners and help instructors become "adaptive experts" who are:

[a]ble to master the skills and strategies to plan, manage, carry out, and assess the activities of teaching and learning while at the same time adapting and adjusting to the complexities that are embedded in those activities in order to make sound instructional decisions within the contexts in which they teach. (p. 11)

In this work, however, I found that ensuring that EAL instructors are flexible, lifelong learners is not enough to help teachers navigate the complex contexts in which we find ourselves as teachers in BC. Indeed this approach may be inadvertently adding to the marginalization of instructors. It normalizes the high expectations of employers for EAL instructors to be flexible employees, who are ready to teach when it suits the business model, who are prepared to create and provide new teaching resources for the company to meet customer demands, and who are less inclined to complain about the lack of teaching resources or job security as they see this as a normalized part of being a flexible, autonomous professional. I argue that beyond flexibility and teacher knowledge, education programs must also teach critical reflection, thereby normalizing

the practice of questioning both teacher and student positionality, by reflecting on power in teaching contexts and asking ourselves, “who benefits?” Teacher educators need to be sure they are avoiding what Block et al. (2012) term “the technocratic reductionist approach to education” (p. 142) and go beyond teaching students to be “adaptive experts” (p. 142). EAL teacher education must offer students the tools (such as practiced, critical reflection) to help them make their own sense of their lived experiences and the powerful forces that converge in the contact zone of BC EAL.

Beyond this, teaching programs need to enshrine the value of a teaching community. If we understand that learning is a social activity and that teaching requires ongoing learning, then we must also accept that we cannot embark on a teaching career as a soloist. EAL instructors must begin their careers knowing that they will need the support of their peers. Both hallway conversations and professional development must be encouraged. My survey results showed that 50% of respondents wanted to work more collaboratively with their peers. We crave community when we are separated by insecurity, space, and distance. Taboos around discussing working conditions, hours, and wages need to be lifted in favour of instructor professional solidarity. Otherwise the conditions that lead to our exploitation in this context will only be allowed to continue.

Bathmaker et al. (2013) argue that there has been a “long term failure to support the development of a full professional identity” of English instructors in the UK (p. 735). The same is arguably true for EAL instructors in British Columbia. Teacher preparation programs must recognize their own complicity in the marginalization of EAL in BC. By not teaching students to be their own advocates and by omitting to present the lived realities of EAL instructors in BC they are continuing to uphold the myth that everything is fine in the land of BC EAL. This work argues that this is clearly not the case. I now turn to a discussion of the implications of this study for professional organizations that support EAL instructors.

### **5.3.3. Implications for professional organizations**

Through this study I have found a number of implications for professional organizations as they impact the professional identity negotiation of the instructors that they represent in the province today.

Thinking about professional designations and how EAL instructor's knowledge and work can be validated in the eyes of the public and perhaps governmental funding agencies, there are a number of alternatives to how accreditation happens today. Currently, BC TEAL accredits instructors through TESL Canada, which has standardized levels of accreditation. New and experienced instructors are encouraged to apply for accreditation and employers are encouraged to hire accredited instructors, but importantly, this is in no way enforced. Breshears (2004) argued that the only way to mandate professional standards is through the state, similarly to K-12 instructors' accreditation. There remains little incentive for programs to hire accredited instructors when all EAL teachers are seen as interchangeable and equally able to teach. As MacPherson, Kouritzin, and Sohee (2005) state, "If the pursuit of profits rather than pedagogical outcomes dominates programming decisions, then TESL will remain burdened by an ambiguous professional status" (p. 1).

BC TEAL's website declares that an instructor's membership in the organization "indicates a profound commitment to their peers and the profession they share. Engaging in professional conferences and networking events, we explore, dialogue and improve on every aspect of our work." Additionally, "the value of the professional association is immeasurable" (bcteal.org). However, if the professional association does not recognize the marginalized position of its members and is not actively working towards a more professionalized standing for its diverse membership, then what is the real value of the professional association, beyond providing professional development conferences?

Recently however, BC TEAL has begun to take a much more active role on behalf of the EAL community, beyond traditional professional development. The results of the recent membership survey indicated that members would like BC TEAL to expand the role of advocating on behalf of the profession (Williams, Dobson, Walsh Marr, &

Shaw, 2014). Following this, the Policy and Advisory Committee has been revived and the organization has hired a professional communications company to look for ways to advocate on behalf of our membership to government funding ministries at both the provincial and federal level.

The board has also recently reached out to the research community at local post-secondary institutions in an effort to build a stronger connect between EAL research and practice. The first workshop (lead by Dr. Ena Lee at Simon Fraser University) presented the theoretical background and opportunities for instructors to do their own in-classroom research. This important outreach enhances the connection between EAL professionals and the academy, strengthening ties that can benefit both.

BC TEAL might also be an ally to teacher education programs and provide opportunities for joint advocacy. Together professional organizations and teacher education programs can help to build professionalism in Canada. Thomson (2004) argues that in Canada if admission to the field were more restricted, TESL would become more of a professional and less of a short-term or part-time job. He argues, “[o]nly through stringent standards will adult ESL instructors receive the recognition and respect that other similar professionals enjoy” (p. 43). This can be addressed by both professional organizations and universities, as Breshears (2004) suggests, by setting in place rigorous standards that provide external credentialing.

Beyond this, the academy and professional organizations could work together to support the creation of safe spaces for instructors to come together and share experiences. Palmer (1997) argues that: “[o]ur task is to create enough safe spaces and trusting relationships within the academic workplace—hedged about by appropriate structural protections—that more of us will be able to tell the truth about our own struggles and joys as teachers” (p. 21). The result of this might be that we are able to imagine better possibilities for ourselves and our own positive identity negotiations. Through open discussion and collaboration the collective power of instructors, teacher education programs housed within the academy, and professional organizations may offer opportunities to better support each other to move away from the margins of our

institutions and better understand ourselves and our roles in the contact zone of BC EAL.

#### **5.3.4. Implications for further study**

The rich interview data—the narratives told, collected, and recounted here—can only relay part of the experiences of nine individual instructors (including myself), out of an unknown number of instructors in BC, and my study is limited by this narrow scope. I acknowledge that this work has also been limited by my own inexperience as a first-time researcher who sought to understand perhaps more than could be achieved in a master's thesis. Despite these limitations, however, this work does open up many possibilities for further study, as will be discussed below.

According to Lin et al. (2005), there are reasons why we don't know more about the classroom experiences of EAL instructors written in their own voices. They write:

Frontline TESOL workers (typically female classroom teachers) do not have a chance to incorporate their experiences and activities into prestigious mainstream theories and research because they are rarely given the institutional resources and time to theorize, share, and publish their experiences in the discipline's prestigious journals. And when frontline TESOL professionals do engage in research, mainstream researchers often criticize their research agendas and projects as soft ethnographic work that does not qualify as hard science. (Lin et al., 2005, p. 496)

If this privileged attitude towards EAL instructor research, which marginalizes the methods most appealing to practitioners (who may find these projects more accessible and relatable to their everyday classroom experiences), is allowed to continue to dominate our field unchallenged, I believe our field will suffer. Without all of our contributions our collective understanding can never be as rich and nuanced as our lived classroom experiences deserve. We will not understand our field better, more completely and more accurately, without direct, sustained encouragement of diverse, accessible research, which can directly connect back to the lived experiences of real EAL classrooms and teachers.

Beyond EAL practitioners themselves investigating their own and others' lived experiences, such as I have done here, there are many directions for further study that could lead out of this work. As mentioned in the opening section of this chapter, the opportunity remains to gather a more complete quantitative picture of exactly who we are in BC EAL, outside of our professional association. Understanding ourselves in this way would provide a firm basis from which to advocate as a unified group. Without generating this data of "who we are in BC EAL" for ourselves, we will remain invisible to ourselves and others, in official terms. With this invisibility comes the risk that others can step in to fill that void with their own understanding of our work, rather than us having the empowering opportunity to define our own experiences for ourselves.

Following the career trajectories of instructors over a number of years might provide good insight into how our EAL careers develop over time. My survey results indicated that respondent instructors have taught in a variety of contexts over the course of their careers, often teaching overseas, in the private sector, and in publically funded programs in the space of a few years. Examining how we renegotiate who we are in what we do throughout those career transitions might prove to be insightful work.

Of the BC teaching contexts discussed in this study, the least understood remains private ESL. Perhaps because of the challenge of gaining access to private businesses or because of the unglamorous, least-prestigious position it holds in the hierarchy of EAL (Breshears, 2004), it has rarely been the subject of academic inquiry. Future research could seek to better understand how English-for-profit schools operate, how instructors experience their work there, and how they navigate their careers in the most contested context in BC EAL. An institutional ethnography (Smith, 2006) of a private school might answer some important questions about who we are in that part of BC EAL as well. It is hoped that this work might inspire others to investigate BC EAL, our students, instructors, programs, and institutions, as there remain plenty of opportunities to expand our understanding of what it means to teach and learn in the contact zone of BC EAL.

## 5.4. Final Thoughts

During our interview Harriet said she was “just thankful to have the work,” which was a sentiment I heard on other occasions in the interviews and over the years during my career in EAL. I believe that the narratives shared here show that instructors in BC EAL deserve better than that. As instructors our stories show that we are motivated by the progress of our students; we are empowered by their belief in us and by helping our students improve. English is a powerful tool in the world and helping students to access that tool can be very meaningful to instructors. The question remains, how can we continue to do this important work when our daily struggle—with professional identity, with our space and resources, with employment conditions, with the pressure to meet consumer-driven demands and the needs of our students—occupies so much of our attention, time, and resources?

It is my hope that the narratives and data presented in this work will resonate in some way with the experiences of other EAL instructors teaching in BC. Perhaps in this resonance they might discover that their lived experiences are not only analogous, but are in fact part of a wider and explicit pattern in the teaching lives lived here, at this moment. It is my hope that this framing of BC EAL as a contact zone might allow other instructors to see these experiences with a fresh perspective, and perhaps to gain some insight that helps them understand more about their personal teaching experiences and the complex forces at work both inside and outside of their classrooms. Lastly, it is my hope that this work has, in a small way, illuminated a possibility for agency for instructors, a way to make change on our own behalf, and that together we might be able to both name and push back against the powerful forces that we daily find here, in the lived experiences of the contact zone.

## References

- Altheide, D., & Johnson, J. (1994). Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 435-457). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35(4), 373-395.
- Atkinson, P. (2006). Rescuing autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35(4), 400-404.
- Arshad-Ayaz, A. (2007). Globalisation and marginalisation in higher education. *Education and Society*, 25(1), 77-93.
- Auerbach, E. R. (1991). Politics, pedagogy, and professionalism: Challenging marginalization in ESL. *College ESL*, 1(1), 1-9.
- Bathmaker, A., & Avis, J. (2013). Inbound, outbound or peripheral: the impact of discourses of 'organisational' professionalism on becoming a teacher in English further education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 34(5), 731-748.
- Bizzell, P. (1994). "Contact zones" and English studies, *College English*, 56(2), 163-169.
- Block, D. (2004). Key concepts in ELT: Globalization and language teaching. *ELT Journal*, 58(1), 75-77.
- Block, D., Gray, J., & Holborow, M. (2012). *Neoliberalism and applied linguistics*. New York: Routledge.
- Breshears, S. (2004). Professionalization and exclusion in ESL teaching. *TESL Canada*, 4, 23-39.
- Breshears, S. (2008). *Stories of unionization: Four teachers' perspectives on collective bargaining in 2 Canadian private ESL schools*. (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/9143>
- British Columbia Teachers' Federation. (2014). *2013-14 Canadian teacher salary rankings: provinces and territories*. Vancouver, BC.

- Brinkmann, S. (2013). *Qualitative interviewing*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A., Bell, E., & Teevan, J. (2009). *Social research methods*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Canagarajah, A. (1997). Safe houses in the contact zone: Coping strategies of African-American students in the academy, *College Composition and Communication*, 48(2), 173-196.
- Canagarajah, A. (2012). Teacher development in a global profession: An autoethnography. *TESOL Quarterly*, 46(2), 258-279.
- Canagarajah, A. (1996). From critical research practice to critical research reporting. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 321-330.
- Carroll, W. K. (2004). *Critical strategies for social research*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2011). Grounded theory. In Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp.359-380). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Charmaz, K. (2008). Views from the margins: Voices, silences, and suffering. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 5(1), 7-18.
- Chun, C. (2009). Contesting neoliberal discourses in EAP: Critical praxis in an IEP classroom. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 8, 111-120.
- Crandall, J. (1993). Professionalism and professionalization of adult ESL literacy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(3), 497-515.
- Crookes, G. (1997). What influence what and how second and foreign language teachers teach? *Modern Language Journal*, 81(1), 67.
- Curry, M., Jaxon, K., Russell, J. L., Callahan, M. A., & Bicais, J. (2008). Examining the practices of beginning teachers' micropolitical literacy within professional inquiry communities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 600-673.
- Daly, N. (2008). Not empty vessels: New Zealand pre-service additional language teacher identity. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 14, 5-13.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Dewey, J., & Archambault, R. (1964). *John Dewey on education: Selected writings*. New York, NY: Modern Library.

- Duff, P. A., & Uchida, Y. (1997). The negotiation of teachers' sociocultural identities and practices in postsecondary EFL classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31, 451-486.
- Early, M. (1991). Using wordless picture books to promote second language learning. *English Language Teachers Journal*, 45, 245-251.
- Eddy, C., & May, C. (2004). TESL Canada: National contributions to ESL professionalism in Canada. *TESL Canada Journal*, 22, 89-103.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as a subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research*, (pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- ELSANet.org. Retrieved from: <http://www.elsanet.org/site/what-is-elsa#elsa>
- Farrell, T. (2013). Reflecting on ESL teacher expertise: A case study. *System*, 41(4), 1070-1082.
- Ferreira, A., & Mendelowitz, B. (2009). Creating a dynamic contact zone: An undergraduate English course as multilingual pedagogic space. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 8(2), 54-79.
- Flores, N. (2013). The unexamined relationship between neoliberalism and plurilingualism: A cautionary tale. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47(3), 500-520.
- Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979*. New York, NY: Picador.
- Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. (1998) Reconceptualising the knowledge base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(3) 397-417.
- Freeman, D., & Richards, J. (1993). Conceptions of teaching and the education of second language teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(2) 193-216.
- Gandana, I., & Parr, G. (2013). Professional identity, curriculum and teaching intercultural communication: An Indonesian case study. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 26(3), 229-246.
- Garnett, B. (2010). Toward understanding the academic trajectories of ESL youth. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 66(5), 677-710.
- George, C. (2009). Marginalization or collaboration: First year ESL teachers & the middle school context. *Middle Grades Research Journal*, 4(1), 25-52.

- Gordon, C. (1991). Governmental rationality: An introduction. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gray, J., & Block, D. (2013). All middle class now? Evolving representations of the working class in the neoliberal era: the case of ELT textbooks. *English Language Teaching Textbooks: Content, Consumption, Production*, 45-71.
- Gray, S. M. (2012). From Principles to practice: Collegial observation for teacher development. *TESOL Journal*, 3, 231-255.
- Haque, E., Cray, E., Ramanathan, V., & Morgan, B. (2007) Constraining teachers: Adult ESL settlement language training policy and implementation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(3), 634-642.
- Hargreaves, A. (2000). Four ages of professionalism and professional learning. *Teachers & Teaching*, 6(2), 151-182.
- Harvey, D. (2007). Neoliberalism as creative destruction. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 610, 22-44.
- Herbert R., & Rubin, I., (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Hodge, K. (2005). Re-writing the script: How immigrant teachers (re)construct identities in a Canadian private language school setting. (*Master's Thesis*). Retrieved from: <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/10039>
- Holborow, M. (2007). Language, ideology and neoliberalism. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 6(1), 51-73.
- Holland, D., Lachicotte Jr., W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (2001). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ilieva, R. (2010). Attending to cultural and linguistic diversity in education: An analysis of ESL language policies and programs in public schools in British Columbia. In D. Yankova (Ed.), *Managing diversity and social cohesion: The Canadian experience* (pp. 237-245). Brno, Czech Republic: Masaryk University Press.
- James, C., & Templeman, E. (2009). A case for faculty involvement in EAP placement testing. *TESL Canada Journal*, 26(2), 82-99.
- Johnson, B. (1997). Do EFL teachers have careers? *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(4). 681-712.
- Johnson, K. (2009). Second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective. Taylor & Francis. Retrieved November 10, 2012, from <http://lib.myilibrary.com?ID=215113>

- Johnson, K., & Golombek, P. (2002). *Teachers' narrative inquiry as professional development*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 235-257.
- Kirby, S., & McKenna, K. (2004). Methods from the margins. In W. K. Carroll, *Critical strategies for social research*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Levidow, L. (2002). Marketizing higher education: neoliberal strategies and counter-strategies. In K. Robins & F. Webster (Eds.), *The virtual university? Knowledge, markets and management* (pp. 227-248). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Liggett, T. (2010). 'A little bit marginalized': the structural marginalization of English language teachers in urban and rural public schools. *Teaching Education*, 21(3), 217-232.
- Lin, A., Grant, R., Kubota, R., Motha, S., Tinker Sachs, G., Vandrick, S., & Wong, S. (2004). Women faculty of color in TESOL: Theorizing our lived experiences. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(3), 487-504.
- Locke, L., Silverman, S., & Spirduso, W. (2004). *Reading and understanding research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lorimer, C., & Schulte, J. (2011). Reimagining TESOL professionalism: The graduate student perspective. *CATESOL Journal*, 23(1), 31-44.
- MacPherson, S., Kouritzin, S., & Sohee, K. (2005). Profits or professionalism: Issues facing the professionalization of TESL in Canada. *College Quarterly*, 8(2), 1-24.
- Mantero, M. (2004). Transcending tradition: situated activity, discourse, and identity in language teacher education. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 1(3), 143-161.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2006). *Designing qualitative research*. Thousands Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Marshall, S. (2010). Re-becoming ESL: multilingual university students and a deficit identity. *Language & Education: An International Journal*, 24(1), 41-56.
- Master, P. (1983). The etiquette of observing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17, 497-501.
- Melles, G. (2010). Competing allegiances in ESL curriculum work. *Ethnography & Education*, 5(1), 33-47.

- Murray, D. E. (1992). Making it happen: an ESL professional organization's advocacy for teachers and learners. *English Language Teachers Journal*, 4(6), 92-95.
- Naylor, C. (1994). The BCTF ESL/ESD research project: Executive summary. B.C. Teacher's Federation Research Department.
- Norton, B. (2010). Identity, literacy, and English-language teaching. *TESL Canada Journal*, 28(1), 1-13.
- Norton, B., & Gunderson, L. (2002). Reception classes for immigrant students in Vancouver, Canada. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36(1), 98-102.
- Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(2), 307-322.
- Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, language learning and social change. *Language Teaching*, 44(4), 412-446.
- Palmer, P. (1997). The heart of a teacher: Identity and integrity in teaching, *Change*, 29(6), 14-21.
- Pennington, M., & Young, A. (1989). Approaches to faculty evaluation for ESL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23(4), 619-646.
- Phillipson, R. (2009). English in globalisation, a lingua franca or a lingua frankensteinia? *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(2), 335-339..
- Pratt, M. L. (1991). Arts of the contact zone. *Profession*, 33-40.
- Pratt, M. L. (1992). *Imperial eyes travel writing and transculturalization*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Province of British Columbia. (2012). *British Columbia's international education strategy 2012*. Retrieved from [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/internationaleducation/forms/InternationalEducationStrategy\\_WEB.PDF](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/internationaleducation/forms/InternationalEducationStrategy_WEB.PDF)
- Province of British Columbia. (2012). *BC jobs plan*. Retrieved from <http://www.bcjobsplan.ca/learn-about-the-plan/>
- Province of British Columbia. (2012). *WelcomeBC settlement and integration services: 2011-2012 annual report*. Retrieved from [http://www.welcomebc.ca/welcome\\_bc/media/Media-Gallery/docs/wbc\\_ar\\_2011\\_12\\_web.pdf](http://www.welcomebc.ca/welcome_bc/media/Media-Gallery/docs/wbc_ar_2011_12_web.pdf)

- Reeves, J. (2009). Teacher investment in learner identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 34-41
- Rossi, C. (2014, June 5). ESL cuts translate into layoffs. *Vancouver Courier*. Retrieved from <http://www.vancourier.com/news/esl-cuts-translate-into-layoffs-1.1117551>.
- Shi, L. (2009). Chinese-Western “contact zone”: Students’ resistance and teachers’ adaptation to local needs. *TESL Canada Journal*, 27(1), 47-63.
- Singh, P., & Doherty, C. (2004). Global cultural flows and pedagogic dilemmas: Teaching in the global university contact zone. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(1), 9-42.
- Smagorinsky, P., Jakubiak, C., & Moore, C. (2008). Student teaching in the contact zone: Learning to teach amid multiple interests in a vocational English class. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(5), 442-454.
- Smith, D. E. (2006). *Institutional ethnography as practice*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Starr, L. (2010). The use of autoethnography in educational research: Locating who we are in what we do. *CJNSE/RCJCÉ*, 3(1). Retrieved from <http://www.cjnse-rcjce.ca/ojs2/index.php/cjnse/article/view/149>
- Thomson, R. (2004). Buyer beware: Professional preparation and TESL certificate programs in Canada. *TESL Canada Journal*, 2240-57.
- Toohey, K., & Derwing, T. (2008). Hidden losses: How demographics can encourage incorrect assumptions about ESL high school students’ success. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 54(2), 178-193.
- Varghese, M., Morgan, B., Johnston, B., & Johnson, K. (2005). Theorizing language teacher identity: Three perspectives and beyond. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 4(1), 21-44.
- Watson, J. (2008). *Private career training institutions act review*. Retrieved from [www.aved.gov.bc.ca/publications/docs/PCTIA-Review.pdf](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/publications/docs/PCTIA-Review.pdf)
- What is BC TEAL? (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.bcteal.org/about/>
- Willet, J. & Jeanot, M. (1993). Resistance to taking a critical stance. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(3). 477-495.
- Williams, S., Dobson, J., Walsh Marr, J., & Shaw, F. (May, 2014). *Understanding your voice: BC TEAL member survey results and interpretation*. Presented at BC TEAL annual conference held at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Richmond, BC.

Wyatt-Beynon, J., Ilieva, R., & Toohey, K. (2001). A secondary school career education program for ESL students. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 31(4), 399-420.

Yoon, E., & Gulson, K. (2010). School choice in the stratilingual city of Vancouver. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 31(6), 703-718.

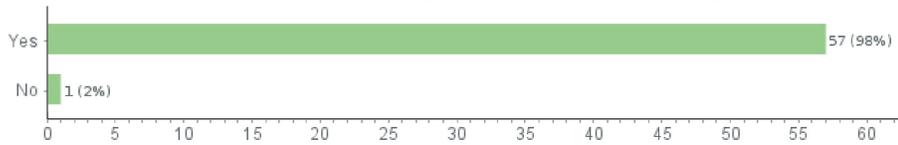
# Appendix A.

## Survey Results

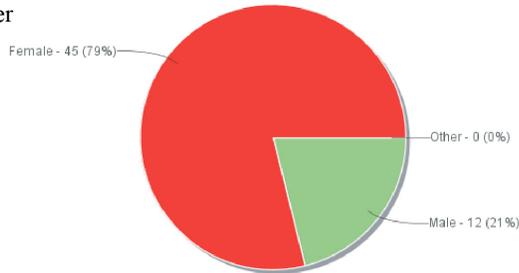
### Summary Report

(Completion rate: 86.44%)

Please read the information and consent question below before you begin:



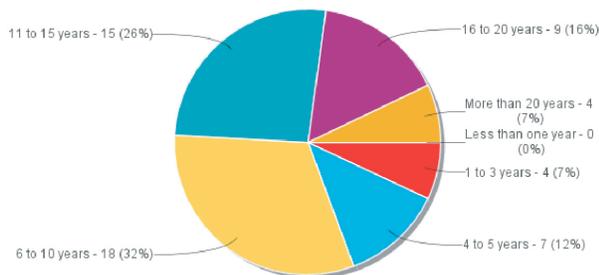
#### Gender



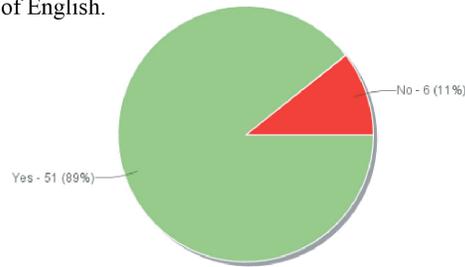
#### Education

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Some post-secondary education		5%	3
Post-secondary diploma or certificate		21%	12
Bachelor degree		63%	36
2 or more bachelor degrees		5%	3
Post-graduate Certificate (e.g., CELTA)		35%	20
Post-graduate Diploma (e.g., DELTA)		16%	9
Masters degree in TESOL related field (e.g., MEd TEAL, MA Adult Ed)		49%	28
Masters degree in other field (e.g., MA History, MSc Biology)		12%	7
PhD in TESOL related field		5%	3
PhD in other field		0%	0
Total Responses:			57

#### Teaching Experience:



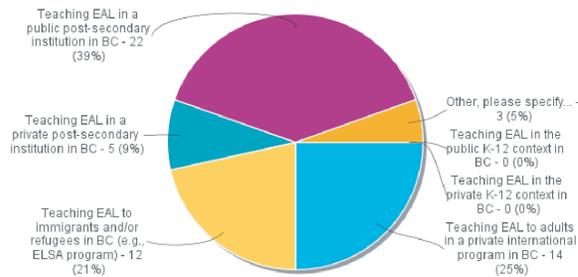
I consider myself a native speaker of English.



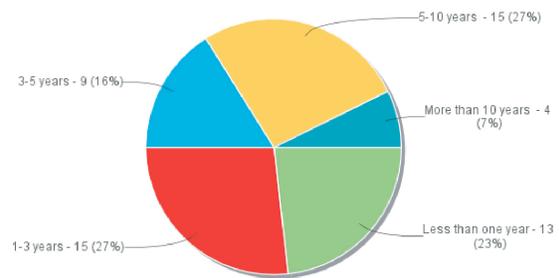
Please indicate contexts in which you have had teaching experience in the past: (choose as many as apply to you)

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Teaching EFL in a country other than Canada: (e.g., English teaching in Japan or Mexico)		61%	35
Teaching EFL in Canada: (e.g., English teaching in Quebec)		18%	10
Teaching EAL in Canada outside of BC: (e.g., EAL teaching in Ontario)		18%	10
Teaching EAL in an English speaking country outside of Canada (e.g., EAL in USA or Australia)		16%	9
Teaching EAL in the private K-12 context in BC		7%	4
Teaching EAL to adults at a private international school in BC		67%	38
Teaching EAL in an immigrant and/or refugees program in BC (e.g., ELSA program)		58%	33
Teaching EAL in a private post-secondary institution in BC		12%	7
Teaching EAL in a public post-secondary institution in BC		39%	22
Other, please specify...		12%	7
Total Responses			57

Please indicate your current teaching context: (choose 1 or, if teaching in several contexts, the one where you teach the most)



How many years have you been in your current position?



Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each statement below.

	Agree	Disagree	Total Responses
I'm happy with the level of professional support I receive in my job.	34 (62%)	21 (38%)	55
I'm happy with the level of community support in my job.	33 (61%)	21 (39%)	54
My coworkers discuss problems and work together on solutions.	49 (91%)	5 (9%)	54
My supervisor consults me with problems and issues.	43 (78%)	12 (22%)	55
My program has supportive teaching practices.	35 (66%)	18 (34%)	53

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each statement below:

	Agree	Disagree	Total Responses
I feel secure in my teaching position.	27 (50%)	27 (50%)	54
I feel safe in taking risks and trying new things in my teaching.	48 (89%)	6 (11%)	54
Teachers in my program are open to new ideas.	44 (81%)	10 (19%)	54
My supervisor helps me solve problems.	44 (81%)	10 (19%)	54
My supervisor is supportive of new teaching practices and ideas.	47 (87%)	7 (13%)	54
I am happy with the content of what I teach.	48 (89%)	6 (11%)	54
I am able to use my preferred teaching method as much as I'd like.	44 (81%)	10 (19%)	54

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each statement below:

	Agree	Disagree	Total Responses
I feel respected by my institution.	36 (68%)	17 (32%)	53
I feel respected by my program.	42 (79%)	11 (21%)	53
I feel respected as an EAL professional	34 (64%)	19 (36%)	53
I feel respected by my peers in my program.	51 (96%)	2 (4%)	53
I feel supported by my peers.	43 (81%)	10 (19%)	53
I feel supported by my program supervisor.	41 (79%)	11 (21%)	52
I feel supported by my institution.	29 (55%)	24 (45%)	53

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each statement below:

	Agree	Disagree	Total Responses
This program allows me to do my best work for my students.	42 (78%)	12 (22%)	54
This teaching community allows me to do my best work for my students.	42 (79%)	11 (21%)	53
I'm doing my best work for my students.	46 (85%)	8 (15%)	54
I would like to do better work for my students.	44 (83%)	9 (17%)	53
I would like to work more collaboratively.	29 (55%)	24 (45%)	53
I would like to try new things more often in my teaching.	37 (70%)	16 (30%)	53
My students benefit from the community of teachers in my program.	45 (85%)	8 (15%)	53

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each statement below:

	Agree	Disagree	Total Responses
I would like to fit in better with my peers.	16 (31%)	36 (69%)	52
I have good social support in my job.	39 (74%)	14 (26%)	53
I understand the work place dynamics at my job.	39 (74%)	14 (26%)	53
I have good support to help understand the workplace dynamics at my job.	32 (60%)	21 (40%)	53

Please indicate your satisfaction with support structures in your current teaching position, where 1 represents being very unsatisfied, 2 unsatisfied, 3 neutral, 4 satisfied, and 5 represents very satisfied.

	1 Very Unsatisfied	2 Unsatisfied	3 Neutral	4 Satisfied	5 Very Satisfied	Total Responses
The support of your supervisor.	3 (6%)	8 (16%)	6 (12%)	27 (53%)	7 (14%)	51
The support of your co-workers.	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	7 (14%)	20 (39%)	19 (37%)	51
Your program's support of Professional Development.	5 (10%)	12 (24%)	13 (25%)	14 (27%)	7 (14%)	51
Your program's support of community building.	5 (10%)	9 (18%)	23 (45%)	11 (22%)	3 (6%)	51
Your program's support of mentorship.	5 (10%)	12 (24%)	18 (35%)	12 (24%)	4 (8%)	51
Your program's support of new teachers.	6 (12%)	13 (25%)	14 (27%)	15 (29%)	3 (6%)	51
Your colleagues' support for new teachers in your program.	0 (0%)	9 (18%)	9 (18%)	23 (45%)	10 (20%)	51
Your supervisor's support for new teachers in this program.	3 (6%)	11 (22%)	10 (20%)	21 (41%)	6 (12%)	51
Your institution's support for new teachers at this institution.	7 (14%)	19 (37%)	10 (20%)	11 (22%)	4 (8%)	51
Your program's support of teacher enquiry.	5 (10%)	10 (20%)	17 (33%)	15 (29%)	4 (8%)	51
Your satisfaction with your teaching community.	3 (6%)	8 (16%)	6 (12%)	26 (51%)	8 (16%)	51

## Appendix B.

### Call Out for Participants



#### Have you ever wondered **Who We Are in EAL in BC?**

Little is known about how BC EAL instructors understand their experiences in their current teaching contexts.

If you are an EAL instructor currently teaching in BC, and can spare 20 minutes of your time, you are invited to participate in a study about this topic by completing a secure, anonymous, online survey at:

<http://fluidsurveys.com/s/EALinBC/>

Or please contact Fiona Shaw with any questions

This research will help us to know more about EAL teaching in BC, how instructors make sense of these experiences in real teaching contexts, and how to support good practice in the future.

Thank you in advance for your interest in my research,

Fiona Shaw

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics approval from, the Office of Research Ethics, Simon Fraser University. Please contact Fiona Shaw, Faculty of Education, with any questions or inquiries about this study.

## Appendix C.

### Semi-structured interview questions

1. Can you tell me about your EAL teaching history?
2. Tell me about your teaching philosophy –
3. How did you feel about teaching EAL when you first started?
4. Please tell me about your first teaching position in BC.
5. Please tell me about your current teaching position – what was the hiring process like?
6. Please tell me about your first few weeks in your current position.
7. Did/Do you feel welcome? Why or why not?
8. Do you feel supported in your current teaching context? Why or why not?
9. Do you feel secure? Why or why not?
10. Tell me about what you have found helpful in your current position?
11. What has been a struggle in your current position?
12. Tell me about what is different in your current EAL teaching from other EAL teaching positions you have had in the past.
13. How do you know about the workplace dynamics where you work? Are you happy with that?
14. What kind of professional development do you take part in and are you happy with it? Why?
15. Tell me about the teaching community in your current teaching context?
16. Are you happy or unhappy with the amount of collaboration in your workplace? Why?
17. Tell me about how you feel students are treated in your current teaching context?

18. Tell me about how you feel instructors are treated in your current teaching context?
19. What does your current teaching context do well and not so well?
20. How do you feel about your effectiveness as a teacher in this context?  
Why?
21. How do you know if you are doing a good job in your current position?
22. Is there anything else about EAL teaching in your current or past contexts you'd like to discuss?