

**INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AS TEACHER EDUCATION:  
A CURRICULUM OF CONTRADICTIONS**

by

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**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

In the Faculty  
of  
Education

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**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

**Summer 2006**

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## Abstract

International Education is an ambiguous term for various concepts and practices applied to diverse educational contexts. The International Teacher Education Module (ITEM) in the Professional Development Program of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University offers a teacher education program intended to connect educational theory to classroom practice within a context of internationalization. To this end, students from the ITEM complete the first program semester in out-of-country sites.

This thesis is based on interviews with educators involved with the ITEM in Trinidad and Tobago, and in Oaxaca, Mexico, and interviews with six student teacher informants from the ITEM's ninth cohort. The research is grounded in my 10-year history with the program, supplemented by input from other faculty and ITEM graduates.

To assess the philosophies and practices of this program I have employed identity theory as conceived by Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, and Cain, social theories of learning based in the work of Etienne Wenger, diverse concepts of International Education, and various voices and perspectives from post-colonial literature. Through these views I have written a friendly critique of the stated themes and objectives of the ITEM, and of International Education as enacted by this program.

Analysis of the data showed that the ITEM student teachers develop strong philosophical bases and a sense of personal and professional identity through which they approach their teaching. All were able to formulate personal and professional concepts of International Education from their experiences in the out-of-country sites and through curricular applications in their final, local classroom practica. The educators from Oaxaca and from Trinidad and Tobago, conversely, were unclear about the concept of International Education, largely unaware of the philosophical intents of the ITEM, and had no personal or professional investment in its theories or practices.

Through the multiple theories employed, I argue that the ITEM enacts an ethnocentric concept of International Education in its out-of-country semester, based in the goodwill

of its host countries, which mimics a colonial relationship. This thesis recommends a reciprocal conceptualization and practice of International Education developed from an educational relationship that includes negotiation and exchange with all countries involved.

**Keywords:**

International Education; Teacher Education; Critical Pedagogy; Culture and Identity in Teacher Education; International Curriculum Theory

## Dedication

For my mother, who (frequently) told me, "Always finish what you start".

For my father, who told my sister, "The only way to find out, is to  
go out there, and find out".

Thanks. You were both right.

## Acknowledgements

This research was made possible through the generosity of Simon Fraser University. During my years of working with the Faculty of Education I was granted tuition waivers, without which this study would not have been completed.

Generosity, patience and confidence of friends and colleagues also enabled the completion of this thesis. Thanks to my partner, Madith Wilson, for the space and time to write, and for her love, encouragement and enthusiasm.

Thanks, too, to Jeanne Perreault whose inspiration has guided me all these years.

Thanks again and always to Kelleen Toohey, for her insights and support for this research, and for her mentorship over the past 21 years. I am grateful, as well, to Celeste Snowber and Charles Bingham whose feedback and belief in this project helped to motivate me. Support from members of TARG and KRAB (you know who you are) also sustained my morale while I conceived of, and completed, this thesis.

Special thanks as well, to Erika Hasebe-Ludt and Ian Andrews for their collaboration, friendship and good humour, from the very beginning. Similarly, I am grateful to the many ITEMites, for their commitment, professionalism and courage in a time of great change and challenge in our schools. They have taught me much about humility, imagination, resilience and loyalty.

I specially wish to acknowledge and thank the student teacher informants—now practicing teachers—from the ITEM who made themselves available so selflessly, for the purposes of this research. I was constantly humbled, and reassured, by their dedication and thoughtfulness. I hope I represented them honourably.

Finally, I wish to express my deep appreciation to and recognition of the educators in Trinidad & Tobago, and in Oaxaca, Mexico, who have supported the ITEM all these years. They gave selflessly of their time and energy to me. This thesis would not have been possible without their contributions. I hope that I have represented their voices respectfully and truthfully.



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## Chapter 1. A Starting Point

In February 1998, a group of student teachers from Simon Fraser University, together with their Faculty Associates (one of whom was me) and faculty member, presented their conceptions of International Education at the WestCAST conference in Victoria, British Columbia.<sup>1</sup> These students described International Education as “a state of mind.” They understood it to be an approach to classroom practices in public schools that honoured their students’ diverse heritages. They identified their own family routes to Canada: among them, from Persia, by way of India and Africa, from the Czech Republic, by way of Austria, from China, by way of Hong Kong, and from Pakistan, by way of England and Germany.

The student teachers reported that in their practicum classrooms they were inviting their students to connect with each other through their diverse family origins. The classes then made connections with the world “out there,” through considering these ancestral journeys in relation to the curriculum. In these ways, the student teachers tried to make sense of a pedagogical concept offered to them through their particular teacher education program: the International Teacher Education Module (ITEM).

The 1998 presentation was titled, and concluded with, “We Think We’ve Found a Starting Point.” This thesis is an examination of that teacher education program, eight years later. What are its current conceptual bases for International Education, how has it been experienced and practiced by student teachers, and how has it evolved from that “starting point”? As one of the founding Faculty Associates, and through my continuing involvement in this teacher education program, I am an insider to this group. I have investments in and commitment to its success, both for the student teachers and for the faculty in Canada, and now, for the educators in participating sites in Oaxaca, Mexico, and in Trinidad & Tobago.

This thesis is an inquiry, based principally on the experiences of six Canadian student teachers, and six educators from the southern sites, during the program’s ninth year. It is a “friendly critique” (Waterstone, 2003) of the ITEM and an assessment of

<sup>1</sup> The students were Paula Jasic, Salima Karmali, Denise Schellhase and Victoria Yee.

International Education, as practiced by the ITEM, from a theoretical and ethical perspective. It is my hope to be able to confirm the program's beneficial practices, to illuminate areas in need of further critique, and to contribute to a developing concept of the theory and practices of International Education.

## **A History**

In the spring of 1996, I was offered a position as a Faculty Associate (FA) in the Professional Development Program (PDP) within the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University (SFU). Until that time I had worked as a classroom teacher, and a learning assistance teacher, in elementary and secondary schools in three school districts in British Columbia. I had also taught adults "English Conversation" at an English language school in Japan where I lived and worked for a year and a half.

For five of my 11-year public school teaching career, I was an "ESL" teacher. I helped students in local schools from countries all around the world to become fluent and literate in English while they adapted culturally to the lower mainland of British Columbia. I believe it was these experiences—my work with international children from Grades 4 through 12—as well as my life and work in Japan, which helped the interview team decide to offer me the Faculty Associate position in 1996. When I accepted the appointment, the new program to which I had been assigned had not yet been named, but the representative faculty member, Dr. Ian Andrews, had a mandate from the faculty to provide a teacher education program whose focus was to be that of "International Education." The other Faculty Associate chosen for this work was Dr. Erika Hasebe-Ludt. Together, the three of us named the module, imagined and initiated the conceptual basis for the program, and developed a corresponding curriculum for the first two years of the ITEM.

## Background

### *A Year in the PDP*

The Professional Development Program (PDP) began in 1965 as a teacher education program within the Faculty of Education at SFU. According to Stephen Smith, Director of the PDP from 1997-2004,

Legend has it that Professors John Ellis and Archie McKinnon, founding members of the Faculty of Education, met on Sunday afternoons in a café in downtown Vancouver and conceived of this program over a two to three month period in late 1964. Ellis, the first Director of Professional Programs, and McKinnon, the first Dean of the Faculty of Education, began their program deliberations with two ideas that have stood the test of time. These ideas are, first, that there are two elements in teacher preparation, namely the practical and the theoretical, which should be valued in equal proportions. But it is practice that should come first. The second idea is that the PDP should be a program with a specific mission. It should promote the professional development of student teachers and those who teach them for the sake of school improvement. (Smith, 2004, p. 1)

The program then, as now, includes a year-long curriculum over three semesters. The first semester, *Education 401/2*, typically consists of short practica in local public school classrooms combined with on-campus reflection time, theory and methods instruction. *Education 405* includes the "long practicum" in a 12-week semester. *Education 404*, the theory/methods course work, is always completed in the summer semester.

The relationship of practice, theory and reflection within the program is philosophically based and was an innovation of the PDP. A detailed explanation from Smith provides a context for the ITEM:

Real teaching, not just practice teaching, was to be the point of departure for the PDP. A subsequent period of reflection and study would make sense of what was experienced, to be followed by further teaching and reflection in an ongoing cycle of professional growth and development. Seconded teachers, called Faculty Associates (FAs) were to work with the student-teachers, alongside faculty professors, thereby ensuring the practical relevance of the program while staying connected to educational research and scholarship. Student teachers would be apprenticed to School Associates, or sponsor teachers, and in this partnership with the field, professional development would accrue to both student teacher and [F]aculty [A]ssociate.

The purpose of the PDP is to prepare teachers to make a difference that matters in the lives of all children and youth...In fact, interpreting, understanding, cultivating and applying a broad pedagogical competence to the public school system and the teaching sites to which student teachers are assigned remains the fundamental task of the PDP to which we are committed. (p. 2)

In its work to prepare beginning teachers to be ready for contemporary classrooms, the PDP has incorporated 14 groups or modules, each typically including 32 student teachers. Faculty Associates, responsible to each module, in consultation with a tenure-stream professor, prepare and teach a curriculum coherent with the 12 PDP goals, formulated in 1983 under Professor Selma Wasserman's directorship of Professional Programs (see Appendix A). At the same time, each module has a particular theme or "big idea" that "determine[s] the choice of, and approach to, module activities which are, in turn, developmentally sequenced" (Smith, 2004, p. 6). For example the Fine and Performing Arts Module provides an arts-based curriculum. The Urban Mosaic Module works with five elementary schools and their related secondary school, to orient student teachers to these schools' cultural, community and educational interests. The ITEM offers a program that claims to focus on the theme of internationalization of education, providing student teachers with a curriculum designed to

Examine the issues and challenges facing teachers in British Columbia schools where diversity, global education, English as an additional language and intercultural communication have become critical and integral components of classroom life and the curriculum. (Andrews, Hasebe-Ludt, Northey, & Scholefield, 1998, p. 1)

### ***Program within a Program***

The Faculty of Education and the PDP have been supportive of the ITEM from its inception. Extensive assessments have been conducted on student teacher response to the program, through student teacher evaluations and questionnaires. Feedback has also been solicited from local School Associates (SAs), the classroom teachers who host the student teachers for the long practicum in the lower mainland.

For the first three years, the ITEM was conducted on the Burnaby campus and in lower mainland schools. The first group of 16 students to complete *Education 401/2* outside Canada went to Oaxaca, Mexico in 1999. As the chart on the following page



indicates, for two years the other 16 students of the ITEM continued to complete *Education 401/2* in the lower mainland. In year six, ITEM opened its second out-of-country site in Trinidad & Tobago and now all 32 students complete their first semester, *Education 401/2*, out-of-country (see Table 1).

**Table 1.**

**Site and Faculty Assignments for the ITEM, Years 1 – 10**

ITEM#	Year	Education 401/2: Location	Number of Students	Faculty Associates	Coordinator
1	1996-1997	lower mainland of British Columbia (Surrey, Burnaby, Vancouver, Langley, etc.)	32	Erika Hasebe-Ludt Anne Scholefield	Alannah Ireland
2	1997-1998	lower mainland of B.C.	32	Erika Hasebe-Ludt Anne Scholefield	Laura Bickerton
3	1998-1999	lower mainland of B.C.	32	Don Northey Anne Scholefield	Hugh Burke
4	1999-2000	Oaxaca, Mexico	16	Don Northey	Hugh Burke
		lower mainland of B.C.	16	Rose Low	
5	2000-2001	Oaxaca, Mexico	16	Don Northey	Anne Scholefield
		lower mainland of B.C.	16	Rose Low	
6	2001-2002	Oaxaca, Mexico	16	Heather Tobe	Anne Scholefield
		Trinidad & Tobago	16	Michael Warsh	
7	2002-2003	Oaxaca, Mexico	16	Heather Tobe	Anne Scholefield
		Trinidad & Tobago	16	Don Northey	
8	2003-2004	Oaxaca, Mexico	16	Sarah Joyce	Heather Tobe
		Trinidad & Tobago	16	Paul Bishop (ITEM 1 Graduate)	
9	2004-2005	Oaxaca, Mexico	16	Sarah Joyce	Heather Tobe
		Trinidad & Tobago	16	Paul Bishop	
10	2005-2006	Oaxaca, Mexico	16	Sarah Joyce	Heather Tobe
		Trinidad & Tobago	16	Tasha Henry (ITEM 1 Graduate)	

From its inception until the completion of its ninth year, Dr. Ian Andrews served as the representative faculty member for the ITEM. In September 2005, this role was assumed by Dr. Stephen Smith.

By 2006, more than 300 teachers will have graduated from the ITEM. More than 180 of these graduates will have completed their first PDP semester at sites outside Canada. I have worked with the ITEM every year, with the exception of year four. I am currently the instructor of *Education 370*,<sup>2</sup> a course originally designed specifically for the ITEM student teachers, that runs concurrently with all three semesters. As one of the authors of the ITEM's and *Education 370*'s themes and objectives, I have a personal and professional interest in this work. This has led to an interest in the philosophical evolution and consequent practices of the ITEM, and its influence on the philosophies and practices of beginning teachers who graduate from the program. I am also interested in the perception of the ITEM from the point of view of educators involved in the program in Oaxaca, and in Trinidad & Tobago.

As well as being a unique program with regard to its international practicum, the ITEM, through the initiative of its original faculty representative, Ian Andrews, strives to maintain its connection with and among graduates and all others who have been involved with the program over the years. As mentioned earlier, 1<sup>st</sup>-year graduates are now working as Faculty Associates. One is a program coordinator in the PDP. Graduates from other years are now School Associates, sponsoring new ITEM student teachers in their classrooms. One ITEM graduate commented, when reflecting on the ITEM student teachers he has hosted over the past few years, as an SA, that "when [my former student teachers] do somehow connect [with each other]...there's already this connection that they have. Among the three of them, they talk about certain things, they'll trade stories and experiences, even though they don't really know each other." He also emphasized

*I really like the fact that the program relies on previous generations. It's like your elders, right? They have a wisdom and they have experience*

<sup>2</sup> The Faculty of Education granted the ITEM special permission to conduct this Action Inquiry course concurrently with the two practicum semesters. Within the PDP currently, this is unique to the ITEM program. As of May '05, *Education 370* is being offered as an undergraduate course and is a requirement for the new "International Education Minor."

*that certainly would be really helpful for those new to the craft [of teaching]. That constantly connecting people and that constant reference to what others did and what they are doing, and matching up those individuals with those who have gone through the experience [is something that I value]. (Phong Kuoch, in conversation, July 2005)*

The ITEM's most recent gesture to further include "the elders" involves teachers from the southern sites. Some, who have worked with the ITEM, are being considered for the positions of site-based Faculty Associates within the PDP. In August 2005, a School Associate from Oaxaca, Mexico, who had hosted Canadian student teachers in her classroom for four years, attended the preparatory August Orientation for Faculty Associates on campus at SFU. In the future, the FA in Oaxaca might be an Oaxacan, and in Trinidad & Tobago, a Trinidadian.

### **International Education in the Professional Development Program**

International Education has a history that can be "traced to antiquity" (Scanlon and Shields, 1968 in Sylvester, 2005). However, although International Education is acknowledged as an established field, as recently as 1975, universities and colleges in Canada rarely made reference to International Education in their mission statements. By the mid '90s, however, over 80% of these same institutions affirmed the importance of International Education as part of their educational responsibilities (Knight, 1996). The concept and establishment of the ITEM, in 1996, was in step with this national post-secondary development.

Because it is an unusual teacher education program, the ITEM also sought and was granted support for its program from the Teacher Education branch of the B.C. College of Teachers (BCCT). For the first several years, reports of the ITEM's activities were provided to the BCCT to ensure that the College standards for teacher education were being met. In addition, student teacher evaluations and questionnaires informed the ITEM faculty of the program's influence on student teacher development. These analyses of the ITEM program constitute the assessment, to date, of its goals, activities

and outcomes. My research is the first review of the ITEM by a participant,<sup>3</sup> through a theoretical and ethical lens. I examine the objectives of International Education as it is understood in the ITEM and in the larger context of the teacher education program—the Professional Development Program (PDP)—of the Faculty of Education. This investigation was provoked and guided by several circumstances:

### ***Example One***

Recently a graduate of the ITEM wrote in letter to support the program for a national award, “I believe that it is the element of exchange that makes teacher education so rich. In ITEM we had the advantage of an international exchange” (Susan, 2003).

### ***Example Two***

During the second year of the ITEM’s program in Trinidad & Tobago, a Trinidadian parent of a school child discussed, with a visiting professor from the Faculty of Education at SFU, the purposes of the ITEM. The parent remarked with regard to the presence of the Canadian student teachers, “You are coming down here to practice on us” (M. Zola, personal communication, May 4, 2004).

### ***Example Three***

The Annual Report from ITEM’s sixth year claims its teacher education curriculum

Provides participants with direct, lived experience with members of another culture in order to facilitate and enrich global perspectives, and to equip participants (as future teachers) to respond to students’ diverse needs in a variety of instructional settings, both in the Canadian educational environment and in the international context. (Tobe & Warsh, 2002, p. 5)

<sup>3</sup> *Transformation possibilities: The International Teacher Education Module at Simon Fraser University* (2005) is Master of Education thesis by J. Miller, based on data limited to interviews with Ian Andrews and eight ITEM 8 students at the completion of their final practicum. The author of the thesis is a student at the University of Alberta and teaches in the Saanich School District on Vancouver Island.

Contrary to the statement made in Example One, the ITEM is *not* an exchange program. Because this is a common misconception, I believe it is important to examine the implications of such a misunderstanding and to consider what the *actual* reciprocal nature of the program might be. Related to questions of reciprocity within the program are questions about the neo-colonial possibilities, real or perceived, of such a one-way engagement. When mostly white student teachers from a more affluent northern nation “get” their educations in the classrooms of poorer, browner, southern nations, it is the responsibility of the program to understand what political (and educational) dynamics are at work. I also felt that the assertions made by Tobe and Warsh (above), that is, that the ITEM teachers graduate equipped “to respond to students’ diverse needs,” needed to be researched. Through this research, the concept of “International Education” will be further informed and clarified so that,

[t]he translation of the concepts and ideals of International Education into institutional structures...will bring enhanced learning opportunities to students from a wide range of educational and cultural backgrounds [and] have a part to play in the related tasks of converting a shared understanding of International Education into practical reality and in using that experience further to inform and develop that understanding itself.  
(Thompson, 2002, p. 7)

Last, my research looks at implications related to the assumption of pedagogical and cultural exchange within the program. These concerns are related specifically to the philosophies, intents and outcomes of the ITEM. A further concern, which perhaps should be an over-arching question, relates to the meaning of International Education itself, and the general perception among scholars and educators, that there is no common definition or understanding of the term (Knight, 1998; Sylvester, 2005; Thompson, 2005; Bresler & Ardichvili, 2002; Beck, 2004; Yang, 2003). Without a common understanding, how can we know what the ITEM stands for? How, considering this ambiguity, might the work of the ITEM contribute to a more general understanding of the field of study and relationships that constitute International Education?

## **The Researcher**

After serving as a Faculty Associate for three years, I returned to teaching in a public school classroom, worked as a Faculty Associate in another module for a

semester, and then was offered and accepted the position of PDP coordinator for three years. As a coordinator I worked again with the ITEM, participating in FA and student selection and placement of student teachers in public school classrooms. I was also occasionally involved with struggling students and their withdrawal from the program. A more unusual part of my assignment as coordinator was to visit the FAs and student teachers at their sites in Trinidad & Tobago, and Oaxaca, Mexico. I slept on concrete in indigenous villages, hiked through mud with irritable student teachers and stumbled through sweltering jungles in tropical downpours with incredulous "ITEMites," in search of manatees and monkeys. In all these situations I was preoccupied with questions about the education of our student teachers and our relationships with the host nations in the south.

To contribute to the field of International Education, and to examine the practices and outcomes of the ITEM, I engaged in qualitative research of the program. Given the limited research conducted in so-called "International Education" I looked to other fields of study for guidance. John Wengle, an anthropologist, discusses the "data lifeline" that fieldwork provided for the discipline of anthropology. He writes in *Ethnographies in the field: The psychology of research*, that "to continue to exist independently, without fear of annexation, a field needs unique data" to ensure its vitality (1988, p. 157). As a 9-year veteran of the ITEM, my fieldwork has been ongoing and, I believe, has generated considerable unique data. I have worked in schools with sponsor teachers—School Associates—as well as with students from 9 of the 10 ITEM generations. I have been at both the out-of-country sites with FAs, and students there. In 2003 I conducted preliminary research with five student teacher graduates of the ITEM 7 and one SA who had sponsored two ITEM student teachers as well as student teachers from other programs. From the responses of these informants, I formulated the interview questions for students graduating in 2005. In addition, I interviewed SAs from the southern sites as well as graduates of the ITEM who themselves, as practicing classroom teachers, have sponsored ITEM students. My work with the ITEM 9, as well as supplementary data from ITEM graduates across the years, inform this assessment of the ITEM program and may contribute to the "data lifeline" necessary for the evolution and clarity of the field of International Education.

My position as a researcher is a consequence of the opportunities I have had working with the ITEM—as stated earlier, I am a “founding member” of the faculty team and helped to develop its curriculum. (The ITEM’s original themes and objectives remain intact although the activities that address the program’s goals have evolved from year-to-year.) As stated earlier, I have a professional and personal interest in the program. With this attachment in mind, I acknowledge that I engaged in this study as an “old-timer” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and as such, struggled with the concept, if not the practice, of objective analysis of the data. In fact, I do not claim to have been objective. “I have looked for myself where, knowingly or not, I think we all are—and unavoidably belong: in the subjective underbrush of [my] own research experience” (Peshkin, 1990, p. 20). Being conscious of this relationship to the program, and being mindful of my insider, “old-timer” status, I conducted the study from the “underbrush,” all the while working to remain aware of my own biases and alert to those I could not admit. I tried to remain attentive, also, to the responses that student interviewees might have made that were influenced by my history with the program.

In my proposal, I stated that I would be less involved with the ITEM 9 than I had been with most other ITEM generations. However, I was subsequently offered the opportunity to be the *Education 370* instructor for ITEM 9, and I accepted it (Appendix B). In this role, I met with the students for one evening session before they left for the south. In the southern sites, I conducted two seminars with them there. At the same time, I conducted interviews with the “informant” students and the southern School Associates. During their long immersion practicum semester in Canada, I continued to work with all the ITEM 9 student teachers, instructing them in their Action Inquiry assignments, and mentoring them in this project throughout their practica. From the beginning, the students were aware that I was simultaneously conducting research on the program. I am unable to determine how or whether this role influenced their relationship to me or to their participation in the curriculum. My involvement served to provide me with a broad picture of the student teachers’ conceptions of International Education, and themselves as International Educators. Through their discussions and written assignments, I was privy to the process they were undergoing as they considered their understanding of and contributions to the field.

## The Research

I have a vested interest in this program and a desire to see it offer meaningful education to student teachers in Canada, and to educators and children in the southern sites. As noted, my professional relationship to the ITEM and to those who work with me has also become a personal interest. As coordinator, I was the chief organizer of the 7-year reunion in June 2003. Many of my professional relationships in the program have become long-lasting friendships. The Faculty Associate for ITEM 8 and 9 was a student teacher in ITEM 1, later served as a School Associate, and hosted me in his residence in Trinidad & Tobago when I conducted my research there. The students who participated in my research were aware of my connection to and interest in the success of the program. It is possible that my status vis-a-vis the ITEM may have influenced the responses of the interviewees. I questioned in my proposal whether, for example, the students might respond in ways that confirm a more positive assessment of the program because they may assume I am most interested in the successes. I wondered, too, whether they might withhold criticism or questions or remain silent about stories that they feel may not cast the program in a favourable light.

When we enter into a research relationship with participants and ask them to share their stories with us, there is the potential to share their lived, told, relived and retold stories as well as our own. These intensive relationships require serious consideration of who we are as researchers in the stories of participants, for when we become characters in their stories, we change their stories...As researcher we are also changed, but because we enter the relationships with certain intentions and purposes and, as the ones most often initiating the research relationship, our care and our responsibility is first directed toward participants. (Clandenin & Connelly, 2000, p. 422)

When I think about how these relationships might influence the research, I look to the work of Dr. Bonnie Waterstone (2003) who for a year, “analysed the material discursive conditions” (p. 1) within a group of teacher researchers with whom she worked. This group became a small community whose purpose was “to foster productive, respectful collaboration between differently situated participants” (p. 1). Waterstone acknowledges that the institutional hierarchy of the university, under whose auspices these teachers met, influenced the research. She analyses this collaboration of university based researcher and classroom teacher practitioners, describing the study as



a “friendly critique,” an “analysis of a setting founded on values [she] supports” (p. 3). Although I am not analyzing the relationship between the informants and me, I do acknowledge my assumption that our work is philosophically compatible and that all of us are engaged in a program based on values we all support. Like Waterstone, though, I have tried to remain alert to where these assumptions might break down, and how those discrepancies might have affected the intents and outcomes of the research.

As the instructor for *Education 370: International and Intercultural Education*, I am required to evaluate the assignments of the informants. I felt that in each case, however, the student teachers were frank and at ease in the interviews, demonstrating varying degrees of formality. I felt no reticence in their responses. However, I was and remain mindful of ways that “power is produced and how it articulates with and sometimes reinforces institutional and structural hierarchies” (Waterstone, 2003, p. 4), inhibiting disclosure and provoking traditional, circumspect teacher/student reserve.

There are also benefits to the complex relationship between the ITEM program and me. Just as the students might have been inhibited by my desire to see the program succeed, and withhold any critical comment, so too might they be more inclined to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the enthusiasm they feel for their learning and for the opportunities the program provides. By working with me so closely, they have been able to get to know me as a committed educator, one who is thoughtful about the curriculum and open to questions and comments that challenge the program and its ideas. One of the informants remarked in her final interview, “Like from you, I can see that—these types of things are important to you, you’re passionate about it, you talk about it and so it comes out with what you’re teaching” (Karen, 3, p. 10). And just as the Trinidadian mother confronted Professor Zola with the observation that our program “practices on” her child, so has one of the “Trini” student teachers questioned whether “this program [was] meant to recognize SFU and make it stand out more, or was it really thinking about the kids?” (Diana, 3, p. 7). The degree of criticality in that remark helps me to feel confident that these student teachers are as comfortable with their criticism as they are with their commendations. Waterstone notes, “My participation in the group...had an ongoing influence” (p. 97). “[M]y role as a participant observer...had potential to impact [the subject’s] past, present and future” (p. 98). I think that only

sometimes can we understand the nature of that influence, and for the rest of the time, the best we can do is to acknowledge that this is so, and move on.

Writing about "Meaning Making in International Settings," Lori Bresler reminds us each person's individual purposes,

Their different goals and structures create different experiences. The experiences shape the creation of interpretive zones, the kinds of knowledge we gain, and the mode of communication and presentation. (Bresler, 2002, p. 57)

In addition to my history with the ITEM, my purposes as a researcher and as an instructor within the ITEM 9 shape my experiences and consequent knowledge of the program, just as the students' purposes shaped theirs. Within the same program, the knowledge we each developed and what and how we communicated that was and will be distinct for each individual. My role has been to try to make meaning of the disparate purposes, understandings and offerings that the research has revealed, and to remember my interpretive stance as "outsider and insider...participant observer and observant participant" (p. 53) as I analyze and present this work.

## **Summary**

The ITEM took its name to signify that it was a teacher education program intent on providing a particular orientation for beginning teachers. Since its first years, the ITEM has evolved into a program that conducts its first practicum semester out-of-country. Chapter 1 established the history of the program and located the researcher in that history.

Over the course of the program no assessment has been conducted from the point of view of the education partners in the south, or how the program relates to the field of International Education as a whole. My history with the program, my interest in its integrity, and my questions about whether and how it has been meeting its stated educational objectives have moved me to engage in this research.

In the next chapter, I outline the theoretical and ethical frameworks I use to assess the ITEM's philosophy and practices.

## Chapter 2. Theory and Ethics of International Education

When Dr. Ian Andrews, Dr. Erika Hasebe-Ludt and I met to prepare a conceptual framework and a curriculum for the International Teacher Education Module (ITEM) in 1996, we invited the well-known educational theorist and local professor emeritus, Dr. Ted Aoki, to contribute. He noted, and people's comments about and reactions to the ITEM have confirmed, that the name of the module is ambiguous. Based on diverse understandings of the term "international," various assumptions are frequently made by faculty, potential student teachers, practicing teachers and others about the intent, experiences and educational influence of the ITEM's program. This is both unfortunate and convenient, because while it has released the Faculty of Education from having to reach some kind of consensus with regard to a more deliberate, accessible philosophical or political understanding of International Education, the ambiguity has permitted a breadth of possible (mis)understandings, practices and explorations.

Dr. Aoki "warned" us that in choosing the name International Teacher Education for the program, to use "inter" as a prefix instead of, say, "multi" as in multicultural, was to "signify a pedagogy as enacted in metonymic spaces" (T. T. Aoki, personal communication, September, 1996). That is, Aoki suggested that the name/naming of the module metonymically represented what would characterize the program and its activities, conceptually. Ambiguity, he predicted, would be inherent in name and in the pedagogy and its practices. Similarly, Etienne Wenger (1998) sees ambiguity—in this case inherent in the prefix "inter"—as a "condition of negotiability" (p. 83) that in itself signifies a potential for many meanings. Aoki (1996) wrote in his reflections to us that the place of "inter" is a location "where the ambiguous language of ambivalence, [and] doubling hold: like 'both this and that, but neither this nor that'". Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain (1998), through the theories they use to articulate their concepts of identity and agency, reiterate Aoki's prediction. They theorize a conceptual framework that requires users "to encompass a number of views in virtual simultaneity" (p.15). The "this and that" to which Holland et al. refer are culturalist and constructivist theories of identity, often regarded as oppositional concepts.

In this chapter I will expand on the conceptual frameworks that I feel are helpful and relevant to conduct the analysis proposed in Chapter 1. Then I analyze some underlying assumptions and problematic uses of the term, "International Education." Finally, I examine post-colonial commentary that informs the thesis.

## **Identity Theories**

If it is a good theory, it also allows for new ideas and ways of looking at things to be incorporated constantly without the need to search constantly for new theories.

(Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 1998, p. 38)

### ***Who Do We Think We Are?***

I-Wen Niu, a graduate of the ITEM 7 and an informant for the study that preceded this research, reminded me in a conversation about the ITEM in Mexico, "you have to know yourself first, before you can relate to the others out there" (personal communication, May 5, 2005). One's sense of identity, and its importance, is often raised by the ITEM participants who informed this study, as well as by those from the preliminary inquiry. Identity theories help us to understand that preoccupation, and to locate it within the practices of International Education.

Identity theories are important to our understanding of International Education if, as I-Wen reminded me, we are to respect the relationships that are necessary in, and consequences of this work. Now that the ITEM students complete their first semester in Mexico and in Trinidad & Tobago, the educational implications of the student teachers' self-awareness, relative to others, are particularly important. As the ITEM is hosted by other nations, our identities become informed by our relationships to and with our hosts. These relationships, to my mind, have a significant global and historical context.

If, as some have asserted (Beck, 2001) International Education is an extension of globalization, so globalization is an outgrowth of imperialism, according to Dr. Yvonne Brown (2005). She asserts that "To acknowledge the [imperialist] past would necessarily be to acknowledge the present, and the developed world is largely incapable of that" (p. 223). By this, Brown refers to advantages gained by the developed world, including Canada, through European imperialism while at the same time reminding us of the

degradation that same process inflicted on our host countries. The implications of this past for our relationships with, and identities relative to our hosts, are important. If as Brown says, we are “incapable” of acknowledging this relationship, past and present, our identities remain narrowly informed. Furthermore, inequities in power and privilege will continue to be reinforced. Identity theory helps us to develop an awareness of ourselves as “people embedded in the complexities of their historical and socio-economic legacies” (p. 224). It helps us to recognize our historical and current international relationships, and the ongoing process of educational transformation predicated upon “interlocking genesis...a co-development of identities” (Holland et al., 1998, p. vii) sustained and reinforced by the practices of International Education.

### ***How Do We Think We Are?***

Cultural studies has developed as an interdisciplinary field, emerging from the overlap of such domains as psychology, anthropology and sociology. One of its major concerns is identity. As Holland et al. (1998) see it, culturalists understand identity to be the consequence of taking up and responding to the traditions of one’s society or community. From this perspective, one’s identity is determined and lived through one’s culture, which includes the enactment (or rejection) of the knowledge, morals, values and beliefs of one’s community. On the other hand, constructivist theories, informed by other social sciences (e.g., sociolinguistics), the humanities, as well as feminist analysis, see identities as constructed through particular social relationships. Such theories attribute identity to structural relationships such as gender, class and race. One’s identity or “subject position” is enacted through these structures of relative power, privilege and/or marginalization within one’s community (Beynon, personal communication, February 3, 2004). Holland et al. explain:

These perspectives can be separated, and indeed we have found it immensely helpful to recognize dimensions missing from the culturalist perspective and offered by the constructivist one, and vice versa. But there is no reason to pretend that they are so separate in action. (1998, p.15)

Instead of rejecting one theory or the other, they bring the two perspectives to bear as a “dialogic frame” (p. 8). Recalling Aoki, they state that accepting ambiguity can “explicitly free us from the idea that we as a group or as individuals can hold only one perspective

at a time” (p. 15). They believe that as human beings, we have a dialogic nature and are able to engage opposing views. This conviction supports a perspective through which to understand and come to terms with the ambiguities inherent in International Education.

Using the dialogic frame, built from constructivist and culturalist theories, Holland et al. formulate a concept for identity and agency as enacted in communities and/or cultures that they call “figured worlds.” The concept offers a way to think about the identities, actions and agency of the participants in these contexts. Holland et al. explain figured worlds as “socially and culturally constructed realm[s] of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (p. 52).

It is a landscape...partly contingent upon and partly independent of other figured worlds...Figured worlds in their conceptual dimensions supply the contexts of meaning for actions, cultural productions, performances, disputes, for the understandings that people come to make of themselves, and for the capabilities that people develop to direct their own behavior in these worlds...Figured worlds provide the contexts of meaning and action in which social positions and social relationships are named and conducted. They also provide the loci in which people fashion senses of self—that is, develop identities. (p. 60)

Figured worlds are always in process, shaped by and acquiring their characteristics from the actions of their participants. The participants in turn, establish their own identities through the many figured worlds within which they live and operate. The sense of identity constituted by these relationships is expressed, according to Holland et al., through individual agency and one’s “authorial stance.” Holland et al. write, “Identities—if they are alive, if they are being lived—are unfinished and in process” (p. vi).

Such a theory of identity formation and process not only addresses the preoccupation of the ITEM student teachers with the evolution of their own identities, it represents a possible model for the concept of International Education itself. Just as the theory of Holland et al.’s figured worlds of identity relies on the synthesis of two apparently opposing theories, International Education as a practice might also be understood to embody contradictory theories.

Many “international educators” agree that few of us understand what each other means by the term International Education. Many also acknowledge the lack or absence

of a common theoretical or conceptual underpinning to support the activities and development of the discipline (Knight, 1998; Beck, 2001; Thompson, 2002; Gunesh, 2002). As the field of International Education evolves, its efforts to negotiate a common understanding can be analyzed through the perspectives of Holland et al. (1998). They describe the evolution of figured worlds, like the field of International Education, who “come to name themselves” (p. 51). The concept of figured worlds is based in the belief that as individuals we are not wholly determined by our cultural backgrounds or by our positioning in stratified relationships. Rather, even in the most limiting circumstances, we have “at least a modicum of agency or control” (p. 40) in our lives through which we participate in forming and performing our own identities and the identities of the communities in which we live. Basing their discussions on the ideas of Russian literary theorist, M.M. Bahktin, and his contemporary, L.S. Vygotsky, Holland et al. help us to understand that identity and agency emerge “as an outcome of living in, through, and around the cultural forms practiced in social life” (p. 8). As the field of International Education struggles to define itself, or at least to establish some common conceptual understandings, such struggles become characteristic of the figured world of International Education. That is, the ambiguities and negotiations are inherent and constitute some of the “cultural forms practiced” in the field of International Education.

Holland et al. rely strongly on the theories of Bahktin and Vygotsky to develop their understanding of human agency and identity. The “authoring self” evolves from applying Vygotsky’s (1925) ideas about semiotics, that is “the potential of symbols [including language] to affect and reorganize experience” (Holland et al. 1998, p. 6), to Bahktin’s (1981) understandings of language and “how it communicated power and authority, how it was inscribed with status and influence” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 178). By working with both theorists’ ideas, the authors develop Bahktin’s concept of an “internally persuasive discourse,” inner speech that evolves from an “orchestration of voices” (p. 178) from one’s environment. They describe how each of us, from the “cacophony of different languages and perspectives” (p. 182) that inform our inner speech, develops a more or less stable internally persuasive discourse, or “authorial stance” (p. 182). This authorial stance is the position from which we make sense of the world around us, and from which we develop and assert our identities. Our internally persuasive discourses, according to Holland et al., following Bahktin, are continuously

being formed and reformed as we negotiate our identities in relation to the figured worlds within which we move. “The neophyte, given over to a voice of authority, and the person of greater experience...begins to rearrange, reword, rephrase, reorchestrate different voices, and by this process develops her own ‘authorial stance’” (p. 183). For most of us, through this process, internally persuasive discourses eventually, inevitably become speech. Bakhtin writes about the significance to our development—our identities and agency—of becoming “speaking persons.” He emphasizes

The importance of struggling with another’s discourse, its influence in the history of an individual’s coming to ideological consciousness, is enormous. One’s own discourse and one’s own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of another’s discourse. (p. 183)

Holland et al. recognize that “one makes the authority of discourse into one’s own...[and then] they make a voice by taking a stand” (p. 184). The stance helps to define the individual, the group and the larger world[s] within which these individuals and groups relate. The authors discuss the dynamic nature of identity and the idea that, consequently, this process and this “authoring stance” will likely be one that continues to evolve—new outside voices require the development of new stances. At the same time, they acknowledge Vygotsky’s observation that for some, the stance remains rigid. “The behaviour that was meaningful or indexical with respect to identity has become habituated, fossilized in Vygotsky’s terms, automatic” (p. 190). The development of some figured worlds, the agency of their members, and the fixed or fossilized positions of others, is an important concept to understand. In the words of the authors, this “space of authoring...[is] freighted with the valences of power, position, and privilege. Such a large concept is needed if we are to understand more particularly the places each of us occupies” (p. 191).

The particularity of the places we occupy, the “authoring selves” and the stances taken up, establish conditions for improvisation, “impromptu actions” (p. 17) within figured worlds. The concept of improvisation—“an unexpected outcome when people are simultaneously engaged with or pushed by contradictory discourses” (p. 17)—is compatible with and a consequence of the simultaneity and tension of the dialogic frame employed Holland et al. The dialogic frame employs an approach that “build[s] upon and move[s] beyond [the] two central [culturalist and constructivist] approaches” (p. 8). The



concept of improvisation within the dialogical framework proposed by Holland et al. is compatible with post-colonial and other discourses I discuss later, which also address conditions that provoke “the openings by which change comes about” (p.18). Improvisation and its creative potential, generates openings for theoretical and ethical assessment as figured worlds evolve.

I am suggesting the International Education can be theorized as encompassing the same kinds of ambiguity that Holland et al. see in identity construction for individuals. By thinking of International Education as a figured world, we can recognize its development and accommodate its ambiguities. The practice of International Education can be understood to be an improvisational response to “the identifiable social discourses/practices that are [its] resources...[It is] a response in a time and space defined by others’ standpoints in activity, in a social field conceived as the ground of responsiveness” (p. 272). As Bakhtin stated, it is a practice “coming to ideological consciousness” (1981, p. 183), taking an authorial stance through various discourses. The ideological conscience of the figured world of International Education, theoretically, will develop and operate from its own ethical stance. Considering the practical history of International Education, and its recent development as a theorized field, Holland et al. offer a way to think about International Education as a new figured world, one into which we arrive as it “develops new social competencies in newly imagined communit[y]” (p. 272).

### **International Education Theory**

New developments in International Education often reflect the improvisational responsiveness articulated by Holland et al. above. For example, Sylvester (2002) remarks on “newly imagined” concepts in the field. He writes, “The conceptual maps that we are currently using to construct our modern sense of an emergent field of International Education are largely untested and incomplete” (p. 91). To prepare to address these conceptual maps Sylvester recommends “a complete reconsideration of the history of International Education” (p. 91). I limit my historical assessment of International Education here, locating it in its imperialist past, and acknowledging its connection with globalization, as introduced by Beck (2001). Instead, I consider current

ideas and discourses concerning the diverse beliefs, and practices based on these beliefs, in the contemporary figured world of International Education.

Bresler and Ardichivili (2002) concur with Sylvester's observations. They remark that "[a]n increasing interest in International Education *research* [italics added] is a relatively recent phenomenon" (p. 2). Among those who participate in post-secondary International Education there is general agreement that no all-encompassing understanding of what we mean by International Education has been established (Knight, 1997; Gruenzweig & Rinehart, 1998; Yang, 2002; Stier, 2003).

The *Journal for Studies in International Education* began publishing in 1996 and "went on-line" in March 2001. Many of its articles are concerned with the marketing aspects of International Education, and with issues of European and North American scholars teaching in universities in "Third World" countries. Knight (1999) discusses the inclusion of international students in Canadian educational institutions as an income-generating presence.<sup>4</sup> The economic aspect of International Education continues to be basic to various conceptions of International Education. By contrast, a recent paper in the same journal explores the experiences and professional growth of American student teachers who, like those in the ITEM, teach "overseas" as part of their pre-service teacher education program. When examining the influence of an out-of-country practicum on 50 American student teachers, Cushner and Mahon (2002) focus on "the nature of international student teaching experience and its impact on the professional and personal development of new teachers" (p. 44). Within one volume of one journal, International Education is represented by practices both "here and there."

The field of International Education needs eventually to reconcile, conceptually, its educational (i.e., curricular and pedagogical) concerns with, for example, the marketing (i.e., for profit) aspects of contemporary International Education practices (Knight, 1998) in a way that also takes into account an ethical and moral perspective

<sup>4</sup> On March 7, 2006, SFU's senate entered into an agreement with IBT Education Ltd (IBT) to "create a private preparatory college for international students....SFU will receive as rent about...\$10 million per year once the college reaches optimum enrolment" (<http://www.sfu.ca/mediapr/newsreleases/archives/news03070601.htm>). Regarding this agreement, the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper quoted Slava Senyshyn, head of SFU's Faculty Association who said the Faculty Association is "worried that the profit motive would be in conflict with [the Faculty Association's] values" (February 20, 2006).

(Beck, 2001). These apparent philosophical and moral oppositions may indeed exemplify the kinds of contradictory discourses Holland et al. describe as ambiguities inherent in figured worlds. In this research, however, I do not address the controversy regarding the business of International Education. Instead, I focus on pedagogical, curricular and practical aspects of International Education as understood by student teachers and other educators who are deliberate in their efforts to be practitioners in the field.

*The Journal for Research in International Education (JRIE)* began in 2002 as an on-line journal. Since then *JRIE* has included writers from around the world who have also expressed a variety of understandings about International Education, and raised questions with regard to its practices and theories. In its first editorial, Jeff Thompson acknowledged “the lack of agreement, among theorists and practitioners alike, concerning the fundamental nature of International Education” (p. 5). Thompson went on to challenge us to “the task of generating and sustaining a debate concerning the nature and definition of the field” (p. 5). He suggested that inspiration for this work might come through efforts to provide “an education for all young people, not only as citizens of a specific nation state, but additionally as world citizens” (p. 6). Although that seems to be Thompson’s sole contribution to an understanding of what a theoretical position on International Education might include, he does reiterate a prediction proposed by Aoki, echoed by Holland et al. Thompson acknowledges the ambiguous and dialogic nature of International Education as a field of study.

Although a prime motivation in launching the *JRIE* is to make explicit the uniqueness of a field of study called International Education...it will be obvious that it does not exist in isolation from a wide range of other bodies of knowledge...The exploration of the areas of overlap and interaction between these other bodies of knowledge...will also be encouraged. (p. 8)

Typical of the subsequent articles in the journal is the cross-use of terms such as “global,” “cross-cultural,” “multicultural,” “intercultural,” “cross-national” and so on, confirming the “overlap” of bodies of knowledge, or at least a vocabulary, acknowledged earlier by Thompson and Aoki.

In order to limit the confusion created by the term, “international,” one *JRIE* article proposes to start anew, by re-naming the field “Cosmopolitanism” (or at least to

use the term and its conceptual framework as a complementary element) (Gunesh, 2004). Such a proposal fulfills the assertion of Holland et al., that “these spaces [or figured worlds such as International Education] have the potential to expand, and their players may become social groupings and categories of newer currency” (p. 287).

Gunesh identifies “four major books on International Education that have appeared in recent years” (p. 252), citing publications from 2000, 2001 and 2002. He comments that “remarkably little is directed at clarifying and theorizing their nature” (p. 252) but instead, they mostly address “discussions of curricular, organizational, or managerial concerns” (p. 253). Through his own examination of the concept of “cosmopolitanism” as an alternative, Gunesh does not stray far from its identification, ultimately, with the field of International Education:

[Cosmopolitanism] can provide a cultural depth of engagement with other cultures, loci and locals which internationalism, for reasons of its inherent traditional geographical, geopolitical and political definition and scope, even within the educational context of International Education, cannot provide. But above all, it can provide a personal and individual identity notion of knowledge of and engagement with local cultural diversity, which in the end, *is part and parcel of the notion of ‘international understanding’ that lies at the core of International Education* [italics added]. (p. 268)

While Gunesh offers an alternative concept within the larger scope of International Education, in his efforts to challenge and distinguish his concept *from* the field, he becomes typical *of* the field, and of its practitioners. That is, to borrow Aoki’s term, he describes Cosmopolitanism as “both this *and* that” and by so doing, has exemplified the ambiguities inherent in the field. He at once wants Cosmopolitanism to be distinct from *and* to represent the international understanding that “lies at the core of” International Education.

Further to Gunesh’s report on recent assessments of International Education, Canadian scholars have examined and reported on various Canadian post-secondary International Education programs. Beck (2001) points out that most writing discusses either the business, that is, the economics of students studying in foreign countries, or the problems of defining the term “International Education” itself. Knight (1999a, 1999b, 2000) has conducted several studies among Canadian universities to assess related practices and attitudes. She writes that the term “International Education is primarily

used as a generic term signifying a kind of education which involves or exists between/among the people, culture and systems of different nations” (1999, p.2). She also suggests that current programs are “work[s] in progress, intended to provoke reflections and discussion on what we mean by International Education, and its relationship to global, transnational and even regional education” (p. 10).

Knight has also attempted to define more narrowly terms used within the universities and “various other sectors” including business and industry (1999, p. 2) which refer to a range of cross-cultural interests. She stated:

The vocabulary of internationalization is growing and changing at a rapid rate. The number and diversity of terms is causing some confusion about the exact meaning of certain concepts. Differences in the meaning of terms exist between countries and even within disciplines. Terms are often used interchangeably. It is therefore important to be clear about the terminology used... (2000, p. 14)

Such a recommendation, while attempting to clarify communication also has the potential to constrict our understandings. It also raises the question of who assumes the authority to fix the definitions and how that authority is assigned or made available. Knight, however, remains open to the evolution of new vocabulary that might emerge to reflect the changing nature of International Education. She suggests (1999) that new vocabulary could indicate development and positive change in relationships that result from international connections. She offers some definitions for commonly used terms (1999), and says that “a review of the different elements used to define the term” (p. 10) is still necessary, cautioning that lack of care and attention to the terms being employed can also result in the field of International Education as recognized by its vague rhetoric. The call for analysis (Sylvester, 2004; Gunesh, 2004; Beck, 2001) and rigour in working toward a clearer conceptualization of the field represents the work of those in the field who wish to negotiate the figured world of International Education. They argue for a movement away from empty rhetoric and unchallenged dogma toward a more morally, ethically and conceptually based discipline. The Faculty of Education in the University of British Columbia, for example, voices ethical concerns in a draft paper describing internationalization initiatives within its faculty. Among their concerns they include

The perennial issue of who has access to higher education for both domestic and international students...[and] how appropriate the curricula,

which are mainly designed for domestic students, are for international students. (2004, p. 5)

These various critiques, observations, assessments and consequent effort to research and theorize the field provide an interesting picture of contemporary scholarly approach to the field of International Education. Its status, and questions about its practices and underlying philosophies, recalls the state of Curriculum Studies in 1975, as described by Pinar (1999). He cites scholars who then described that field as “atheoretical and ahistorical” (p. 484). One writer went so far as to “proclaim the field [of Curriculum Studies to be] dead...from excessive diversity of purpose and an attendant lack of focus and unity” (p. 484). These charges should ring familiar to those of us who claim to work in International Education. Curriculum Studies recovered, or perhaps more accurately, as in the case of Mark Twain (1897), its “death was an exaggeration.” The debate, however, and the subsequent academic vitality within Curriculum Studies might serve as an example for International Education. Bresler and Ardichivili’s (2002) report of interest in International Education research may foreshadow an equally thoughtful and influential future for this field.

Using Holland et al.’s conceptual framework of figured worlds, we might acknowledge that ambiguities not only are inherent within various disciplines such as International Education and Curriculum Studies, but that they have the potential to provoke possibility and growth within the discipline. While Knight, Beck, et al. argue for a clearer conceptualization, I think we must also be alert to the modernist thinking in calling for *the* definition, that is, in establishing International Education as “this *or* that.” In addition to our concerns about clearer understandings to promote clearer communication, we see a need at least to outline some ideological, ethical or philosophical concepts for the field. This would help us choose to identify and engage with the work, or to opt for some other scholarly, educational (or business) pursuit.

Holland et al. refer to Benedict Anderson’s definition of a nation as an “imagined community” (p. 49), a figured world. When we chose “international” for the name of the teacher education program, Dr. Aoki pointed out that “the term ‘international’...has already inscribed within it at least a double meaning—a meaning that, as in international, presumes pre-existence of entities called nations/nationalities...”(1996), imagined or otherwise. Bakhtin (1981), in Holland et al. (1998), refers to “the interanimating

relationship" (p. 182) of meanings within words as indicated by Aoki. This dialogism of meaning within words mirrors the dialogical concept of figured worlds. By considering the interanimating relationship of meanings within "international," we can hope to develop a deeper understanding and a clearer articulation of the field. In so doing we may provide a way to assess the quality of International Education, and its concepts, and what it has to offer scholastically and practically, inherent ambiguities and evolution notwithstanding.

Yang (2003) also suggests new ways to conceptualize International Education. Commenting on the lack of common understanding in the field, Yang recommends that the existing variety of perspectives could actually help to define the term and the inquiry regarding International Education. Considering the difficulty in pinning down a general understanding of what is meant by "International Education" Yang asks:

Should we perhaps look at universities as a key site of struggle, where local knowledge meets global knowledge in a battle to represent different worlds in different ways? How we view universities around the world, and their relations with each other clearly depends on how we understand culture, knowledge, education and international relations. (p. 85)

Yang suggests that International Education, theorized, would have to include the global enterprise of the "advancement of knowledge" and ways that that knowledge is constructed through international interactions. Yang cites studies that suggest there are signs that university education is undergoing "a transformation from nation-state divergence in higher education toward a more universal convergence where universities best serve their nations by serving the world of learning" (p. 87). Wenger's (1998) ideas about how communities of practice negotiate their identities is evident in Yang's efforts to negotiate meaning with regard to the ambiguous purposes of International Education. "Ambiguity," writes Wenger, "is a condition of negotiability and this is a condition of the very possibility of meaning" (p. 83). Yang, Knight, Beck and others, while calling for clearer, careful ways to elucidate the field of International Education, are participating in the negotiation of meaning that is contributing to the conceptual clarity they recommend.

Kumari Beck (2001) has written a thorough study of British Columbia post-secondary International Education programs. She examines the links between aspects of these programs and elements of the phenomenon of globalization. Referring to

McKellin (1998) and Knight (2000), she writes, "Proponents of International Education believe that International Education is a necessary response to globalization" (2001, p. 67). Beck then connects globalization, the development of "the flow of goods, people, ideas and knowledge across national boundaries and [the] impact of activities and events in one part of the world...in a distant part of the world" (p. 68) to transnational networks, corporate empires and their influence on world economics and political power. She also includes in her understanding of globalization the worldwide effects of technology, both as it relates to global communications and as it is demonstrated in modern warfare and ecological, environmental damage. Beck sees this transnational, worldwide evidence of globalization as "the domination of some cultures by another and the accumulation of political, military and economic power" (p. 69), and following Giddens (1990), finds the roots of these relationships in modernity and imperialist practices. Through identifying some of the philosophical characteristics of modernity, such as the assumption of civilized superiority inherent in Western colonial practices, Beck reveals some conceptual origins of contemporary globalization practices and discusses how these practices have been perpetuated. She claims that "[g]lobalization is the backdrop against which the action of International Education is played out" (p. 98) and discusses how the field of International Education might respond to this relationship to globalization and what that response might be. Although Brown (2005) asserts "the developed world does not acknowledge responsibility for its role" (p. 224) in the perpetuation of and profit from imperialism in its contemporary form as globalization, Beck believes International Education can and should acknowledge this responsibility.

Beck, like many others, notes the absence of any common guiding philosophy in the field of International Education. She expresses concern, quoting Ornstein (1999), that without common guiding principles "educators are vulnerable to externally imposed prescriptions, to fads and frills, to authoritarian schemes, and to other '-isms'" (Beck, p.100). She looks to various post-colonial and post-modern theories to provide "a strong educational philosophical base" (p. 100) for International Education. Following an examination of a broad range of related post-colonial concepts, Beck develops the idea of applying an ethic of inclusion as a foundation for a conceptual framework for International Education. Borrowing from ecological ethics, ecofeminism and Noddings'



(1989) theories on the ethics of care, Beck conceives of an ethical perspective around which the practices of International Education might be built.

International Education needs to be tied to the well-being of the communities it serves, and to the common good instead of to the fortunes of the 'hosting countries' or solely to the fortunes of a selected group of individual learners. (p. 132)

Citing Lave and Wenger (1991), Beck fortifies her ideas regarding the common good with sociocultural theories of learning and observes that if International Education were indeed to respond to the communities it serves, its curriculum would better reflect "the perspectives, values and experiences" of those communities (p. 169). She argues for a holistic view of International Education and suggests that International Education be included not as a "special interest" but as part of mainstream education (p. 169). Beck recommends that International Education transform its practices from modern to postmodern ones and its focus from economics to "one that is concerned with the 'real players' of International Education, the students" (p. 158). In this way, according to Beck, International Education can help to challenge some of the detrimental effects of imperialism, colonization and globalization, while effecting ethical practices with an inclusive philosophy and curriculum of its own.

### **A Discourse of Possibility**

Kumari Beck counters the discourse of modernity, which she has argued is the underlying discourse of globalization, with postmodern discourses. She believes that postmodernity "make[s] room for different and new voices to challenge the bipolarities of modernity and offer[s] ways of questioning and problematising" (p. 135). Beck refers to postmodern analyses as "a discourse of possibility," a term I have borrowed here, to frame my approach to some of these theories.

The modernist discourse that Beck attributes to globalization, can be recognized in the call of international educators for clearer, more fixed definitions of vocabulary and practices from the field. At the same time, other voices are calling for new concepts and different ways to understand the intents and activities of International Education. As indicated earlier, such an apparent contradiction may represent the ambiguity inherent in International Education and forecast by Aoki at the outset. We find again a "this *and* that"

paradox to signify one of the ways International Education is to be understood and one of the ways it finds itself implicated in both modern and postmodern discourses.

Some of the discourses of postmodernity that have bearing on the field of International Education examine “traditional” concepts of culture, race, gender and class (culturalist/structuralist discourses) as they relate to identity theories examined earlier, and as they relate to concepts of power and agency (constructivist discourses). As noted, Holland et al. looking at once through two theoretical lenses, articulate a conceptual framework that illustrates how individuals and communities enact agency in response to their environments in their figured worlds. This approach—generating “new ideas and ways of looking at things” (Smith, 1999) from two existing, apparently oppositional theories—represents a postmodern methodology, and reinforces the idea that International Education can accommodate more than one position. That is, to imagine International Education as a dialogic field of study based in a post-modern discourse is to begin to reconcile the uncertainties that currently typify the field.

This kind of dialogical theorizing can be found in the research of Daniel Yon (2000). Yon spent a year in an urban Toronto high school, interviewing students and teachers while observing the dynamics of life of this community. The theories that guided his analysis included “Marxism, structuralism and post structuralism, psychoanalytic theory, discourse theory, postmodernism, feminist theory, and postcolonial theory” (p. 9). From these influences he theorizes “issues and concerns...with migrations, diaspora, globalization and transnationalism; the shifting contours of race, culture and identity, debates about culture, cultural hybridity and...questions of representation” (p. xiii). Yon is also influenced in his work by discourse analysis and discourse theory. He maintains “[d]iscourse shapes how we come to think and produce new knowledge, and facilitates shared understandings and engagements” (p. 3). He also reminds us that discourse, in this case the discourse of identity and multiculturalism, can limit and constrain our understandings and representations. Recalling Beck’s vision of a discourse of possibility, he suggests engagement with a discourse that offers “a more open and pervasive view of culture, which is ...a process...” (p. 5).

If we accept the point of view that International Education has inherited its discourse and philosophies from the modernist projects of globalization (Beck, 2001),

Yon's work has much to offer as a way to begin to build a conceptual framework from a post-modern perspective:

I have been interested in how discourses act upon people, both students and teachers, but also with how individuals rework and act upon discourses in different ways. I have also tried to think about why some discourses, for example discourses of multiculturalism and of how the nation is imagined, are so persistent... (p. 125)

Like Beck, and many post-colonial theorists, he takes into consideration the influences of prevailing discourses, in this case, on the school community. At the same time, like Holland et al., he recognizes agency, "how individuals rework and act upon discourses" (p. 125). Also of interest to this study is Yon's examination of the "persistence" of the discourses concerning multiculturalism and "how the nation is imagined" within public education.

In assessing the lives of the school community in the contexts of race, gender, and allegiance to (or rejection of) their nation(s) of origin Yon observes that for many, national identity is complicated by the discourses of individual identity, multiculturalism, immigration, and the presence of the past in their imagined national futures. He finds the students are "invested in a sense of belonging and of making a place for themselves" (p.135). Yon does not acknowledge that this "investment in a sense of belonging" is characteristic of most adolescents' need to identify with one or more particular group, regardless of their racial or cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is helpful to consider his analysis, given the students' diverse origins and the ways they negotiate one another and the expectations of the school system in which they find themselves. Yon, in his final analysis, acknowledges the ambivalence of individuals and the community as they take up and reject convenient labels and contradictory experiences. He writes that, like the students, the teachers "may simultaneously resist, accommodate, and be ambivalent toward the discourses of multiculturalism, antiracism and inclusivity all at the same time" (p. 31). They may be "pulled in one direction by the authoritative discourses on multiculturalism...and pushed in the opposite direction by internally persuasive discourses" (p. 31). Their lived experiences, the ways they make sense of "this *and* that" and the formulation of their internally persuasive discourses all have bearing on the development of a discourse of possibility to offer as a conceptual framework for International Education.

### ***Who Do They Think We Are?***

Among postmodern discourses that counter modernist practices inherited from International Education's historical relationship to globalization is a diverse body of post-colonial theory and literature. David Spurr (1993) confirmed Beck's observation that colonial thinking and perspectives remain imbedded in the rhetoric of current writing about cross-cultural, cross-boundary relationships. He reexamined "the history, politics, psychology, and language of colonization" (1993, p. 1) as it survives in the discourses of today. Spurr says of the rhetoric of these contemporary (neo)colonial discourses that "there is nothing especially conscious or intentional in their use; they are part of the landscape in which relationships of power manifest themselves" (p. 2). Spurr exposes evidence of such power relationships in contemporary journalism and "travel writing," arguing that to examine literature through this theoretical approach and to reveal its modernist origins helps us to understand the language used "as a set of signs in which the colonial situation can be read" (p. 6).

Spurr's alert with regard to the language of colonialism is compatible with Willinsky's (1998) observations about "imperialism's intellectual interests, which I take to be its educational project" (p. 10). Willinsky added, "this project would live on, for many of us, as an unconscious aspect of our education" (p. 3). When thinking about an education program that prepares teachers for contemporary classrooms, and the discourse we inherit and employ, we are warned to be conscious of a language that bears "the history of identities that imperialism has bestowed upon us" (p. 13).

Further to "reading" colonial or imperialist relationships through language, many of Vygotsky's ideas were taken up in the work of Holland et al. (1998) who argued that as we acquire language our cultural, social and psychological development is influenced by relationships signified in the language. Not only can we analyze neocolonial relationships through the language, the language itself, according to Vygotsky, teaches us who we are and imposes on us the nature of our relationships with others and our consequent or relative identities. According to Vygotsky "all the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals" (1978, p. 57). In modernist discourses these "higher functions"—thinking, communicating, creating and problem solving—establish and continually influence hierarchical relationships between individuals and

among (neo)colonizers and colonized, relationships that correspond with “imperialism’s intellectual interests,” as noted previously by Willinsky (1998). Similarly, Bakhtin confirms Spurr’s belief that language is not neutral, “but that rather it exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions” (1981, p. 294). As we take up language, we struggle to make it our own while at the same time, reproducing previous meanings and reinscribing previous intentions. The intentions Spurr, Willinsky and other post-colonial theorists call to our attention, are those that Beck ascribes to globalization and its modernist practices. Spurr concurs with Beck in his assertion that “the intense and localized colonial administration of 50 years ago, for example, has shifted to a more indirect and global supervision of “Third World” political and economic development” (p. 11).<sup>5</sup> He goes on to propose that a post-colonial discourse might help to “search for alternatives to the discourses of the colonial era” (p. 6) to produce an opposing voice to the (in)direct modernist “supervision.”

Spurr acknowledges that in relationships of unequal power, all of those involved “share in some measure a sense of entrapment within the structures of power” (p. 187). He writes that some forms of resistance within that entrapment exist as “camouflaged response from members of the colonized population” (p. 186). He recommends we attend carefully to these responses. He suggests such attention might help to develop beneficial kinds of “interpretation, understanding and knowledge” (p. 192) to support the transformations and evolution that evolve from the kinds of agency, that is, camouflaged response, that Holland et al. say is enacted within figured worlds. A post-colonial perspective helps us to recognize and to hear the overt and “camouflaged” language of post-colonial discourse, the discourse Brown states we are unable to hear.

Where Spurr is concerned with camouflaged *responses*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) urges us to recognize vestiges of camouflaged modernist *practices* in International Education. She alerts us to attend to what might qualify as “hidden curriculum” (p. 11) in current research where individuals from nations with relative

<sup>5</sup> In determining how support staff at the ITEM’s southern sites should be paid, some faculty committee members questioned whether those in the south should be paid the same as those in Canada. A concern was expressed by one member “that paying someone to do regular FA work in Canadian terms might ‘spoil’ the Mexican or Trinidad & Tobagan appointee” (S. Smith, personal communication, December 14, 2004).

economic and/or political power enact their understandings of International Education on less affluent, less powerful communities. Such activities often bear unacknowledged and sometimes unconscious ideologies “so taken for granted that many researchers simply assume that they, as researchers, embody this ideal and are natural representatives of it when they work with other communities” (p. 2). Through examining the legacy of modernism from the perspectives of all of its heirs, Smith, Spurr and Willinsky remind us that the practices of International Education ought to be sensitive to a colonialist, imperialist history. Enactment of International Education that evolves from a theoretical heart, must also have an ethical basis, “a degree of educational accountability” (Willinsky, 1998, p. 16) that should characterize any discourse of possibility. That is, a theory of International Education must base its concepts on the conscious recognition and acknowledgement of its colonialist and imperialist heritage.

Smith, an indigenous scholar, declares, “From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism” (1999, p. 1). A researcher of Maori heritage, Smith writes about the tradition of non-Maori researchers who, “on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us”(p. 3) use their new knowledge to further their own purposes. Referring to Foucault, Smith suggests that these “travellers’ tales” contribute as much to the researchers’ knowledge of themselves and their own cultures and positions as they do to their understanding of the lives and realities of their hosts. Like Spurr, Smith informs us that there is “an alternative story...counter-stories...powerful forms of resistance” (p. 3). She reminds us “international” includes “indigenous peoples’...a term that internationalizes the experiences, the issues and the struggles of some of the world’s colonized peoples” (p. 7). If we are to conceptualize practices and scholarship that are ethical and inclusive (Beck, 2001), post-colonial, colonized voices must be part of the dialogical discourse we are imagining. (I believe these voices confirm Bakhtin’s (1981) prediction of voices “liberating themselves from the authority of another’s discourse” (p. 183). They are also evidence of agency and improvisation characteristic of the figured worlds described by Holland et al.). As Spurr reminds us to listen for (and to) the responsive voices of the colonized, Smith offers her own writing as an example. She claims that in her academic work she is

'researching back' in the same tradition of 'writing back' or 'talking back' that characterizes much of the post-colonial or anti-colonial literature. It has involved a 'knowingness of the colonizer' and a recovery of ourselves, an analysis of ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the institutions that support them. (p. 7)

Through Smith's "researching back" international educators and researchers can see ourselves as "others" see us.

Smith also alerts us to the "knowingness" of the colonized who make the return trip—she cites Gayatri Spivak, an "Asian/Indian" intellectual working in the United States. Spivak maintains that the question "Who will speak?" is less of a concern for "Third World" scholars such as herself, than the question, "Who will listen?" (p. 71). I understand this to mean that many post-colonial theorists seek reciprocal relationships, ones that enable them to unveil "hidden curricula" inherent in the traditional discourses of those with power and to move beyond "camouflaged response." As a discourse of possibility, these post-colonial voices, within a dialogical framework, can help expose the structures of power that Holland et al. (from Bakhtin) recognize are imbedded in language. At the very least, post-colonial discourse can help to reveal the discursive bases of Spurr's "sense of entrapment." Within the discourse of "researching back," "talking back" and requiring "the other" to listen, post-colonial theory opens a space for voices from both "here *and* there."

Gloria Anzaldúa presents a post-colonial perspective intended to help think beyond the "original traumas" of the colonization of Mexico, and, by extension, of Trinidad & Tobago (2002, p. 553). Anzaldúa, who identifies as a "chicana" American lesbian of indigenous Mexican and European descent, discusses the consequences of inheriting and/or assuming a stance that places one at an intercultural intersection. She, like Holland et al., seeks generative possibilities in such locations:

According to Jung, if you hold opposites long enough without taking sides a new identity emerges. As you make your way through life, nepantla<sup>6</sup> itself becomes the place where you live in most of the time—home. Nepantla is the site of transformation, the place where different

<sup>6</sup> "Nepantla" is an indigenous Central American word for an in-between space.

perspectives come in to conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures. Nepantla is the zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium between your outer expression of change and your inner relationship to it. (pp. 548-549)

Anzaldúa offers us a name and a place for the intersection of various theories and their apparent contradictions. Through “nepantla” she recalls Aoki, Holland et al. and Yon, expressing from an indigenous, post-colonial position a “condition of negotiability” as articulated by Wenger (1998). Octavio Paz, poet laureate from Mexico, touched on the tensions of these ambiguous international, historical relationships in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech:

In Mexico, the Spaniards encountered history as well as geography. That history is still alive: it is a present rather than a past. The temples and gods of pre-Columbian Mexico are a pile of ruins, but the spirit that breathed life into that world has not disappeared; it speaks to us in the hermetic language of myth, legend, forms of social coexistence, popular art, customs. Being a Mexican writer means listening to the voice of that present, that presence. Listening to it, speaking with it, deciphering it: expressing it...After this brief digression we may be able to perceive the peculiar relation that *simultaneously binds us to and separates us from* [italics added] the European tradition. (1990, p. 3)

Paz asks us to recognize this “peculiar relation” of the past and the present, which both binds *and* separates. Like Anzaldúa, Aoki, Holland et al., he recognizes that contradictory positions or conditions co-exist. As a voice from a colonized nation that hosts the program that is the subject of this study, Paz provides an important challenge to the hegemony of the “European tradition.” He and other Mexican scholars (Fuentes, 1997, Castellanos, 1990) honour indigenous history and the “language of myth” that has helped to shape Mexican identity and influence Mexico’s colonial relationships and post-colonial responses.

From Trinidad & Tobago, the other host country for the program under study, V.S. Naipaul (2001) describes a nation of “mimic men,” a people who have taken the language of the colonizers, and following Bakhtin, with other people’s intentions, “lie about themselves, and lie to themselves, since it is their only resource” (p. 8). Naipaul posits that this “mimicking” is a consequence of “colonial shame and fantasy,” recalling Smith’s assertion of the “knowingness of the colonizer.” Derek Walcott, on the other



hand, urges us to consider respectfully the resilience and ingenuity of the people of Trinidad & Tobago, a perspective which is compatible with Smith's reference to her community's "recovery of [them]selves." "Talking back" in his Nobel Laureate speech, Walcott said,

Deprived of their original languages, the captured and indentured tribes create their own, accreting and secreting fragments of an old, an epic vocabulary, from Asia and from Africa, but to an ancestral, an ecstatic rhythm in the blood that cannot be subdued by slavery or indenture...this process of renaming, of finding new metaphors, is the same process that the poet faces every morning of his working day, making his own tools...even renaming himself. ...these echoes...they are not decayed but strong. (1992, p. 4)

In contrast to Naipaul's impression of a population degraded, Walcott acknowledges a culture generated from fragments left by its colonizers, but experiences this population as "ecstatic...new...strong." Walcott also recalls Anzaldúa's "nepantla" and the concepts of dialogism, improvisation and agency in figured worlds as he recognizes one (diverse) culture emerging from several—from "fragments" of Asia and Africa, these people "create their own." As post colonial-writers who speak from similar origins, Naipaul and Walcott challenge us to hold simultaneously their contradictory images of a community composed of varied cultures, over-ridden by another.

Added to this ambiguity is the voice of Trinidadian Canadian writer, Dionne Brand:

To the The Door of No Return which is illuminated in the consciousness of Blacks in the Diaspora there are no maps. This door is not mere physicality. It is a spiritual location. It is also perhaps a psychic destination. Since leaving was never voluntary, return was, and still may be, an intention, however deeply buried. There is as it says no way in; no return. (2001, p. 1)

Like Anzaldúa's "zone between changes," Paz's "spirit...that has not disappeared," Brand identifies the "spiritual location" and "psychic destination" of diasporic populations. These "imagined communities" (Benedict, 1983) produce (ambiguous) post-modern discourses from imagined and geographic colonized sites.

Closer to home, post-colonial scholars remind us that our *intranational* relationships bear a history that stands as a reminder of the modernist conceptions of nation which according to Beck (2001) International Education has inherited. For

example, the experiences of Dr. Roy Miki and his view of “nation” and “nationality” is born of being exiled in Canada, the country of his birth and treated as an anti-national in a nation that should have protected him. As an adult, an academic and a writer, Miki (1998), referring to Margaret Atwood’s *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972) and its discussion of the Canadian literary canon, writes, “The unabashedly unqualified erasure of Canadians of Japanese ancestry unsettles: no attention whatsoever [is given] to the specific ‘Canadian predicament’ of their uprooting, dispossession, even deportation, as the direct consequence of xenophobic Canadian policy” (p. 101). “Writing back,” Miki informs us that his nation is one that is racialized and for many, inhospitable. This experience is shared by Ted Aoki whose family was also relocated as a result of *The Canadian War Measures Act of 1941*. Aoki (2000) describes “the psychic walls and constraints that kept us caged in or caged out, depending on one’s perspective—unwanted strangers in our own homeland” (p. 67). Both writers describe a community within a nation, “caged in or caged out,” entrapped, as Spurr has suggested, in an identity defined by others, and defined by erasure. Miki writes extensively about the ways race and racial politics influence the concept of nation in Canada and suggests that not only has racial difference affected the identities of people of colour but has also helped Euro-Canadians to define ourselves, (I speak here as a Euro-Canadian) in relation to “others.” For both Aoki and Miki, nationality represents “[a] place of ambivalence...of opposing views, and positions” (Yon, 2000, p. 127). When considering nationality, and who and how “nation” figures in the theoretical framework of International Education, and in the program under study, such *intranational* voices are vital to the conceptualization of the field.

Derek Walcott (1986) adds to the concept of nationality, particularly for those who may, like Aoki and others, be “caged out” or like Brand, have no maps. In his epic poem, *Schooner Flight*, Walcott “talks back” to the modernist concept of a fixed and essentialized idea of nation/nationality and the experience of some marginalized citizens. Echoing Benedict Anderson, Walcott writes “I had no nation now but the imagination” (1986, p. 350).

## Social Theories of Learning

Education, in its deepest sense and at whatever age it takes place, concerns the opening of identities—exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state...[E]ducation must strive to open new dimensions for the negotiation of the self. [It] is not merely formative—it is transformative.

(Wenger, 1998, p. 263)

Wenger makes direct connection between learning/education, and the formation of identity. In fact, Jean Lave and he maintain, “learning and a sense of identity are inseparable” (Lave & Wenger, p. 115). In articulating a social theory of learning (1998), Wenger elaborates on the ways learning occurs through “our lived experience of participation in the world” (p. 3). He describes how the components of meaning, practice, community and identity must be integrated for the social process of learning and knowing to be effective.

As with other conceptual frameworks in this chapter, Wenger has developed his theories through building on existing discourses. He integrates theories of social structure, that is, those that emphasize cultural systems, discourses and history with theories of situated experience that “give primacy to the dynamics of everyday existence, improvisation, coordination and interactional choreography. They emphasize agency and intentions” (p. 13). Just as social theories of learning are set within other concepts and discourses employed in my theoretical approach to International Education, so Wenger believes that “learning as participation is certainly caught in the middle” (p. 13), dependent on our actions and interactions within the proscriptions of culture and history. Taking a structuralist point of view, Wenger notes that social learning has the potential to reproduce and entrench social structures and power relationships. We learn who we are and we know (and maintain or are maintained in) our place. But Wenger also believes that experience through participation enables us to construct new meaning and in so doing, we demonstrate agency. Agency and improvisation are elements of Wenger's social theory of learning, just as they are elements of Holland et al.'s figured worlds.

Wenger examines how learning takes place through participation, and the nature of this learning, in the communities to which we belong. As with the figured worlds of Holland et al., Wenger acknowledges that each of us belongs to more than one

community and therefore each of us may participate in learning through various identities. The meanings we get through our participation or practice in the communities within which we interact, are necessarily negotiated. That is, because social circumstances are constantly changing, so must our relationships adapt to these changes. In the adaptation lies the negotiation, and through negotiation we establish and reestablish identity. In this negotiation we find agency.

As individuals participate in more than one community of practice, so do different communities interact with each other. Wenger describes what he calls “boundary practices” where communities of practice articulate with each other, or the rest of the world. When thinking of the philosophies and practices of International Education, I find relevance in Wenger’s perspective. He notes that there are circumstances where one community may become “completely self-involved...insulated from the practices they are supposed to connect” (p. 115). This recalls, for me, Cushner and Mahon’s (2002) assessment of overseas student teachers’ achievements, without consideration of their hosts’ experience. On the other hand, for Wenger, boundary practices also represent interdisciplinary practices whose evolution grows from efforts to bring two or more disciplines together. Although this is not always successful, according to Wenger, “this risk is also their potential” (p. 115).

Wenger has an educator’s respect for the potential of ambiguous situations. Like Aoki, he recognizes that although ambiguity may be uncomfortable, metonymic, it is an inevitable condition for the negotiation of meaning. The interview data shows the student teachers in this study understand this phenomenon when discussing their experiences out-of-country. In Liam’s words, “You look like an idiot and then you learn afterwards why you looked like such an idiot!” (Liam, 3, p. 24). Wenger believes that the option for negotiation within interdisciplinary—or in this case international—circumstances must be intrinsic for the vitality of the community. He says, “ambiguity is not simply an obstacle to overcome, it is an inherent condition to be put to work...[an]...occasion for the production of new meaning” (p. 84). Wenger does not romanticize the “opportunities” of ambiguity, nor does he imply that effective communities of practice are inherently compatible. He says that the “connotation of peaceful coexistence...[is] not assumed” (p.77). Instead, he stresses that it is the negotiation of the joint enterprise that keeps the community together and through which learning (and identity) can happen. Wenger’s

theories help us to understand inter-relationships among diverse communities—that just as the practice is defined by each group member’s response to internal dynamics, so does the community itself relate to the context of the world within which it operates.

Wenger’s ideas have their greatest relevance to this study through his ability to make connections between learning and identity. “Processes of identification define which meanings matter to us” (p. 197). We have, he says “the ability, facility and legitimacy to contribute to, take responsibility for, and shape the meanings that matter within a social configurations...and our positions in them” (p. 197).

## **Summary**

I have proposed an amalgamation of several theories on which to base and examine the practices of International Education, and from which to guide its development. This theoretical amalgam serves as a dialogical framework, involving current discourses of International Education, contemporary identity theories, social learning theories, and post-colonial writing and critique—all applied to enable a discourse of possibilities. The proposed framework provides a context for International Education and a way to negotiate its “pedagogy as enacted in metonymic spaces” (Aoki, 1996). It brings to those spaces, a theoretical and ethical stance from which to assess the objectives and practices of the International Teacher Education Module (ITEM) within the figured world of International Education. I will attempt to apply this theoretical and ethical framework to the analysis of the data to follow.

## Chapter 3. Methodology

### Preliminary Inquiry

In the spring of 2003, I conducted a pilot study with five ITEM 8 teachers who had recently completed their final practicum in the ITEM. They had spent *Education 401/2* in Oaxaca, Mexico.<sup>7</sup> I chose as varied a group as I could from the 15 students who completed the program. Three were women, one was a primary teacher, two were intermediate teachers, one taught middle school and one, secondary. Two were Euro that is, white Canadians, and the other three were of east Asian ancestry. All had been recommended to the British Columbia College of Teachers for certification by the PDP, pending successful completion of *Education 404*. I interviewed them each, individually, for approximately one hour. I also conducted an email interview with a School Associate who was also a graduate of the PDP. She had been an SA for student teachers from other programs as well as for two ITEM students. From the results of those interviews I was able to identify several themes that assisted me in formulating the questions for my subsequent research. (see Appendix C)

### Research Questions and Focus

As the ITEM continues from year-to-year, the program has kept the same name and used consistent language, evident in the objectives stated in the ITEM student handbooks and yearly program reports. In its 1<sup>st</sup>-year it was the newest module with the newest theme. Now, 10 years later, the ITEM is considered among the four or five older established programs of the 14 PDP modules.

Because I have been involved from the start, I have witnessed the ITEM's evolution from a locally based project to a program where students spend nine weeks as guests in southern countries. In the hands of nine different Faculty Associates, the

<sup>7</sup> In Oaxaca, the student teachers are placed with English speaking School Associates. The Mexican students in these classrooms are either studying English as a discrete subject area, and/or they are enrolled in English immersion programs. The ITEM student teachers, therefore, teach in English. Their home-stays, however, are with Mexican families who generally do not speak English.

program has changed over the years although, as noted, the stated themes and objectives have remained basically the same.

My role has changed as well. As a Faculty Associate, I shared the responsibility for the design and implementation of the original curriculum. As a coordinator, I assumed administrative duties. I placed students in local classrooms and oversaw withdrawals of students who were not yet ready for certification. I was available to offer suggestions and to provide some curricular support, but for the most part, mine was an observational role.

More recently, as the instructor for the complementary *Education 370* course, I have once again been involved in curriculum design and implementation for the ITEM. In this capacity I have worked closely with the Faculty Associates and faculty member to provide a course that is compatible with and relevant to the module, and responsive to the needs and interests of the students. In this role, I have returned to active engagement with the ITEM student teachers.

As a former coordinator, and now, as the *Education 370* instructor, and through my preliminary study, many questions have developed for me with regard to the program's conceptual claims, and what, in fact, happens. These questions and interests have helped me to formulate the following research questions:

- What are the conceptual bases for International Education as it is understood among academics and among the ITEM and its participants?
- What does the ITEM enact, relative to its expressed objectives and themes, and how does this lived experience relate to the philosophical and educational intents of the program?
- What is the value and some potential applications of International Education for all PDP students as well as for students and educators in the countries that host the ITEM?
- What are some ways of further conceptualizing the field of International Education through the experiences and contributions of the ITEM?

Because I have been involved with the ITEM from the beginning, much of my analysis is based on my "insider status." I have access to, or have kept documents such as yearly reports, handbooks, student teacher evaluations of the program, and

correspondence and communications with ITEM graduates and other involved colleagues over the years.

Much of the data for this dissertation is drawn from interviews with six of the 32 ITEM 9 students, before, during and after their semester in Trinidad & Tobago or Oaxaca, Mexico, and from interviews with six educators from the southern sites. Interviews set in the contexts of the host countries are informed by media reports of local socio-economic and educational concerns, and by literature from national and expatriate writers. Conversations and communications with former ITEM students, local School Associates, and Faculty Associates who are also ITEM graduates, also inform this work. Additionally, International Education as enacted by the ITEM is considered with other concepts and programs that identify as International Education.

### **Researcher Biography**

The assumptions and purposes of the researcher always find their way into a research act, and they always make a difference in what knowledge is produced.

(Kincheloe, 2004, p. 7)

The research questions reflect personal and professional concern for the integrity of the ITEM, and for my sense of responsibility in addressing this concern. By extension, my interest in this research is also a reflection of my own personal and professional sense of integrity. Are we (am I) doing what we say we are doing? Are we (am I) who we say we are?

My personal background is representative of the mainstream culture of my generation here in British Columbia. I am a baby boomer of British ancestry. My parents were middle class and I was born and raised in a more or less British enclave, 15 kilometres north of Victoria, on Vancouver Island. It wasn't until I made the decision to come out as a lesbian in my late twenties, and to live with the consequences of that decision, that I began to take an informed interest in those who were not of the cultural mainstream. Personally and professionally, I have attempted as much as possible, given the built-in assumptions of my upbringing, to recognize power imbalances and uneven privilege inherent in our institutions—political, educational, legal and social—and in the intersections of those institutions. As a classroom teacher, I began to recognize



the various ways our public school system reinforces the status quo, not only for those with privilege, but also for those who have less representation and/or power. When I lived in Japan, I was assumed to be a heterosexual American. My responses to being (mis)recognized in this particular way helped me to be more aware of how our institutions influence cross-cultural (and other) perceptions and self-perceptions and how identity and relationships are often initiated and reinforced. When thinking about research I am mindful of Kincheloe's caution that "an important aspect of [this] work...involves coming to understand the social construction of self, the influence of selfhood on perception, and the influence of perception on the nature of inquiry" (2004, p. 6).

When I returned to Canada, I was reminded by a woman-of-colour, originally from a poor, southern Spanish-speaking country, that my presence in Japan, contrary to what I had assumed, may not have been welcome. She offered that while most Japanese people may have presented a respectful face to me, their special treatment of my white, English-speaking self might have covered a more resentful truth. I had not, in fact, assumed that I was universally welcome in Japan. I often wondered about my pseudo-celebrity status, and was uncomfortable with the enthusiasm for and accompanying objectification of my particular foreignness. In a letter to Dr. Kelleen Toohey, a professor friend in Canada, I wrote,

*Sometimes I think I function as a kind of hood ornament...I wear lots of make-up and skirts and lady-shoes and I suspect I represent or rather validate the English this school has to offer. It's the oddest experience...Even though my status is that of a celebrity...if the real me were to come out from behind this lipstick I'd be sent packing. (personal communication, June 8, 1987)*

My Chicana friend helped to revive one of many questions I still have about (mostly) white, English speaking North Americans working and traveling abroad. And I wonder, what are the implications of our presence in the countries that host the ITEM and for the ways we see ourselves? In the letter to Dr. Toohey I added,

*I'm struck by the expatriate community—well-off and privileged and treated in a way few Japanese ever experience. Many declare they'll never go home. Many hold their deferential hosts in contempt while accepting, expecting, then demanding the hospitality afforded us here. (personal communication, June 8, 1987)*

This sustained mindfulness of our foreign presence in poor, brown countries such as Trinidad & Tobago, and Mexico has been brought to bear on my approach to the research here.

When the ITEM began, Erika, Ian and I were concerned with helping to develop awareness in student teachers of the diversity within local classrooms, and ways to incorporate what each student brings into the prescribed curriculum. As the ITEM has moved its focus from students in local classrooms, to our own experience as Canadians in “foreign” classrooms, I have reflected often on the comments of my Chicana acquaintance. A question that I have tried to keep in mind and encouraged the student teachers to examine is, “Who do you think you are?” When considering the “inter” space of our international quest, I think it’s important also to ask, “Who do *they* think we are?”

## **Methodology**

As a methodology, I am most philosophically aligned with bricolage as it is introduced by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and further informed by Kincheloe (2004). “The researcher-as-bricoleur-theorist works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3), confronting and applying the ambiguity inherent in such an approach to the nature of the subject under study. In other words, like the identity theories of Holland et al., and Wenger’s theories of social learning, bricolage requires a dialogic approach, one that assumes the benefits and ability to hold more than one perspective at a time. And, like Aoki’s prediction for conceptualizing International Education as a metonymic space, bricolage, according to Kincheloe, also “creates a space” for “possibility” (2004, p. 21). Considering the theoretical proposal that International Education “practices” ambiguity and negotiation as one of its “cultural forms,” bricolage serves as a compatible methodology through which to negotiate and interpret diverse research data. “[T]he bricoleur works to embrace and learn from various modes of knowledge production, including philosophical inquiry as well as historical and literary modes of scholarship” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 15). Compatible with the idea of simultaneously holding more than one perspective, bricolage also supports the possibility, as understood through Anzaldúa’s “nepantla,” for something new to emerge.

Denzin and Lincoln describe the bricoleur as a researcher who gathers data through “a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to observing to interpreting personal and historical documents, to intensive self-reflection and introspection” (p. 2). Accordingly, I have conducted my analysis through several methods with the methodological understanding that diverse perspectives help to develop a deeper, “thicker” concept of the subject at hand (Kincheloe, 2004). In this research I have included reflections from graduates on their work as new professionals, relative to the themes they examined as student teachers in the ITEM, and the ways they have attempted to address these philosophies in their subsequent practice. In addition to conference presentations and videotaped interviews from before these new teachers accepted classroom assignments, I have received reflections and questions in the form of phone calls, conversations over dinner, emails, forwarded copies of applications to Masters programs, and letters of reference to support the ITEM in nominations for various awards. I have also studied musical traditions, poetry and prose of the countries that host the ITEM. From the “orchestration of voices” considered by such a methodology, bricolage has provided the varied data necessary to develop my authorial stance.

The artifacts or “archives” noted above, in combination with interviews, observation, journal notations, photographs, the arts and literature has provide effective triangulation to help “connect the parts to the whole” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). For example, an email from the Faculty Associate in Trinidad & Tobago responding to a bureaucratic inquiry also commented on the “cultural” aspects of the ITEM’s life there, beyond the walls of the schools:

*As happens during travels in most countries, events occur which are a bit beyond your understanding. Saturday morning, for example, I awoke at 6:30 a.m., after being out late at a concert, to the indescribably loud booming of soca music. It was so loud that, even inside the concrete walls of my hotel, I could feel the bass thudding in my chest. It turned out that a flatbed truck loaded with speakers was driving down the street to advertise a street party happening in the next block. Some of the students walked down to see what was happening and found a group promoting the street party handing out free beer and rum while scantily-clad women (wearing "booty shorts") pranced around. Police wearing jeans, t-shirts and bullet proof vests hung out, stroking their AK-47s and gawking at the women. Using perfect cultural sensitivity and tact, a student questioned one of the organizers about the activity. "Why are you*

*here at the ass crack of dawn making this god awful noise?" to which the organizer responded, "Carnival is coming!" It was a wonderful opportunity for cultural learning. The students came to the understanding that, like the weather, there are two seasons in Trinidad: Carnival, which lasts two days, and the preparation for Carnival, which lasts the rest of the year. I am so happy to see the rich learning experiences the students are profiting from here in Trinidad. (email from Paul Bishop, 3-months before Carnival, November 2003)*

As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) predict, the research "changes and takes new forms as different tools, methods and techniques are added to the puzzle" (p. 2). Paul's email helped me to develop my interview questions. It helped me, through its humour, to listen carefully to the informants and to examine their contexts, attuned for the unpredictable.

## **Methods**

This study of the educational and pedagogical influences of the International Teacher Education Module on its student teachers was undertaken through qualitative means. Just as the student teachers are expected to question and re-question their teaching decisions, based on the responses of their students to the lessons they teach (Holborn, 1988; Henderson, 1992; Smith, 2004), so the qualitative researcher, in proceeding with her project, continues to critique her own methods. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) remind us, "research design should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project" (Hammersley & Atkinson, quoted in Maxwell, 1996, p. 2). Maxwell reinforces this by adding, "Each component of the design may need to be reconsidered or modified in response to new developments or to changes in some other component" (1996, p. 2). Reflective methodology was selected to suit reflective practice, and, in the case of the ITEM, to examine an education program that purports to encourage reflexivity in its graduates.

### ***Semi-structured Interviews***

#### *Student Teachers*

From the 32 students who were to spend their first semester in Oaxaca, Mexico, or in Trinidad & Tobago, I invited six to participate as interview informants. All six of the students accepted the invitation. As with the preliminary study, I wanted to include a

broad representation of culture, gender, language proficiency and teaching areas. Just as the researcher is “shaped by...her personal history, gender, social class, race and ethnicity” (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 3) these characteristics are germane to identities and data of the research informants. These traits influence the status conferred on them in the out-of-country context. Given the colonial past of Trinidad & Tobago, for instance, its history of indentured labour among its Indian population and slavery among its African descendants, white and “brown” student teachers will have significantly different experiences there, both in the students’ reactions to the host community, and in the host community’s reactions to the students. Similarly, monolingual students in Mexico, or white male students will experience teaching and social perceptions differently than those of young women or Canadian students of Asian background. Mexico has a complicated history with its more or less white American neighbour and its Spanish colonial past, and these circumstances will have bearing on how the community in Oaxaca perceives its Canadian visitors, and the effect this has on the Canadians. In my preliminary research, one student teacher of Chinese background noted, “in a way I was confused about what I was, Canadian or Chinese or Japanese, and when the [Mexican] kids listened to my stories, they were a bit confused about whether I was Chinese or Canadian or Japanese”(Dan, May 2003). Another informant from that group concurred. She said, “I got so into the culture, and all of a sudden, I wasn’t really Canadian, and I wasn’t really Chinese, either” (I-Wen, May 2003).

Unless indicated otherwise, the student teacher informants were heterosexual, between the ages of 22- and 30-years-old and English speaking. I have noted other features that I feel distinguished some of the informants from the other students in the module and that position them in particular ways in the research with respect to gender, ethnicity, and so on. I interviewed each student three times—before, during and after their semester in the south (see Tables 2 and 3).

**Table 2.****Oaxacan Student Teacher Informants**

<b>Name (gender)</b>	<b>Stature</b>	<b>Cultural Background</b>	<b>Self Identity</b>	<b>Academic Background</b>
Liam (male)	6', blond, blue-eyed, athletic, white	Irish-Canadian	1 <sup>st</sup> generation working-class Irish immigrant.	History, Political Science
Evelyn (female)	5'4," dark curly hair, dark eyes and complexion	Castillian Spanish mother, Chinese-Trini Father. Venezuelan born. Canadian educated.	Latina/Venezuelan. Bilingual Spanish/English, culturally diverse.	Linguistics, Education
Don (male)	5'5," shaved head, blue eyes, compact, fit, white	Scottish born, raised in Canada.	Working class Scots/Canadian, gay, multicultural orientation, bilingual English/Spanish	Architecture, Engineering

**Table 3.****Trinidad & Tobago Student Teacher Informants**

<b>Name (gender)</b>	<b>Stature</b>	<b>Cultural Background</b>	<b>Self Identity</b>	<b>Academic Background</b>
Karen (female)	5'2," black hair & eyes, slender, brown skin	Canadian born, Indian/Punjabi heritage	Sikh/Indian, bilingual English/Punjabi, Canadian	History, Poli/Sci, Education
Diane (female)	5'6" blond hair, blue eyes, stocky/plump, white	Several generations Anglo-Canadian.	Canadian, monolingual. Multicultural family—white and aboriginal siblings	Early Childhood Education, P.E., Education
Rahim (male)	6', black hair (varied) and eyes, brown skin.	Libyan born Bangladeshi origins, Canadian educated.	Multilingual, multicultural upbringing and outlook.	Math/Science

**School Associates**

Over the years, many of the local School Associates have provided input, from their classroom perspectives, with regard to the ITEM student teachers during their long practicum. I was interested to hear the perspectives of School Associates in Mexico and Trinidad & Tobago with regard to their understandings of the program and its influence in the south. In addition to observing in several classrooms, I audio-taped School

Associates and an administrator. In one case I conducted an email interview with a faculty member from the local university. The descriptions of the educators from the south are detailed in Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4.**

***Oaxacan Informants***

<b>Name (gender)</b>	<b>Teaching Experience</b>	<b>Teaching Assignment</b>	<b>International Experience</b>
Maria (female)	Beginning teacher	Public School, Secondary French/English	One semester in the PDP at SFU
Debra (female)	8 years	Catholic Private School, elementary	Mexican born, Mexican father, English mother. Bilingual Eng/Sp
Selina (female)	6 years	Private secondary school, English, Tourism	Canadian International College, Canadian homestay

*Note.* All of the educators who served as informants in Oaxaca spoke Spanish as their first language. All are competent in English and one is fluently bilingual.

**Table 5.**

***Trinidad & Tobagan Informants***

<b>Name (gender)</b>	<b>Teaching Experience</b>	<b>Teaching Assignment</b>	<b>International Experience</b>
Martha (female)	10 + years, secondary	Secondary Social Studies, Acting Dean of Discipline	Bachelors Degree from U. of Western Ontario. Masters student.
Jean (female)	10 + years elementary	Principal, elementary school	Not sure.
Sammy (male)	Not sure. Sammy worked as ITEM's site coordinator	University of the West Indies, Education	Visits to Canada, currently also at Thompson Rivers U.

*Note.* Trinidad & Tobago is an English speaking country. All of the educators who served as informants in Trinidad & Tobago speak English as their first language.

Each set of interviews was informed by the previous interviews. I then reflected on their implications for the ongoing research. Throughout the process, "individual constructions [were] elicited and refined...through interaction *between and among* investigator and respondents" (Guba & Lincoln, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 111). The most salient example of this is my decision to use, with permission, the student teachers'

*Education 370* assignments as data. When I first proposed this research project, I had not yet been offered the position of instructor for *Education 370*. When I accepted the job, I realized that my informants would also be my students. However, I did not assume, at the time, that their assignments might have bearing on my research. When it became clear to me that there was important, thoughtful data in the *Education 370* responses, I applied for permission from the SFU Ethics Office to use this data, and subsequently received permission from the students. Consequently, their audio-taped reflections are reinforced (and sometimes contradicted) by their written work, providing a broader, deeper sampling of data.

The data from the assignments and from the interviews allows for a process Geertz calls “tacking” (1976, p. 235). This “tacking” is further clarified by Maxwell as checking “back and forth between the different components of the design, assessing the implications of purposes, theory, research questions, methods and validity threats for one another” (1996, p. 4). As a methodological approach, it is consistent with the theoretical ideas on which this research is grounded.

### **Observations**

Kidder (1981) has noted that observational technique “has the flexibility to yield insight into new realities or new ways of looking at old realities” (Adler & Adler, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 382). It is also worth noting that observation is available as a means to collect data in situations where electronic recording equipment or other means are unavailable. During one visit with the ITEM 6 to a village outside Oaxaca, I found myself spending the night with the students on a concrete floor, with no electricity, chatting by candlelight. As their PDP coordinator at that time, I was able to “observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider’s identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership” (Adler & Adler, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 380). Similarly, my hike through the jungle with the students in Trinidad & Tobago, provided extraordinary possibilities for observation and, according to the Adlers, helped establish me as both an “active-member researcher” and a “peripheral-member-researcher” (p. 380).



I was involved with various extra-curricular activities at each site and conducted in-school observations. As one of the methods in the bricolage, this ethnographic approach is consistent with an interdisciplinary perspective. Although some researchers argue that ethnography is richly productive of theory (Toohey, 2005, personal notes), Stuart Hall presents a contradictory understanding in the forward to *Elusive Culture: Schooling, Race and Identity in Global Times*:

Ethnography is, of course, a fieldwork methodology well developed in anthropology. It has been widely adapted to more contemporary institutional situations, including classroom studies. Its great merit is that it shows in detail and in depth how subjective meanings mediate the micro-social processes involved in everyday social life in something approaching their natural settings. Precisely because of their grounding in the specific and the particular, ethnographies are hard to generalize or to theorize. They enrich—rather than produce—concepts and theories. (Hall, 2000, p. x)

Hall's comments bring to mind an earlier quote from Linda Tuwihai Smith, who suggested that if the theory is good, we don't have to create new ones—we can participate in enriching existing theory. Kincheloe (2004) supports this view. He adds, “the knowledge and ways of knowing of non-western<sup>8</sup> peoples...helps bricoleurs reshape and sophisticate social theory, research methods [and] interpretative strategies” (p. 15). This research then, as ethnography, is intended to add to and enrich the conceptual bases for the field of International Education through the voices of the educators from the south as well as from the student teachers and participants in Canada. The intent is to broaden the contributions to the various complementary and contradictory discourses of possibility, articulated in Chapter 2.

Given that this research is intended to help inform these discourses I have again taken note of Daniel Yon's (2000) study of secondary high school students: “Those we research may internalize the language of the researcher and talk and act through the concepts and meanings that language produces” (p. 2). That is, in the process of ethnographic research, in the language of the unstructured interviews, participant

<sup>8</sup> It is debatable whether Trinidad & Tobagans or Oaxacans would identify as “non-western.” All southern informants did, however, acknowledge difference relative to culture, economy and privilege. Some described themselves and their compatriots as “Third World,” relative to the SFU visitors. Southern participants, furthermore, do not contribute to the planned curriculum or stated objectives and themes of the ITEM.

observations and particularly in the discourse of *Education 370*, the researcher influence on the understandings and contributions of the informants is of concern. Yon reminds us, recalling Michel Foucault's notion of *power/knowledge* (1981), that in the process of qualitative research as it seeks to understand and to know, discursive research and its application "is both enabling and constraining" (2000, p. 3). How might the researcher's questions introduce limits to the respondent's parameters of thought? Dorothy Smith writes (1990):

Thus, a method inquiring into the social relations of the setting to make these explicit in description must begin with the language uses of the setting, and with the speech of those who are members of the setting to the [researcher]. As they tell her what is going on, and as they explain, name, and explicate ostensibly, their teaching is continually informed by their implicit knowledge of the organization of the setting and the sense of what they say expresses that and depends on that. They can hear how *the [researcher's] questions do not quite make sense* [italics added]. (p. 118)

In other words, as much as I needed to be sensitive to the influence the ITEM and I had on the student teachers' use of "our" discourse, at the same time, I had to learn, through the responses of the students and of the informants at the southern sites, "the language uses of the setting." I had visited the ITEM's southern sites for just a few days in previous years. Although I was there for a full week at each site for the purposes of this research, relative to the program and my connection to the community, in the eyes of the southerners I was still just "dropping in." This visitor status is significant to my understanding of the students', Faculty Associates' and School Associates' contexts. For my questions to make sense, I had to try, as Smith says, to let the participants teach me. A reminder came in an email from the Faculty Associate in Trinidad & Tobago:

*You don't know about the lizards living in the students' kitchen in residence, or the incessant mosquitoes that feast on your ankles. I haven't told you of all the times I have forgotten my umbrella and been soaked in a tropical downpour. You have not shared my joy being the ear (and shoulder) for 15 students living in very close quarters who must share a bathroom, kitchen, and PHONE! (I say 15 students because Jason, as the sole male student, is living on the same compound, but in a different building. He can step out any time he wants.) You don't know what my typical day to day is like: running from school to school in 35C temperatures, ensuring that SAs and Administrators understand the nature of the work with student teachers, while reassuring the students*

*that, "Yes, you can do this!" (P. Bishop, personal communication, November 10, 2003)*

Although I brought to this research eight years of experience with the ITEM, my context, as noted, is distinct from that of other participants. It was my duty, then, to keep in mind, as Smith states, that the questions I asked might not have made sense to those to whom they were directed. This circumstance not only had bearing on what data was gathered, but how that data was understood.

At the same time, because of my extensive experience with the ITEM, I have a history with this program that, within the larger context, does deem me a "member." Given the program's emphasis on sustaining connections among the ITEM alumni and faculty, and considering the appreciation the former student and current SA has for the elders of the program, the participants in this study understood that although I wasn't necessarily immediate family, I was, in the tradition of families, part of the clan. In the tradition of qualitative researchers described by Geertz (1988), I am present in the history of the ITEM, and, in this research, "presen[t] in the interpretive text" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 9).

As I searched and researched, like student teachers who become transformed by their engagement with/in their practica, so did I, the researcher, become changed by the research. After listening to the tapes of interviews with students in the southern sites, I wrote:

*I hear my own thinking develop as I chat on the tapes. Methodological questions start to pop up—I am changed by the interview process. Just as the students, from place to place, semester to semester are evolving their understandings of themselves as "International Teachers," I am changing in my understandings of the process, of what I think it might mean, and so my questions and my reception of their responses becomes different. In the last of 11 transcriptions from the south, E. says, "And I think I'm still working it...I think once I get back to Vancouver and then I start comparing my experiences here, and then teaching there, then I'll be able to have a set definition, or maybe just a working one for every different place I go..." (Nov, p. 1). And I respond, "I think you're going to be able to actually, you and the students here, to participate in defining it." So how do we account for that—being changed by the process of the research? (Jan 30, 2005, field notes)*

New questions were generated from my responses to the data and to the theory I was considering. Through this dialogical process, as I progressed through my research and my work with the ITEM 9 student teachers, I was involved in changing, or at least affecting, the very program I was researching *and* being changed by it. This kind of participatory research is sometimes described as “omphalitic”:

Maturity, and ultimately progress, come to a field of human study only if its practitioners periodically turn backward and fold inward upon themselves to examine their fundamental philosophical and methodological presuppositions. (Wengle, 1988, p. 157)

Personally and professionally, the turning backward and re-examination felt less a folding in and more like a kind of educational and theoretical spiraling, the “autopoietic process” described by Kincheloe:

[Reflective processes] allow for new insights and ideas to emerge as concepts are viewed in light of new perspectives and different ways of making meaning. In this context an autopoietic process is constructed as new modes of knowledge emerge in the interaction of these multidimensional perspectives. (2004, p. 27)

Kincheloe goes on to recommend constructing one’s research so that this process is inherent, in order to account for the interdisciplinarity and to “synergize the research process” (p. 27) deliberately. I still frequently return to problems and questions I have already considered, reflecting on the progress and evolution of the ITEM. I return looking outward, differently informed, from a different perspective, and I hope, with different understandings of that which I am investigating and developing simultaneously.

### ***Documents and Material Culture***

Since the ITEM’s inception student teachers and Faculty Associates alike have been encouraged to keep journals. In fact, graduates occasionally send emails that they identify as “ejournals.” These arrive at times of crisis, or times of celebration. Occasionally, the author writes just to process some pedagogical question and it works in their favour to have an audience. I have been lucky enough to be that audience off and on, over the years. An example of such an unexpected email is *Message from Switzerland* that arrived years after the student had graduated. She wrote from an international school for children of wealthy politicians. These students had been

previously expelled from other schools for various infractions including violence and drug use.

*Being over here, in a really crazy teaching environment (nothing like BC), teaching kids from all over the world, I keep using the strategies that we talked about throughout the [ITEM] program. Also, thank you so much for forcing us to reflect and keep a journal. Being out here in a small town with only three other teachers at the school, I can understand the importance of keeping myself in check with my own goals for myself as a teacher. (D. MacDonald, personal communication, June 5, 2001)*

A later email detailed the “crazy teaching environment,” and discussed the goals this young woman had negotiated for herself during her year in the ITEM. I contrast that with this subsequent message from another student in a stressful, bilingual/binational teaching environment: “Honestly, I just remember the people I met and the fun times I had in the ITEM. I can't honestly say I use much of what I learned there” (H. King, personal communication, October 22, 2002). The data, over the years and through various media, helps to provide a multidimensional picture of the program and its influence. Hodder says, “Texts can be used alongside other forms of evidence so that the particular biases of each can be understood and compared” (Hodder, 2000, p. 394). This, too, supports the methodology of the *bricolage*.

### **Arts Based Inquiry**

The arts of a people can represent for us various ways of being, learning, and communicating. Research is informed through experience with music, visual arts, poetry, dance and literature: “Artful stories are more than marketable commodities—they give shape and meaning to experience. Artists order and reconsider experience in order to learn and share something about themselves” (P. Diamond & C. Mullen, 1999, p. 16). Mexican novelists Carlos Fuentes and Elena Poniatowska, for example, describe lives, real and imagined, of the people of Mexico in their domestic relationships, and relative to to their (North) American neighbours. Similarly, Trinidadian authors such as Dionne Brand and Ramabai Espinet, now Canadian residents, “challenge and extend how we respond to life, deepening thought about the human condition” (p. 16) and more particularly, about the worlds of Trinidadians both in Trinidad & Tobago, and in their diasporic lives.

Some of the history and culture of Trinidad & Tobago can also be understood through its music and musicians. Musical innovation and expression inform us of the values and interests of a community. For example, the music of the Trinidadian steel pans, and their origins, connect directly to the country's colonial past. Similarly, the tradition of calypso has cultural and historical connections within the Caribbean and with the larger world. From the liner notes of "The Mighty Sparrow Volume Four," we learn that the singer/songwriter, Slinger Francisco, for decades has continued to provide, through calypso, "that special West Indian song form that is ever an ongoing commentary on politics, society, life and love" (1994). Although he did not complete his high school education, "[Francisco] kept on studying on his own throughout his life, as his intelligent lyrics and analyses of society have time and time again proven." His reputation is based not only on his musicality, but on his astute "social commentary" (1994). A recent email from a "Trini" Canadian friend, Artistic Director of Toronto's Caribana, 2003, stated

*One way to fully understand the Trinidadian psyche is to observe their music in relation to say the African American and the Jamaican. Our music, calypso, does not possess the pain of the blues and slow tedious rock back of the reggae. A people down pressed react in the song they sing. Trinidad's calypso has absolutely no pain about it; it rather makes a joke and folly at a situation. (Rhoma Spencer, personal email, February 26, 2005)*

The arts can be a means through which we can come to a more intimate understanding of our live(d) experience, either as audiences or as participants. "As artists, teacher researchers engage in re/vision, novelty, and reflexivity" (P. Diamond & C. Mullen, 1999, p. 20). As part of the *bricolage* of the research, I turned to these same sources for "subjective, evocative, and playful representations of as many indeterminate versions of reality as possible" (p. 23).

## **A Reminder**

There is a time that is always happening. The time that is lost or forgotten or deliberately misplaced...There is time in this archipelago that returns and returns because no one truly belongs here except the Arawak close to extinction and the Carib retreating into denser interiors down the South American Main. The rest are cargoes of human beings without a recognizable

landscape, whether they are slaves or masters.

(Dionne Brand, 1999, p. 36)

Many of the students and much of the population of Oaxaca are indigenous people. The ITEM participates in field studies to indigenous communities there. In Trinidad & Tobago, the indigenous population was exterminated. Among the current citizenry are racially mixed descendants of these people. Both countries have been colonized and both are poor, relative to Canada. To fly in for nine weeks in order to acquire an educational experience has moral and ethical implications for the ITEM, and for me as a researcher. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a Maori academic cited in Chapter 2 reminds us that “the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism” and that “[t]he word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (1999, p. 1). Although it would be a mistake to assume Smith’s point of view is universal among indigenous and/or colonized communities, it would be disrespectful to ignore it. Similarly, it is worth attending to our role in the reciprocity of the ITEM’s objectives through this reminder:

Many community projects require extensive community input. The implications of such input for impoverished communities under stress can be enormous. Every meeting, every activity, every visit to a home requires energy, commitment and protocols of respect...idealistic ideas about community collaboration and active participation need to be tempered with realistic assessments of a community’s resources and capabilities. (p. 140)

It is necessary always to be mindful not only of how the ITEM and I may have made assumptions about the universal value of and interest in International Education, but also that our presence there may be experienced, interpreted and expressed very differently by the host community from how it is understood by the Professional Development Program.

## **Summary**

From a preliminary inquiry with students from the ITEM 8, interview questions were formulated for the proposed research. I intended to examine the conceptual bases and actual practices of the program while locating it within and relating it to the larger field of International Education. My own history with the program established me as a

participant observer, an “old timer.” In this capacity, and also as the instructor for a complementary (and required) undergraduate course, I conducted semi-structured interviews, examined material and data from the program’s past, engaged in observation and relied on literature from and about the southern sites. Approaching the research as a *bricoleur* I attempted a broad and varied study to gather a rich set of data from which to conduct my analysis. Keeping in mind that I was participating in the very program I was critiquing, I also spent time at the southern sites, interviewing educators and visiting the communities there.

In the following chapter, I try to establish a context for the southern sites from the point of view of those who speak and live in those communities.



## Chapter 4. Setting the South

If you can live with the imaginary, you can understand the other man's viewpoint and civilization.

(Carlos Fuentes, 1984)

### The Setting

The student handbook for the ITEM, year 9, states that among its purposes the program

intends to examine the issues and challenges for teachers and students in British Columbia schools where diversity, Global Education, English-as-an-additional language and intercultural communication have become critical and integral components of classroom life and the curriculum. (2004, p. 2)

According to the handbook, participation in the ITEM enhances "awareness of the various factors that influence the education of students in culturally diverse educational settings" (p. 3). Given that this educational enhancement is predicated on the student teachers' "direct, lived experiences with members of another culture" (p. 7) in either Trinidad & Tobago or Oaxaca, Mexico, and that the conceptual bases for the program are grounded in these experiences, I begin my analysis with an examination of data from School Associates and educators from the host sites in the south.

### *Trinidad & Tobago*

Toni Morrison's novel, *Tar Baby* (1981), depicts relationships among people in the Caribbean and, as described in the inside flyleaf, "the shades of feeling and the full spectrum of choices facing women and men in a black-and-white world." Morrison examines "black-and-white" relationships and also offers insight into the influence a wealthy and powerful white presence can have on relationships within black communities. Son, a black American stowaway, has been discovered and eventually hosted in a rich, white household on a Caribbean island. Morrison describes his reactions as he watches the black gardener from the window of the white family's home.

[Son] stared at his back. Yardman, she [had] called him. That was Yardman's back. He knew backs, studied them because backs told it

all...they were simply there, all open, unprotected and unmanipulable as Yardman's was, stretched like a smokehouse cot where hobos could spend the night. A back where the pain of every canker, every pinched neck nerve, every toothache, every missed train home, empty mailbox, closed bus depot, do-not-disturb and this-seat-is-taken sign since God made water came to rest. He watched the angle of the old man's spine and for no reason that he could think of tears stung his eyes. It astonished him, those unshed tears, for he knew well the area into which his heart was careening—an area as familiar as the knuckle of his thumb. Not the street of yellow houses with white doors, but the wide lawn places where little boys in Easter white shorts played tennis under their very own sun. A sun whose sole purpose was to light their way, golden their hair and reflect the perfection of their Easter white shorts. He had fingered that image hundreds of times before and it had never produced tears. But now watching Yardman—he was kneeling, chopping at the trunk of a small tree—while he himself was so spanking clean, clean from the roots of his hair to the crevices between his toes, having watched his personal dirt swirl down a drain, while he himself stood wrapped waist-to-thigh in an Easter white towel—now he was as near to crying as he'd been since he'd fled from home. You would have thought something was leaving him and all he could see was its back.

Slowly Yardman stood...“Thanks,” whispered Son, “One more second of your smokehouse cot might have brought me there at last.”  
(p. 139)

As I prepared the questions for, and as questions developed in the semi-structured interviews with the educators in Trinidad & Tobago, I tried to keep in mind that the ITEM was, and is, a project conceived and concluded in “the wide lawn places” of Simon Fraser University. The separation of the conceptual intent of the program from the community which hosts it must have implications for the “direct, lived experiences” the ITEM claims, and hence, for the data. I tried, therefore, to listen with my “Easter white” ears sensitized to the position of educators from the south. How should I understand their responses to the presence of an affluent, foreign, mostly white<sup>9</sup> university that plans

<sup>9</sup> There has been no administrator of colour, or of indigenous ancestry among the faculty or Faculty Associates who supervise the ITEM in the south. In private conversation during my research a faculty member reminded me that I had raised the question of this absence years earlier when I was a coordinator. At the time of my research, I was assured that despite the fact that the ITEM has never had an administrator or Faculty Associate of colour in the south, the program has nevertheless been successful (personal notes, Feb. 16, 2005). This discussion alerted me to a remark by Dr. Roy Miki (1998) of the Faculty of English at SFU: “Political efficacy in the university, then, is constrained by various academic and administrative procedures that neutralize, or otherwise devalue, critiques of racism, sexism, classism, and ethnocentrism within the system” (p. 162).

and administers its program with little input from “the street of yellow houses” in the south? I was interested, for example, in how the ITEM participants from Canada see themselves in relation to Dr. Lochan, a local academic who administers many of the ITEM’s activities in Trinidad & Tobago, and who refers to himself as a citizen of the “Third World.”<sup>10</sup> While the ITEM is hosted in local classrooms there and lives in the community in residence for two months at the University of the West Indies (UWI), from some points of view, our “wide lawn places” might signify a project “whose sole purpose was to light [our] way, golden [our] hair and reflect the perfection of” our program. It is important to bear this in mind when a Canadian student teacher reports that the first question one Trinidadian SA asked upon introduction was, “And can we come and teach in your classrooms in Canada?” (personal notes, Oct. 19, 2004). Another educator from Trinidad & Tobago wrote “our children think [the SFU student teachers] are all rich” (Sammy, personal communication, June 24, 2005). A West Indian university student, in residence with the ITEM students, said to some of them when commenting on kitchen clean-up responsibilities, “You may have maids at home but we don’t have them here” (personal notes, October 20, 2004).

Diana, one of the student teacher informants for this research described a Canadian private school,<sup>11</sup> located in the capital city, Port of Spain, visited by some of the “ITEMites.” She identified it as a school for “*really* rich kids” (Diana, 3, p. 11) equipped with alarm buttons and armed security guards to protect the students and staff in case of kidnappings. “In junior kindergarten...there’s a computer for each kid, there’s pencils, there’s resources, there’s every different kind of toy, everything that you want” (p. 11). According to Diana, half of the students at that school are from Trinidad & Tobago, others are foreign white children of families involved in the oil industry or other “international” projects. All of the teachers are white. After her visit to the school, she reported that she “just went home and bawled because [the kids in her practicum] just

<sup>10</sup> During my stay in Trinidad & Tobago I read an editorial in the local newspaper that discussed the nature of “this multi-cultural society.” The writer described the “Trinbagonian” inclination to “lamentable and quite unnecessary self-contempt.” “We continue to think of ourselves as inferior objects rather than equal subjects in the community of nations” (*Sunday Express*, October 17, 2004, p. 10).

<sup>11</sup> Although this school has no connection with the ITEM program or with SFU, it is important to consider that in the minds of the local community, the two are related as Canadian educational institutions present in a Caribbean context.

don't even have pencils" (p. 11). Perhaps Diana's tearful reaction signifies that she had been witness to the "empty mailbox, closed bus depot, do-not-disturb and this-seat-is-taken sign" that Son recognized in the open back of Yardman.

During her final interview, Diana recounted that at the conclusion of her Trinidadian practicum, when the children at the school where she had conducted her practicum understood that the ITEM student teachers were leaving, "They were angry! They weren't just sad, they were mad, like, *really mad!*" (Diana, 3, p. 7). Evoking Son's recollection of "the area into which his heart was careening," Diana described a child who would not speak, "who just slumped on the floor, blank eyes, tears rolling down his [face]" (p. 7). The child was still tearful and mute when they left an hour later. Perhaps the tearful, angry reaction of the Trinidadian children correspond to Son's stinging tears as he sees the message of the missed train home in Yardman's open back. The "Caucasians" who bring a certain status to the school were leaving. Although as Burbules (2002) writes, "one may be able to describe...but cannot always talk about what it means" (p. 165), Toni Morrison (1992) reminds us "All of us, readers and writers, are bereft when criticism remains too polite or too fearful to notice a disrupting darkness before its eyes" (p. 91). So, Diana's subsequent question remains an important one: "I have wondered this since I have come back, if it was the right thing for me to have been in that school. It almost feels like it's the right thing for SFU, that I was there, but if it was the right thing for those kids...?" (Diana, 3, p.6). Perhaps the reflected light of the sun that lit her way and goldened her hair, had begun to illuminate for Diana the circumstances for and perspectives of the communities in the south.

Morrison's portrayal of black and white Caribbean relationships helps to assess the implications of the ITEM's (temporary) presence and influence in Trinidad & Tobago as it is experienced by the educators there. As the arrival of the Canadian student teachers is anticipated, the host schools must prepare to place them with School Associates in local classrooms. One SA described some of the staff's reactions to this expectation: "Certain people wondered if [the SFU participants] were spies or something" (Martha, p. 18). Reflecting on the political situation in her school she added,

*In my school it's always, 'Who's going to [host the Canadian student]? Who wants to do it?' This time...nobody else will do it so Mr. K. and I...*

*and even yesterday...I kept asking myself, is he trying to palm this whole thing off on me? (Martha, p. 19)*

We talked in what she described as her “ugly, little” office, dim and cluttered, busy with the comings and goings of various students, shared with the school nurse and two other counselors. We sat in a tiny space delineated by a cotton sheet hanging from the ceiling. Much of the interview drifted to her stories of the struggles of the community there, the developing tensions among Trinidadians and Tobagans of different racial and cultural backgrounds.

*The country has become what we would call racial—it’s this race against that race. Sometimes when a new teacher comes, all of us like me would say, “Another Indian coming?” And then the staff room has become divided, like all the Indians will go on one side and all the Africans...and then they assume that the Africans are the big rough people, so we are the Deans, you know, we respond to keeping discipline. And then all the people who misbehave are people like me. So the society has changed. So when you come, the Trinidad I grew up in where we knew how to live together and we did not recognize race, you all will not benefit from that anymore. (p. 19)*

This SA completed her Bachelors degree in a Canadian university. She felt able to assess some of the differences between what she learned in a Canadian context as a “visible minority” (a term she found hilarious), and the historical and current racial and economic circumstances in Trinidad & Tobago.

*Somehow I had to get accustomed to diversity there. Coming here, now, Trinidad has changed, you know. Trinidad was not like that—there was a time when we would sit in classes together...we were aware of our race but it wasn’t an issue. But political conditions over the last 10 years or so has caused all of us to be a little more aware of who we are, so, you know, and it’s causing...we are not handling it well. (Martha, p. 14)*

Martha was curious and skeptical about what the Canadian student teachers could learn in Trinidad & Tobago that they couldn’t learn in Canada. She added that perhaps the lesson might be about what to avoid. For example, when talking about the Trinidad & Tobagan context Martha described the effects of poverty on the youth of the country, “with AIDS running wild. We have some cultural practices that could cause us to be wiped out” (Martha, p. 17). She cited the infection rates among girls aged 15-24 as “the largest group with AIDS in Trinidad.” She continued,

*And then drugs...we are [now a] drug society, right? Venezuela and Columbia. If you go into Port of Spain you'll see a lot of vagrants and we assume that many of them are drug addicts who it has gone really bad for them. And drug use in the school is...it's a scare... (p. 14)*

Martha's talk of drug addicted vagrants in the capital city calls to mind Son's vision of the "smokehouse cot where hobos could spend the night." She apologized for wandering off topic as we spoke, but added that the opportunity to talk had calmed her. Comments in my field book indicate a "sad, grieving" School Associate (personal notes, October 20, 2005). "You would have thought that something was leaving [her] and all [she] could see was its back."

Morrison (1981) in *Tar Baby* helps us to think about the dilemma facing the educators in the Caribbean and perhaps by extension, of Mexico, as she writes about the status of their colonized communities and the conflicting positions of their peoples:

[Son] thought he was rescuing her from...them, the aliens, the people who in a mere three hundred years had killed a world millions of years old...even when some of them built something nice and human, they grew vicious protecting it from their own predatory children, let alone an outsider. Each was pulling the other away from the maw of hell—its very ridge top. Each knew the world as it was meant or ought to be. One had a past, the other a future and each one bore the culture to save the race in his hands. Mama-spoiled black man, will you mature with me? Culture-bearing black woman, whose culture are you bearing? (p. 296)

The conflicted relationship Morrison imagines recalls the contradictory stances taken by Naipaul and Walcott cited earlier. Morrison, however, implicates the "Easter white" northern other in the circumstances of the south.

### **Oaxaca, Mexico**

Yes the U.S. has wanted to possess the future, yes, Latin  
America has wanted to redeem the past. Yet, we must share the  
present, and it is a conflicted one.

(Carlos Fuentes, 1984)

Rosario Castellanos, an author from the region in Mexico where the ITEM program visits, spent many years working with and writing about the indigenous community there. Her short story, *The Luck of Teodoro Mendez Acubal* (1991) concerns the reaction of an impoverished indigenous Chamula man, who finds a coin on the road.

All but lost in the dust, caked with mud, worn from years of use, it had been ignored by the white *caxlanes*. For the *caxlanes* walk with their heads held high. Moved by pride, they contemplate from afar the important matters that absorb them.

...with this stroke of fortune, [the coin had made him] rich. He was as rich as...as a *caxlan*. And Teodoro was amazed that the color of his skin had not changed. (p. 70)

Castellanos, like Morrison, helps us to imagine how the ITEM participants might be regarded by local Mexican populations. Until recently<sup>12</sup> the ITEM in Mexico has been a project “contemplate[d] from afar” and brought to Mexico by white *caxlanes*.

Of the poor in Oaxaca, estimated in one brochure to be 77% of the population, many are indigenous families with children. These children often beg in the streets, and in the *zocolo*, the central public square. It is unclear how many of these children attend school. According to Mexican friends of the ITEM Faculty Associate in Oaxaca, many Chamula and Chiapas people are in Oaxaca as migrants on their way to Mexico City, and ultimately to the United States (personal notes, Nov. 13, 2005).

Carlos Fuentes writes frequently of Mexican poverty relative to North American material abundance. He prepares us for the ambivalence many Mexicans feel toward their northern neighbours. In *The Crystal Frontier* (1997) Fuentes introduces Jose Francisco, a young Mexican who, like many Oaxacans, lives in both Mexican and North American cultures. As he watches Mexican workers communicate in silent protest with an American border patrol, “arms displaying the muscle of poverty” (p. 249) Jose, also a writer, thinks,

To whom if not to himself was he going to say, as he gathered the eggs on his father’s little farm, that he wanted to be heard, wanted to write things, stories about immigrants, illegals, Mexican poverty, Yankee prosperity, but most of all stories about families, that was the wealth of the border world... (p. 251)

<sup>12</sup> In August 2005 the site coordinator for the ITEM in Oaxaca, and a veteran SA for the program there, attended the August Orientation program on campus in Canada, for FAs who work in the PDP. This is the first gesture to include southern participants in the ITEM’s pre-departure activities. At the time of writing, further plans are being made to include a representative from Trinidad & Tobago, also, in the 2006 August Orientation.

Jose Francisco's border world recalls the *nepantla* identified in Chapter 2 by his compatriot, Gloria Anzaldúa. He writes of an in-between place inhabited by many Mexicans, indigenous and mestizo in particular, through their relationship with colonial Spain and now with their North American neighbours. A School Associate from Oaxaca spoke of this in her interview with me when she discussed the attitudes of some Mexican students to learning English. She explained the circumstances of Oaxacans who work illegally in the United States, initially to provide income for their home communities.

*Santa Ana, there are many families there, and there are three towns where there are only women and children. Because all men, all men after 15, will be working in the States. And now it's getting worse because mothers also go away and are leaving the children here with the grandmas and grandpas. So in Santa Ana we found that a very strong reality. Children are by themselves...*

*I have some relatives [who]...were living [in the States] and their wish was to come back here because their parents were poor, but not so poor because they had land....And in that sense they were rich because they have animals, they had the land, the crops were well so they had good ones. But they have to work very hard. And the thing happens in almost all the country. So they have the girlfriend here, they come and get married, make a big party, go back and leave the woman here, perhaps pregnant. They will come the next year, and little babies and the woman is here, after 3 babies they will take the woman there, and the children here. After some years they will try to bring all of the family there. Well this cousin, came back and tried to work again on the land but they saw that, well, they have to work harder for less. (Selina, p. 11)*

Like Jose Francisco, this School Associate has a family story about the border world. Her Canadian student teacher also commented on this phenomenon. He had read Fuentes' story of Jose Francisco and mused about the in-between culture described by that circumstance.

*This is what I'm coming across in Oaxaca all the time, these guys in their Philadelphia Flyers jerseys in these little villages in the country where they're rejected by the village and they're rejected by America...I don't know what to make of it yet. (Liam, 2, p. 18)*

I asked the School Associate if this life between countries and cultures influenced the Mexican students' approach to learning English. She replied,

*Yes, yes, yes. Because for [those living here] it's like something I know I'm going to use never, because I'm not going to go to work illegally. Or, I*



*don't have so much money to try. Or, whuff! I don't know! When do I need to use English?" (Selina, p. 11)*

As she continued, she continued to reflect the ambivalence of her community and of her position as an English teacher with regard to the presence of native English speaking student teachers in her school.

*Perhaps experience is the only thing we can offer, I mean that's the great thing we can give to [the ITEM student teachers]...It's so difficult to travel...we have the idea only rich people can travel. Only rich people can go to other countries and speak English, like, it's out of our reality. (p. 11)*

For those who remain in Oaxaca to host the English-speaking foreigners, the pain of "the missed train home" named earlier by Morrison preoccupies Mexicans, too, in families abandoned or unable to return home. This may also account for the feeling communicated to the big blond blue-eyed student teacher who told me "with some other teachers it's been difficult" (Liam, 2, p. 7) adding, "There seems to be political issues within the schools here...it's simply intuiting something because nobody [except for the School Associate] speaks to me...essentially we're not really addressed or spoken to" (p. 8).

The situations and perspectives of the southern educators provide a background against which interview data can be assessed. As stated earlier, input from the SAs in Oaxaca and from Trinidad & Tobago was not solicited in any formal way until this study.<sup>13 14</sup>

## Implications

The perspectives of the southern educators are presented here first as foreground to the data from the student teachers but also as a response to Spivak's

<sup>13</sup> *Transformation possibilities: The International Teacher Education Module at Simon Fraser University* (2005) a Masters thesis, examines "transformation possibilities" of the ITEM. Single interviews and email follow-ups with the student teachers and the faculty member, provided the data for the analysis. No input was solicited from southern educators or from the Faculty Associates.

<sup>14</sup> At the conclusion of each program, Faculty Associates prepare a report with input from the coordinator and faculty member. The perspective is typically from the point of view of the Canadian FAs and student teachers. I could find no comment from educators from Trinidad & Tobago, or Oaxaca in any of the reports.

question, “Who will listen?” Because the ITEM grounds its pedagogy and its International Education discourse in the experiences of the student teachers, I feel it is also important to understand those experiences through the voices of the southern hosts. I am also mindful of Linda Tuhwai Smith who “researches back.” By presenting the ITEM project from the point of view of the hosts, we can, if not avoid, then at the very least, offer an alternative perspective to any neo-colonial discourse that might surface as a consequence of the hierarchies imbedded in this project. As Yon (2000) recommends, we must allow the voices of the educators from Trinidad & Tobago, and Oaxaca “to rework and act upon” the current discourses of the ITEM and of International Education.

Post-colonial writers such as Toni Morrison, Carlos Fuentes, Derek Walcott and others call us to pay attention to inequities north to south, particularly where the politics of colour and economic power are concerned. They also remind us that between the two communities (in this case, SFU and the southern sites) any educational project must consider the relationship—the international relationship—from the context and experiences of the southern participants as well as through the needs and experiences of the more privileged. That is, if through the proposed research question we are to assess “the conceptual bases for International Education as it is understood among academics and among the ITEM and its participants,” we must take into account the circumstances and perspectives of the southern participants.

Given that the schools and School Associates in the south accept students from the north, and given that southern student teachers are not similarly hosted in Canada, it is worth recalling once more the words of Linda Tuhwai Smith.

Every...visit...requires energy, commitment and protocols of respect...[I]dealistic ideas about community collaboration and active participation need to be tempered with...a community's resources and capabilities. (1999, p. 140)

The suspicion of some Mexican and Trinidadian teachers and the energy required to “mentor” the student teachers suggests an educational relationship that is experienced very differently between the constituent communities. There is a hierarchy in this project implicit in the relative economics and mobility of the participants. To counter a neo-colonial trope, to attempt to give “Third World” discourse the same status as the Canadians who “contemplate from afar the important matters that absorb them,” we may

discover alternatives to the discourses of the colonial era indicated earlier by David Spurr (1993). Accepting the southern contexts as offered by the southern hosts also enables us to recognize the “metonymic spaces” forecast by Dr. Aoki. He encouraged us at the outset of the program to remain open to apparent contradictory positions that might arise in International Education among the practitioners, and also in the circumstances of International Education enacted. The “spaces” offered in Trinidad & Tobago, and Oaxaca, Mexico are spaces of domestic tension—poverty, AIDS, racial friction—into which the ITEM steps, looking for “lived experience.” As the educators at these sites inform us of these circumstances we can better understand the nature of International Education as it is understood and experienced by all the participants.

If we think of the ITEM project as a “community of practice” engaged in International Education with partners north and south, and if we understand this community through the lens of Etienne Wenger (1998), we recognize the need for “the negotiation of meaning...the level of discourse at which the concept of practice should be understood” (p. 72). To conceptualize this community of practice Wenger asserts that those participating must have “1) mutual engagement, 2) a joint enterprise and 3) a shared repertoire” (p. 73). The voices of the southern participants broaden the repertoire and inform the conceptual bases through which International Education is understood (and enacted) generally, and in the southern sites.

The ITEM as an educational community of practice is one part of a larger project of International Education, enacted internationally. Wenger points out that to be legitimately educational, the first characteristic of this community must be mutual engagement. This “does not entail homogeneity” (p. 75) but rather requires “mixtures of power and dependence” (p. 77). The terms of that power and the nature of the dependence must be negotiable, however, for this community to have educational potential for all participants.

Similarly, if we think of the community of International Education as a “figured world,” as described by Holland et al. (1998), we can (and should) account for the perspectives of the southern participants in our conceptualization of International Education. The negotiation of meaning called for by Wenger, the dialogic nature of the figured world(s) of International Education described by Holland et al. must account for

“the contexts of meaning and action in which social positions and social relationships are named and conducted” (p. 60). When the northern guests are perceived by the southern hosts to be “rich” and consequently mobile, when their English is understood to be a commodity or an imposition, when a “Caucasian” face is received as a means to enhance a school’s credibility, identity theories such as Holland et al.’s remind us that within a figured world such as International Education, those whose classrooms are requested “from afar,” will have or will develop an authorial stance from which to engage “*them*, the aliens” (Morrison, 1981, p. 296). That stance may change in response to engagement with the Canadian student teachers or it may become more fixed. But it is important in this work to hear the voices from the south and to consider seriously their “Third World” identities and perceptions as the residents themselves describe themselves, in order to extend the shared repertoire of International Education. In this way, the experiences and responses of the educators in Trinidad & Tobago, and Oaxaca, Mexico can, like the students and faculty of Daniel Yon’s high school, contribute through their own agency, to the discourse of possibility as it characterizes International Education.

## **Summary**

By employing perspectives of Toni Morrison who writes about Caribbean relationships, and perspectives of writers from the southern sites, I attempted to provide a backdrop against which the presence of the ITEM might be seen. This chapter introduced the voices of the southern educators to foreground the arrival of the Canadian student teachers, and to establish a context for their activities there, through the eyes of the hosts. When considering International Education, it is important not only to consider it from the point of view of those who have prepared and enact the curriculum, but also to try to position ourselves with and among those who remain after we have gone.

Next I present data from observations and transcribed interviews with educators from Trinidad & Tobago.

## Chapter 5. From Trinidad & Tobago

Funny how I had never imagined that they could be marked by us as well.

(Ramabai Espinet, 2003, p. 153)

For the visits and interviews with educators from the south, I went to Trinidad & Tobago, in October 2004. This was my second visit to the site. My first visit was in 2001, the year the ITEM first completed an *Education 401/2* semester there. The ITEM students live in residence at the University of the West Indies (UWI), and complete their practica in nearby schools. For the interviews Paul Bishop, the Faculty Associate, organized meetings with available volunteers at two of the schools.

### Interview with a Principal

My first school visit in Trinidad & Tobago occurred on a typical October day. It was 33C, intermittently sunny and pounding rain. Paul escorted me, commenting that he usually arrived at each school with wet shoes and a wet shirt, either from the rain, from perspiration or both. Jean, the principal at St. Anthony's, a small elementary school hosting four ITEM student teachers, appeared to be cool and dry despite the lack of air-conditioning and classrooms and offices open to the weather.

In our conversation that day, Jean talked a lot about the status of teachers in Trinidad & Tobago. Unlike Canadian teachers, many do not have formal teacher education before they assume teaching positions. Jean noted that lack of pre-service preparation often becomes a problem because for many, to be a teacher is a temporary choice. She feels that as a result of this sense of impermanence, many teachers lack the necessary commitment and passion to be influential educators.

Jean used the word "stagnation" to describe the condition of some who had been teaching for several years. This seemed less a criticism and more an acknowledgement that teachers need support to continue to develop their abilities and to feel confident to try new ideas. For Jean, the real benefit of the ITEM's presence in her school was its influence on her 'stagnant' teachers. "She also exclaimed with considerable enthusiasm that some of the strategies introduced by previous ITEMites 'worked'—for example, pairing older kids with younger ones in a reading program" (personal notes, Oct. 18,

2004). According to Jean, the buddying had reduced incidences of teasing and bullying in the schoolyard. She also attributed a consequent improvement in reading skills among all students to the buddying initiative.

The Canadian students' efforts reinforced for Jean reading she had done concerning constructivist theories of learning and validated practices she had long wanted to try. Later, in the formal interview, she told me, "what [my] teachers were hearing about in theory...they actually saw your teachers engage in it, and liked it...I think that [the 'Trini' teachers] became more willing to try it" (Jean, p. 3).

Four days after my first visit to St. Anthony's school I arrived for the formal interview with Jean. My notes indicate that the rain was heavy again—we looked for a place to talk that wasn't overwhelmed by the sound of the downpour. In my notes I have included an observation that Jean "was so smartly dressed—all the women teachers seem to be, at all the schools." Earlier, Paul had suggested that we looked like Mormon Missionaries, several of whom populated the area. Now, as I look back, I wonder what my demeanor may have communicated to the Trinidadians and what influence, if any, this might have had on their responses to me. I noted that Jean "was very business-like" that day, and very busy. "After a time her interest in the interview faded and I could feel her attention swinging to other demands" (Oct. 22, 2004). At the beginning, though, I was able to solicit a discussion about the ITEM and what she knew about it.

*I get the impression that they are coming to sort of familiarize themselves with children from our culture...I think it's because they have this kind of children across there. And, you know, a trip for them. And added to that, to do their practicum. So basically, that's what I've got. (Jean, p. 1)*

By "this kind of children" I understand that she was referring to the many children at St. Anthony's who live in extreme poverty. Some come from families who are squatters in the hills nearby. Later, I asked some of the children why so many students were absent that day. One child replied, "Because the rain makes them sick." I added in my notes, "For those who live up in the hills on dirt roads in squats, the mud is not navigable and because of wash-outs, sometimes it's not safe" (personal notes, Oct. 22, 2004).

While Jean and I talked, a student's mother approached, wanting Jean's stamp and signature on a welfare voucher. The mother was dressed in a McDonald's restaurant jacket, zipped top to bottom. Finally, because of the heat, she opened the

jacket to expose a short, tight dress, that, from my experience, was unusually revealing for the generally conservative women of Trinidad & Tobago. A tense exchange was completed while the mother stood, and Jean and I sat. I wondered if this was one of the parents from the poor “squats” whose income evidently was dependent on the principal’s authority. I wondered if my presence had contributed to the tension. Had the mother dressed hurriedly like my mother who put on her raincoat on over her bathrobe to drop me off at school on rainy days? Was this atypical clothing an indication of class or status? I wondered at the kinds of social and cultural cues that I could not read and which my presence and the presence of the other northerners may have disturbed.

Jean and I resumed the interview briefly. She said that although she had sponsored several ITEM students over the years, she was vague about the implications of the “I” in ITEM. I provided some history and then asked “given that that’s the purpose of the module, that this would educate them to be ‘international educators’, do you have an idea of what that would mean?”

Jean replied, “My perception of it would be someone who could teach or help children from diverse backgrounds to learn, regardless of their background. You should be able, as a teacher, to help them” (Jean, p. 2). But she was less interested in the purposes of the ITEM than she was on the effects of the Canadian student teachers on her primary students:

*Without even looking at what they do, their presence here in this school does something for the children...The mere idea that they are foreigners, Caucasians at that, come in here and intermingle and be amongst them, it does something for [the children’s] self-esteem. They feel good about that, so that in itself is a plus. (p. 2)*

Jean also talked about the reciprocal nature of the ITEM’s relationship with her school. When asked for her reaction to the impression that the program is an exchange, she replied,

*Well, they come, they do their practicum, none of us go. It’s not really an exchange program as such. I have always seen it as they doing their practicum in another country. And as I said it’s the gaining experience that’s the meaning of the trip. (Jean, p. 3)*

She emphasized what she had said earlier, that the presence of the Canadians had effectively modeled alternative teaching strategies to what she called “that old colonial

mode where the teachers just pour in the information and the children should receive it” (p. 4). She added,

*I think the experience, really, has brought about a change in our students. Because of the kind of children we have, those who are slower, [the SFU students] get on with us. The last couple of years we have really seen things turn around here because of a different way, a different attitude towards teaching. (p. 4)*

Given her earlier remarks, I asked Jean whether she felt that “foreign” presence somehow validated for the community the “different way” to which she referred. That is, I wondered whether there was a local perception that foreignness implied superiority. She replied,

*At the grassroots people are more like that. That's why our children appreciate them so much. The parents like knowing that there is a Canadian here. A white person. That's grassroots level. But at the training college level I don't think that would be the case...we have moved away from that a bit and teachers at the training college tend to be radical, uh? So they wouldn't... (p. 7)*

Finally, Jean acknowledged that an actual exchange would be appreciated. She noted that Canada has “children from the West Indies there. So I think that it would help our [teachers] here to become more, to treat the children in a more updated fashion” (p. 4). However, she showed little optimism that this might happen. In describing the relationship with the ITEM program she added with a laugh, “I never saw it as an exchange” (p. 3).

### **Interview with a Secondary School Associate**

Until the moment I heard the words ‘Coolie, coolie, coolie!’ I had been just a girl. The big girls who took me to school every day were not coolies, I knew that. Yula was half-Chinese and Yvette was mixed. A coolie was a nasty ugly thing.

(Ramabai Espinet, 2003, p. 205)

The title of Dean in senior secondary schools in Trinidad & Tobago indicates responsibility for student behaviour and discipline. In addition to classroom teaching, Martha was Acting Dean of Discipline at St. Michael’s Secondary School. In the fall of 2004, she hosted two ITEM students for the first time. She was also involved with SFU through professional development programs offered by SFU to practicing teachers there.



Martha had completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Western Ontario in 1984 and remarked, "I learned more about diversity in Canada than living here." As an undergraduate she had been bent on a career in politics, saying, "I wanted to defend the universe." However, despite the fact that she comes from a family of politicians, she chose teaching instead. "I prefer to help people and I love teaching," she explained (Martha, p. 7). When asked what she knew of the ITEM and its relationship to local schools Martha replied,

*As far as I know it's a teacher training program where Simon Fraser has brought down some teachers and they wish for them to observe our teaching methods here, you know, and use these methods to plan their own lessons and to learn to teach. Sometimes I look at it as a cultural exchange. Often I've wondered if there was something special about the Trinidad teaching style that you Canadians wanted to adopt. Perhaps look at how we manage our classes, how we deliver information. Because I never thought that our system was special in any way. However I'm seeing where, you know, another country's coming and observing us and wanting to teach in the way in which we teach, so... ( p. 1)*

Although she had seen some literature about the ITEM, Martha explained that she had never had "a real, clear" explanation of the purposes of the program. She said, "I am not too sure what our teachers get out of it. But the kids, the children get a lot out of it" (p. 2). By this she meant that the Trini students benefited from witnessing other teaching styles. "The classes become livelier, more interesting, more varied and the teacher who is attached to the Canadian teacher comes to school more often and is more dedicated at that time" (p. 2). In addition to more consistent attendance from some School Associates Martha also noticed others were more frequently absent when the Canadian student teachers were there. She suggested that this absence might be due to the Trinidadian teacher's lack of confidence. "At first it's like nobody really wants to have a Canadian person attached, you know, because it means for once you have to do things right" (p. 2). Martha acknowledged contradictory responses to the presence of the ITEM. She added that for some local teachers to have a student teacher was a confidence builder—the positive effect the ITEM presence had on the students inspired renewed interest in the SA. In her own case, she said that after her initial reluctance, "For me, this time around, it's interesting because I want to see how another person is looking at our school. I want to see what they're getting" (p. 2).

Because Martha was involved with other SFU programs, she assumed there would be substance to the ITEM curriculum. “From what I’ve seen, the Simon Fraser people are quite dedicated.” She recognized the commitment by the FA who “visits regularly. They discuss [the students’] work with them. The [student] teachers are extra-prepared for class, and so on” (p. 12). At the same time, Martha questioned the legitimacy of the assumption by the ITEM that the student teachers would learn more in Trinidad & Tobago than they would in Canada:

*I kept wondering, what does [the student teacher] want out of this? How does your society benefit from this program apart from, you know, meeting and learning more from international groups which come into your society anyhow? Because a lot of our people are migrating to Canada. How else do you all benefit from having this international...? Somehow I had to get accustomed to diversity there. (pp. 13-14)*

Martha seemed not to connect the purpose of International Education espoused by the ITEM program to any objectives or outcomes for educators in Trinidad & Tobago. She recognized her experiences in Canada to be educational, but discussed them as distinct from her involvement with SFU.

*The first time I heard the word “visible minority” I kept wondering who they were talking about—it couldn’t be me! (Martha laughs). And there was a diversity there that I have not seen here. For example I thought all white people were white—I thought white people they were just white people. And then I started to hear about English white, French white, Italian white, and started to open my mind to Europe, and it’s really big, and you have all these people, and they’re all in Canada! ...So where [did] I have a place [there], you know? (p. 14)*

Martha indicated that she didn’t anticipate any international exchange between the Trininis and the Canadians, in the context of Trinidad & Tobago. She did suggest that by the time the ITEM students left, “[They’ll] get to know us, and [they’ll] get to know how our children respond, and...Canadian students going back home will be able to manage West Indian classrooms” (p. 15).

In the end, Martha held that the best SFU had to offer the Trinidadian & Tobagan educators was the professional development program she had attended in the summer of 2000.

*You may believe that the exchange should be with the actual program of the [student] teachers coming to the school. I must tell you that I was part*

*of a program where Ian [Andrews] and they came and they taught us how to use methods...critical thinking...how to really get it done, to get theory into action...they succeeded in doing that. If they had continuously come, every year, that particular group...More teachers from this system benefited from that. Hundreds of teachers... (pp. 17-18)*

### **Response from University Faculty/Site Coordinator**

When the ITEM first arrived in Trinidad & Tobago the program was supported by Sammy Lochan, a local doctoral student from the faculty of education of the University of the West Indies (UWI). Sammy has acted as an administrative resource for the ITEM since that 1<sup>st</sup>-year. In the meantime, he has successfully completed his doctoral studies. I met Dr. Lochan on both my visits to Trinidad & Tobago but was unable to schedule a formal interview with him. Instead he agreed to an email interview, responding to the same questions I put to Jean and Martha.

Sammy's work with the ITEM program includes locating teachers who are willing to host the ITEM student teachers in their classrooms. When I asked him to speak to the effect of the ITEM's presence in the schools he said that this was not clear to him. He wrote, "I would have to do some research myself" in order to determine what the effects of the ITEM might be. He did say that the student teachers' presence would undoubtedly provide "food for thought" among the local teachers. Because the requirements for teacher qualification are so different between British Columbia and Trinidad & Tobago he said, "The idea of [SFU's] professional training being necessary would make people think."

Sammy felt that the best aspect of the ITEM's presence in Trinidad & Tobago is the influence the student teachers have on elementary students. He declared, "Children in the primary schools love them dearly." He coupled this observation with the positive influence the ITEM students have in residence at UWI, although he did not specify what this influence might be. He acknowledged that generally speaking, Canadian teachers "bring a more student friendly approach" to teaching. Like many educators in the south, Sammy reminded me, "SFU students are shocked that our children think they are all rich."

He was better able to articulate what he felt are the benefits of the program for the SFU students. For the two years that the students have been living in the UWI residence,<sup>15</sup> Sammy has noticed that compared with the first two groups, the ITEM students in residence “get a good sense of the country and the rest of the Caribbean by the range of students they meet [there].” He also recognized that, through the program, “the SFU students are made to learn a new culture and...that is good preparation for being a teacher.” Sammy noticed, too, that as a consequence of spending time immersed in the southern schools the ITEM student teachers “are forced to assess and evaluate what they have experienced in their own upbringing.” He suggested that unconscious assumptions may become evident when Canadian students are confronted with the very different ways that Trinidad & Tobagans “deal with religion and ethnicity,” for example.

When addressing “what is exchanged” Sammy again said this was difficult for him to answer. He indicated that “some teachers from Trinidad & Tobago who have been mentors more than once think it is a bit strenuous to mentor.” He went on to say that there has been broad spectrum of relationships between Canadians and the local people, including “talk of marriage.” He said, “In our society people befriend quickly and they tend to extend warm welcomes to foreigners and they may even see to it that they have a good time.” He suggested that as a result,

*Students get to experience an ease of living that may not be the same in Canada. I know they have trouble understanding some of our practices such as corporal punishment. I know they are amazed at what some teachers do with little materials. (Sammy, 2005, p.2)*

When addressing International Education Sammy wrote that working with the ITEM was his first experience with International Education. He said that he has been trying to identify for himself the difference between schooling in Trinidad & Tobago, and in Canada in order to “be able to relate to the SFU students.” He concluded by saying

<sup>15</sup> For the first 2-years groups of 4-6 student teachers lived in houses in residential neighbourhoods. Since then, they have stayed at the UWI residences. By contrast, the ITEM student teachers in Oaxaca live in homestays. I have inquired many times about the potential for homestay experiences for the student teachers in Trinidad & Tobago. None of the SFU administrators has answered this question clearly, although resource people in Trinidad & Tobago say it is an option.

*All over the world everyone wants to produce students who are life long learners, critical thinkers, independent learners, good citizens but there are different ways in which each culture is limited or blessed and therefore have to arrange schooling differently. I think international education gives one a sense of what makes the difference. It may also help to explain similarities in schooling. (Sammy, 2005, p. 2)*

## Implications

It is that patience that is the width of Antillean life, and the secret is not to ask the wrong thing of it, not to demand of it an ambition it has no interest in.

(Derek Walcott, 1992, p. 5)

I asked five broad overlapping questions of the southern educators (see appendices). I wanted to know how they perceived the relationship of their school to the ITEM, what they understood of the ITEM's program. I asked them to articulate their own conceptions of International Education. I also asked them about perceived benefits for themselves individually and as a community, and for the Canadians. Finally, I asked for recommendations they might make for what to sustain and what to change in the program.

Responses from the three informants address the research questions by providing data from personal and professional standpoints related to the activities of the ITEM in their communities. By reflecting on the data through the theoretical perspectives that inform this work, understanding of the educational significance of the ITEM, and its contributions to International Education is broadened.

From the point of view of the "Trinis" involved with the ITEM, International Education is understood to be about individual teachers' varying degrees of readiness for classrooms composed of children from diverse cultural backgrounds. The diversity to which they refer is, however, attributed to Canadian classrooms. In other words, all three educators view the work with the ITEM student teachers as an opportunity for *Canadians* to become international educators either in order to cope with the diversity in Canada, or to prepare them to teach internationally. There is no indication from the Trinis that they envision themselves in this figured world. Although interested in the idea of a more mutual experience, that is, student teachers from Trinidad & Tobago conducting practica in Canada, they seem not to take the idea seriously. International Education as

conceived by the Trinis, in the perception and experience of these three Trinidadian educators is about providing opportunities for the ITEM. Holland et al. (1998) would explain this positioning by the Trinis as “identity in practice” (p. 271). That is, the engagement of Trinidad & Tobagan educators in International Education is a “response to social and cultural openings and impositions” (p. 270) created by the presence of the ITEM. Rather than reject the idea of International Education, or confine the concept to a practice enabled by the mobility and finances of the Canadians, the Trinidadians instead assume an alternative position in the figured world of International Education. They “place “[themselves]” in social fields, in degrees of relation to—affiliation with, opposition to, and distance from—identifiable others” (p. 271). These “degrees of relation,” according to Holland et al. represent identity in relation to positionality—the “hereness and thereeness” of people “inextricably linked to power, status and rank” (p. 271). The condition of inequality therefore is inherent in the Trinidadian concept and experience of International Education. The idea of International Education itself is a concept “imposed by a foreign minority, racially and culturally different, over a materially weaker” (p. 5) community. Although the educators from Trinidad & Tobago are (sometimes reluctant) participants in the ITEM project, and although they recognize that the student teachers in the ITEM come to Trinidad & Tobago for a kind of professional development, they are not involved in the planning or the discourse of the program. According to David Spurr in *The Rhetoric of Empire* (1993) such a relationship is a colonial one. It follows that a conceptualization of International Education by the Trinidadian hosts could well be an understanding of International Education as a colonial project.

The benefits of the ITEM's presence for the Trinis is unrelated to the benefits for the Canadians, in the minds of the southern hosts. The value of the program in the host schools is professional, idiosyncratic, and unrelated to the purposes of the ITEM—some local teachers become more reflective of their own teaching practices while adapting various teaching strategies modeled to them. (Other teachers stop attending school when the ITEM student teachers arrive.) Jean, the principal, twice indicated that the presence of the Canadians, “Caucasian at that,” enhanced self-esteem in students and was a source of pride for them and their parents. Jean also stated that education students at the university no longer struggle with status relative to race. When I asked about this, she replied, “I think we have moved away from that a bit and teachers at

training college tend to be radical, uh? So they wouldn't..." (Jean, p. 7). Those who research and write about the implications of race in colonized (and other) communities acknowledge the complexities of the relationships inherent in that history and the residue of internalized racism still present (Fanon, 1967; Brand & Bhaggiyadatta, 1986; Essed, 1990; Lee, Maracle, Marlatt & Warland, 1990; Brown, 2005). The relationship of the mostly white ITEM student teachers to the southern communities of colour has bearing on the kind of education the student teachers "acquire" and on the perceptions, experiences and education of the local community. The fact of the ITEM's relative affluence, mobility and colour cannot be overlooked for the self-perceptions and perceptions of others that the relationship reinforces.<sup>16</sup>

The informants in this study did not take up the philosophical questions of International Education itself. Neither did they acknowledge or recognize its potential merit, relative to their own circumstances, at least, not on the ITEM's terms. I am reminded in this instance of the quote from Dorothy Smith (1990) in Chapter Three when she cautions researchers that informants will "explain, name, and explicate" (p. 18) according to their own implicit knowledge of the context, the setting, and that "the sense of what they say expresses that and depends on that" (p. 18). In the contexts of my informants, my questions may not have made sense. They then may have had to interpret what they thought I might mean and relate it to their own their setting. As I examine their responses, I must try to understand their discussion relative to their contexts. In discussing theories of social learning, Wenger (1998) makes a distinction between participation and engagement and this might illuminate the difference between the Trinidad & Tobagan experience and the ITEM's. The focus by Trinidad & Tobagan educators on local and immediate questions as opposed to more global ones may

<sup>16</sup> When writing about the work of universities, their research and their consequent privileged knowledge, Dr. Roy Miki (1998) writes "Knowledge production has to be continually deconstructed in terms of its limits, and to whatever extent possible—a daunting task in the face of the powerful corporatization of the knowledge industry—oppositional and resistant research has to connect with social groups and movements. The deprivileging of university-sanctioned discourses brings into play knowledge formed in the daily lives of those engaged in social struggle. Here involvement needs to be participatory rather than the mere application of academic modes of abstraction to serve the ends of institutional validation and individual proprietorship." (p. 178-9) This suggests to me that as the ITEM studies in southern schools for its own "knowledge production" it must also produce knowledge (understanding and practice) that critiques its international relationships and at the same time establishes a participatory practice for all.

represent participation but not engagement, as indicated by Wenger. "What they end up knowing is something different which has its own relevance in its own context but which does not subsume the perspectives [the larger project] attempts to incorporate" (p. 132).

The informants all express an understanding that the ITEM comes to Trinidad & Tobago for its own purposes, although they were not unanimous in what they understood those purposes to be. Each understands that Canada has a diverse population and that the ITEM program seeks to prepare student teachers for such multicultural school populations. Martha, however, expresses confusion, noting that the population of Canada is more diverse than that of either Mexico or Trinidad & Tobago. The informants also acknowledge that in Trinidad & Tobago, student teachers experience an educational system different from the one they know in Canada and that this could have value for the new teachers.

This vagueness with regard to how the ITEM benefits from its semester in Trinidad & Tobago signifies a disconnection between the Trini hosts and the Canadians. The lack of mutuality either of purpose or of understanding suggests that the Trinidadians did not identify with or through the figured world of International Education. In this way, the ITEM exists as a community of practice that only peripherally connects with the educators from Trinidad & Tobago, "offer[ing] various forms of casual but legitimate access to a practice without subjecting them to the demand of full membership" (Wenger, p. 117). A more cynical interpretation would be that while acquiring their education in Trinidad & Tobago, the ITEM has "let outsiders in to some extent, usually in the course of providing or receiving a service, but also in efforts of public relations or under requirements of public scrutiny" (p. 117). Wenger identifies this kind of relationship as one where the educators in Trinidad & Tobago function at the "*boundaries and peripheries...the 'edges' of communities of practice*" (p. 119). At these "edges" of the ITEM program are their "points of contact with the rest of the world" (p. 119). It is an ambiguous position, welcoming and excluding for both sets of participants. Perhaps, the educators in Trinidad & Tobago experience the enactment of International Education as a practice that requires what Spurr (1993) refers to as "setting up the Third World as a reserve of labor and natural resources" (p. 184). This also calls to mind what Smith (1999) describes as an enterprise that is "not only inquisitive [but] also acquisitive" (p. 3). The "acquisition" and "resources" recall the relationship between current practices



of International Education and globalization as illuminated by Beck (2000). These interpretations are germane to the research question, "What does the ITEM enact, relative to its expressed objectives and themes, and how does this lived experience relate to the philosophical and educational intents of the program?"

## **Summary**

Interviews with a teacher, a principal and one email discussion indicate that the educators in Trinidad & Tobago have little connection with the ITEM curriculum as planned. Although the Canadian student teachers are valued for the way their presence provokes curiosity among the local educators, parents and children, any "exchange" is seen by the educators there to be practical rather than conceptual. One educator noted that Canada's population is more diverse than that of Trinidad & Tobago and she wondered what it was in the "Trini" schools that the Canadians were seeking for themselves. As much as the southerners were welcoming of the ITEM students, they were also conscious of the burden their presence placed on the local teachers. The concept of International Education was not mutual, if in fact it had meaning for the southern educators at all. This raises questions about the intents compared with the effects of the ITEM in Trinidad & Tobago, and the implications for its actual international relationship there.

In the following chapter, I present the data from the educators in Oaxaca, Mexico.

## Chapter 6. Data from Oaxaca, Mexico

The European languages were rooted out from their native soil and their own tradition, and then planted in an unknown and unnamed world: they took root in the new lands and, as they grew within the societies of America, they were transformed....They very soon ceased to be mere transatlantic reflections...more often, they have been a reply.

(Octavio Paz, 1990, p. 1)

The interviews in Oaxaca were completed in November 2004. This was my third visit, having been to the site in previous years as the ITEM coordinator. As with my stay in Trinidad & Tobago, I spent a week with the students, in schools and on campus, participating in a variety of activities. The Faculty Associate on site, Sarah Joyce, arranged the School Associates interviews for me. Because I speak minimal Spanish, the informants were chosen for their English competency, as well as for their experience and familiarity with the ITEM program.

### Interview with a Secondary School Associate/Site Coordinator

Selina had studied English in British Columbia for several months before becoming involved with the ITEM. She lived in a homestay in North Vancouver whose host, coincidentally, later became a Faculty Associate for the ITEM in Oaxaca. Selina was recruited by her former host to be a School Associate and eventually, to be the on-site coordinator for the program. Of all the southern informants for this research, Selina was most aware of the ITEM's purposes and most connected with its on-site activities.

Selina and I met on a mild, sunny day in November. We conducted the interview in a dim office in her school while her two ITEM students took responsibility for her classes. As with the SAs in Trinidad & Tobago, Selina talked about the differences between her national education system and that of British Columbia. She noted that teachers in Mexico required Bachelor degrees but no teacher training. She saw this as a problem because although they were knowledgeable in their subject areas, "they don't have the educational preparation to teach" (Selina, p. 1). English teachers in Mexico are the exception: "We studied to teach English but at the same time we received an education program to be a teacher" (p. 1). Now Selina considers her educational

background to be very important because it helps her to understand the broader needs of the Mexican education system. Her university background includes Didactics, Group Dynamics, and Material Teaching Aids so that in her own practice she knows “how to develop new material, how to make the class interesting, and finally...consider the interests of the students” (p. 3). Her experiences with the ITEM reinforce for her the need for newer teaching approaches. She commented that the first generation of English teachers with a background in education have improved Mexico’s national success rate for English students:

*In general, all the schools like senior high and junior high school have big problems with people failing courses like mathematics or chemistry. Out of about 50 you will have 40 failing each semester. ...And it used to be English. It’s changing now, but it used to be one of the subjects that most students failed. And so the government and the authorities now are very concerned about that so how to change the method. How to make it more integrated to the student, or to the student knowledge or reality. So not only to come and teach them a lot of theory but also to want them to reflect on their knowledge. (p. 2)*

Along with the government’s recognition of the need for educational change has come resistance from some established teachers. However, Selina feels that the general belief among Mexicans, that English is important and that it will be required at the university level will help to overcome this resistance. She believes that by providing new teaching strategies through the ITEM she can support the government’s move to update educational approaches while at the same time strengthening the students’ relationship to English. She hopes that in this way she can better prepare students for university “now that globalization” requires English.

When asked about the reaction of the Mexican students to the the ITEM student teachers Selina said,

*First, they want to know everything about them. Perhaps this is, not rude, but the Canadians are not used to that. They want to touch, they want to talk, they want to ask questions about everything personal, like it’s natural for us, for example when they know you, me as the teacher, they are like, “Are you married? Do you have children? Why don’t you have children? How old are you?” and sometimes the culture is different. You have to ask stuff or the person will not be very confident...*

*The Canadian students when they come...I could say that in general, the first impression is contact. That’s something that they have*

*to face. And they like that, but at the beginning they find that to be very...problematic. Because we know that in Canada you are not allowed to touch students or to...so they are like, can I do this? But then...they are hugging or taking photographs too...., yes... the Mexicans are very nice to them.*

*There is this long process of adaptation. For instance there is the shock, [the Mexican students] don't know how to react to them. The [Canadians] don't know how to react to simple things like this, like contact or the students asking questions... It's a process. I can see many different things going on in both sides, in the Canadian and the Mexican students. (p. 7)*

When I asked Selina about the perception that the program is an exchange, she wondered about the English meaning of the word. "I think it's like to give something and to receive something. I think we are the most fortunate because we receive more" (p. 7). Then she clarified, by describing how in the classroom the presence of the two student teachers supported her, as the classroom teacher, "to divide the job" (p. 8) and to free her up to complete her marking "200, 300 exams to grade—could you take the class and I will be grading" (p. 8). Personally and professionally she says, "To have every time or every year a review of what you are doing. It allows you to reflect on your own teaching, too" (p. 6).

Echoing one of her student teachers, she commented that among the staff at the school,

*There are people who say, 'Who are these people? What are they doing here? Why do they come here?' Because as I told you there are people that, it's not open to receive new ideas or new things, and that happens sometimes. And the other is, sometimes [the Mexican teachers] are afraid of being criticized and I say no, they are not coming here to criticize you. It's an exchange of teaching and learning. I mean, we learn from them and they learn from us and for me that's an exchange. (p. 8)*

For the Mexican students, repeated experience with the ITEM student teachers has been a positive thing: "Oh, the Canadians are coming and all the students know who they are...It's changing also the concept [the students] have about learning English" (p. 8). Many students are convinced that English is irrelevant to them, according to Selina, and that "only rich people can go to other countries and speak English, it's out of our reality" (p. 8). The presence of the ITEM student teachers enables a lived experience with the language and with native English speakers that offers possibility to the Mexican

students. Canadian student teachers provide experience different from and more positive than the experiences of returning Mexicans who leave to work in the USA. She says of those immigrants, "They *don't* speak English...They go to communities where they are among Oaxacans or Mexicans and I know all communication is completely in Spanish" (p. 9). When these immigrants eventually return to Mexico their English-speaking children, however, represent up to 30% of students in some English classes. Together, with the ITEM students, this group represents to the local Mexican students opportunity to experience English as a living language, even though most students have no expectation of leaving Mexico. In our exchange Selina described it this way:

*So now, here you have a foreign person and you need to communicate. So...How do I say that?! How do I ask the name? How do I ask what does she do? How do I ask her if she has a boyfriend? So serious, I mean, communication is communication, it doesn't matter where or which situation. It doesn't matter even if it is just language, it could be someone that cannot speak and you need to communicate how important communication is...*

That's an interesting thought, eh? It isn't really about the English so much, it's also about communication.

*Yes, yes and they see that. And after last year after [the Canadians] came, some [Mexican students] were very interested in having pen-partners or going to language exchange... So they are like, oh give me other people. Interesting people. Now that's why we are trying to use...because they are very interested in music, in artists, and well, you can know more about that if you communicate in English or listen to songs.*

*So I think this exchange is changing all the stereotypes they have about English. And for me it is multipurposeful, to change that because if they start, really start changing the structures they have fixed here, or the ideas in their heads, they will try to make it more reflective. More thoughtful of, "I need to learn." (p. 12)*

I asked Selina to speak about changes she would like to see with the ITEM program. She suggested that it would be helpful to and respectful of the Mexicans, particularly the homestay families, if the ITEMites had at least a rudimentary understanding of Spanish. She felt that not only would this be pragmatic, but that "it is to be very nice, to show interest in the culture" (p. 13). She reminded me "We don't have two official languages here. English is just an instructional language" (p. 13). She extended that idea to include the ITEM's visit to indigenous communities. She

acknowledged that although it is difficult to prepare adequately for such a visit, still, “it’s not proper preparation there” (p. 13) stressing again, that it is a gesture of respect, “having attention with the culture you are going [into]” (p. 13).

Selina pointed out that most ITEM students spend their entire practicum in one classroom, or at least, one school in Oaxaca. Many of the schools are private schools and represent a single socio-economic class. She suggested that student teachers would benefit by visiting several schools during their semester. “This group is very different from the group last year and I think one of the big differences is that they are not afraid to experiment” (p. 14). She cited the ITEM student who requested to be placed in a public secondary school. Selina was able to place her in a poor neighbourhood school where the student teacher, a francophone from Quebec, was able to teach French. Selina laughed as she recounted, “I just said to her, ‘Don’t wear a skirt! And be ready to listen to lots of whistles!’” Selina appreciated the student’s interest, saying, “I think that can make a big change, just to be interested a little more in the culture...and second, to be open to change things. I mean, sometimes we learn more from something that is more difficulty. Yes.” (p. 15).

One of my own visits in Oaxaca included observing for an hour in the public school classroom. I noted in my field book during that class,

*Most desks either have backs missing or writing surfaces torn off. We are on a busy through-way so traffic sounds and shouts come through the windowless windows. There is no door. The walls are covered in graffiti—so was the whiteboard until a staff member came in to wipe it off with some strong solvent, under H.’s pointing arm as she taught.*

*There are about 25 kids here, 13- to 14-year-olds, in uniforms—grey golf shirts, skirts for the girls, jeans for the boys. The teachers’ desk is a blue plywood box.*

*H. is teaching French. The kids are energetic and so is she. She has pale blond hair to her chin, pale translucent skin, pink cheeks and blue eyes. She smiles easily and hugely and the Mexican kids eat it up. When they laugh, she laughs. She shows them pictures of home and family and they circle her, joking, laughing, asking questions.*

*The school where Selina teaches is much different. There was a big sunlit plaza surrounded by individual classrooms. We went to the cafeteria first, furnished with red plastic chairs provided by Coca Cola.*

*The student were much more affluent—uniforms, books and classrooms with doors, windows and no graffiti. (personal notes, Nov. 10, 2004)*

Selina concluded by saying that perhaps, in the future, the program can “rotate” the students so that all students and School Associates experience a greater variety of situations and challenges, reminding me that as a teacher she recognizes that often we benefit more from things we are afraid to do, and “have the least security” (Selina, p. 15).

We concluded the interview by discussing Selina’s understanding of International Education as it relates to the ITEM program.

*Well I understand that they would be able to go anywhere and teach anywhere and get involved in the culture. Like the main goal, to be open and aware that every culture is different and they perhaps have to change methods or a class. And, as I said to them, you can see that even in the same school in the same city, every group is different. If you leave a classroom with a feeling and you come to the next class, it’s totally different. And if I said that, even your mood is different. (p. 18)*

Based on her experiences in Canada, having attended college mostly with students from Japan, Selina added that things that are challenging in a familiar environment “multiply by a hundred when you are working in a foreign country.” When asked about the philosophies and objectives of the ITEM, she hesitated.

*“Are you just guessing?” I asked.*

*Laughing, she replied, “I’m just guessing.” (p. 18)*

### **Interview with a Public Secondary School Associate**

...From the other, muteness  
that seeks a voice  
from one who has a voice  
and claims the ear of one who listens.  
The other. With the other  
Humanity, dialogue, and poetry begin.  
(Rosario Castellanos, 1990, pp. 301-302)

The School Associate for the francophone student teacher mentioned earlier had been a student in the PDP in 2003, on scholarship from Universidad Benito Juarez. Maria completed *Education 401/2* in another module while the ITEM was in Oaxaca. Before that, through the language school at Benito Juarez University, she had been a

“language partner” with ITEM students each year the program was in Oaxaca. Although Maria was otherwise unfamiliar with the ITEM, she had an experiential understanding of the PDP and life in another country.

When I asked her what she knew about the purposes of the ITEM Maria replied, “it’s a program that is focused on International Education, and I mean with International Education, multicultural classrooms and also other cultures, not Canadian. And that’s basically it” (Maria, p. 1). Elaborating on her understanding of International Education she said, “It’s to mix in the classroom cultures of both countries, in this case, Mexico and Canada” (p. 1).

As with other SAs in the south, Maria was clearer about the advantages of the ITEM’s presence for her and her students. She said,

*I am so happy because my students can hear a native speaker, that is so important. And in this school we don’t have the opportunity to have in the classroom a native speaker of French. Or in English—it’s really weird and really difficult for the school. ...And also they are not used to have a treatment with foreign people, I mean from U.S, Canada, England. (p. 1)*

Maria was a beginning teacher. We talked at some length about the emotional investment required of teachers, in particular when dealing with students from economically disadvantaged circumstances. The discussion provoked this observation: “I think that this, it’s (not?) like other feelings, that student teachers that come from Canada can experiment, this kind of feelings, this kind of “other students,” that they don’t have in Canada...” Maria was reflecting on her practicum in Canada, in a middle-class high school in a Vancouver suburb. Acknowledging that students’ problems there were not grounded in poverty she remarked, “it’s different problems from this school for example. So international student teachers can see both problems” (p. 3).

Returning to the benefits for the Mexican students, Maria observed that they could experience,

*another way of thinking. Another culture, another behavior, and I think one of the most important is that they know that if they speak French or speak English they can be in touch with other people. So it opens their world. Did you observe how they react when I told them that they would get a postcard from a boy or girl in Canada? They were, like, oh my god, I’m going to have a friend of other country. (p. 4)*



She then suggested that the benefits would be the same for the ITEM student teachers:

*They are in touch with another kind of behaviour, another kind of culture not only in class, they can be involved in another culture because they live here in the city and they have to do a lot of things like taking the bus, eating in a restaurant, things that, it's definitely different from their country. (p. 4)*

Like Selina, Maria recommended that ITEM students have the opportunity to spend time in a variety of classrooms. She also felt that if the program is to sustain its visits to communities outside Oaxaca, these visits should be longer.

*I think it's a poor town. But they spent just one day. And I think it's good if they can spend more days, like H., spend more days with other kinds of high schools because I know that their placements are in private schools or public rich schools and it's like, they have a wrong impression about public school in Mexico. (p. 6)*

When asked about the concept of exchange Maria was clear in her understanding of the benefits to both Mexicans and Canadians:

*As a language partner you teach Spanish or you teach part of your culture and also you learn about Canadians, about English. As a School Associate, I get the opportunity to be in touch with other culture and to have the opportunity to practice in the classroom. What I've got is that my students have the benefit of a new accent, of other way of teaching, new, authentic material. I think it is an exchange. (p. 8)*

### **Interview with a Private Elementary School Associate**

I am a border woman. I grew up between two cultures, the Mexican...and the Anglo (as a member of a colonized people in our own territory). I have been straddling that tejas-Mexican border, and others, all my life. It's not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions. However, there have been compensations for this mestiza, and certain joys. Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an "alien" element. There is an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being "worked" on.

(Gloria Anzaldúa, 1987, ¶ 4)

My second visit in Oaxaca was to a private Catholic school built by a grateful Arab immigrant, so I was told, who, after his education in Mexico, went on to become

one of the richest men in the country. The school is as modern as any I have seen, and beautiful, in the style of Frank Lloyd Wright: flat-roofed, alternating levels, landscaped with gardens, small pools and large, egg-like sculptures. Five-meter high windows are plentiful, admitting the light and the sky. Debra, the SA told me that the windows and 15-foot doors are intended to resist earthquakes. I commented that in Vancouver, we are on the same fault-line and she replied, in Spanish then English, "Yes, the San Andreas Fault" (personal notes, Nov. 11, 2005).

Debra is the daughter of an English mother and a Mexican father. She has served the ITEM as a School Associate for as many years as the program has been in Oaxaca and noted that she had not been teaching long when she accepted her first ITEM student. She identifies as "Saxon" and Mexican and says Spanish is the language of her emotions, the language she uses to write poetry. When asked to speak about what she knew of the ITEM, she answered,

*Student teachers come over to another country, to a foreign country to get new experiences, and as I understand it, Canada accepts diverse cultures. It's a way for them, to be teachers, to be in contact with different cultures and sort of have a wider understanding of different people.  
(Debra, p. 1)*

However, when asked about the ITEM and its program she replied, "I'm not very clear how it works...I know that I ask every year, 'Are the Canadian teachers coming?' I love having them, Canadian teachers." (p. 1)

Debra was clearer about the effects of the Canadian student teachers on the Mexican students. She said,

*It's a very good way [for Mexican students] to be in contact with the world, and to be in contact more realistically with English, in this case having people from the outside. ... I like [the Canadians] to be in contact with the students because the students get a feel that English is not just in the school or in the classroom—that it's real and it comes from other parts of the world. And I feel that it motivates the students to want to make more contact in English, with English speakers. (p. 2)*

Because she was new to the school where we met, Debra was not able to provide examples of the long-term influence of the Canadians there. She did talk about one child at her previous school who had maintained a Canadian pen-pal for four or five years, from a project initiated by the ITEM student teacher.

When asked about the benefits of the ITEM program for the Canadian students, Debra seemed clearer.

*I felt they are benefited in the sense that they are not in their country, and...especially in Mexico because it is a Third World country compared to Canada, a first world country, they come in contact with completely different situations. The constant problem that we have with the Mexican society, like the one we had two weeks ago, when the school stopped, because the streets were closed because of problems with the neighbours. I don't think this happens in societies like Canada where things work all the time in a very set pattern. In Mexico things happen all the time, different things, you know. Interruptions that we have, like Mass this morning or suddenly I had to go upstairs today. And I guess that this is difficult. I notice that Canadians are more flexible in the sense that if this happened to an English person or an American it would sort of destroy their whole, it would be like, "Oh dear!" you know.*

*It's good for them to see how in spite of so many changes...people still continue learning and the world doesn't fall to pieces. (p. 4)*

Debra used the term "Saxon," again, to describe Canadians when referring to the unpredictability of Mexican life: "I feel it's good for foreign Saxon teachers to see this." When I asked about the term she replied, "Saxons, yes, like English speaking, from a Saxon origin. I mean, Canadians. Well, not all Canadians, in this case, Canadians are different..." When I asked about this perception, Debra added,

*I have noticed that with the Canadian teachers I have met a few Eastern...she was in our school, she was very, very, she had a lot of rapport with the students in our school, and then two years ago, another one, I can't remember her name now, she was from the East too. Very nice girl. (p. 5)*

I was interested in this recollection because there have been "Eastern" student teachers of Asian origin among all of the ITEM groups to visit Oaxaca, including three from the group who were informants for my preliminary study.

Debra went on then to discuss her impressions of Canadians, generally. "Not so much open-minded, but it is a flexible society, flexible people." She compared Canadians with the British and Americans, finding Canadians less judgemental, less likely to jump to conclusions, and "willing."

Debra has three children whom she described as “mestizo, ...Indian, Spanish, English and then my husband’s grandmother was a Mennonite with a bit of French...They’re really, really mestizos, from everywhere. They have a lot of blood there” (p. 8). Continuing with the idea of “mixed” backgrounds, Debra said

*I don't feel at the moment that [my children] have a problem with nationality. Maybe I had at one point, being English and Mexican. Now I can say that I am universal, because it's very interesting and very enriching to have parents from two nationalities. My oldest girl is very proud to have an English grandmother and a half-English mother. So she nudges me in the street and says, "Speak to me in English." Before she didn't want to, but now she wants to be different and special and sophisticated. She feels sophisticated to be from another nationality. And she shows off to her girlfriends that she went to Paris. Or that she receives post cards from Holland because of an aunt that went....Anywhere that there is foreignness... (p. 8)*

Returning to the topic of teaching Debra added, “That’s why I like the Canadian teachers to come—because it gives the children depth, it gives smell, it gives them flavour. They bring Canada to Mexico. I love that” (p. 8).

When asked about the concept of an exchange, Debra stated that she didn’t see the ITEM program as an exchange. She said,

*I understand it as a group of student teachers that come to another country, completely different from theirs to learn from it and to take those influences back home and to enrich their own citizens or their own fellow citizens. (p. 9)*

She did, however, acknowledge an exchange of cultural ideas. Repeating that the school children were enriched by talk about Canada from Canadians, she added that the Canadians benefited from being in a school system where physical expression was acceptable. “The children go up and they hug and kiss them...that’s an enriching cultural exchange.” Debra also expressed an interest to come to Canada, with her children. “I would like my children to have that, to be free in many ways” (p. 9).

Debra concluded the interview with a final comment on the Canadian student teachers’ general experiences:

*I like the way you have adapted to Mexico and get into another kind of culture. I notice how they get on in their homestays here, I know that they are slow but I do know that they go to different parties. In fact when Canadians come they have been to many more places than I have in my*

*five years of being here. And so I feel that they are absorbed by the community and they see things and they learn about things that many people that live here take longer to see...They went to Santa Ana. I haven't done any of those things, you know. I feel that they come in with the kids and they integrate very quickly with them and they try to really perceive them and respect them at the same time. (p. 12)*

Debra's final comment came as a request for a more formal get-together with other SAs from other schools. She noted that in the past this had been the protocol and felt that it helped to prepare the student teachers and the SAs for the expectations of the practicum.

## **Implications**

Even in the countries with the largest surviving Native American populations, such as...Mexico...a glance at photographs of political and business leaders shows that they are disproportionately Europeans...

(Jared Diamond, 1999, p. 375)

As with the informants in Trinidad & Tobago, the data from the Oaxacan teachers fall into three general categories: the effect of the ITEM's presence in their schools, assumptions about the purposes and benefits for the ITEM student teachers, and their own ideas about International Education. The Mexican educators had more to say about the benefits of hosting the ITEM than the informants from Trinidad & Tobago. They had comparatively less to say, though, about how the ITEM students benefited from their stay in Mexico, and were as reticent as the Trinidad & Tobagan educators when talking about the concept of International Education.

Each of the informants, including the bilingual/bicultural teacher, stressed that their students benefit from contact with native English speakers. They are consistent in their assertions that native speakers, who are also "foreigners," offer authentic opportunities for their students to engage with another language and with someone from another culture. Each feels that the Canadian teachers create "openings" for the Mexican students. The Canadian presence stimulates new ways to think, provides contact with the larger world, and enhances the Mexican students' abilities and desires to communicate, generally. One of the teachers noticed that engagement with the ITEM student teachers helps her students to overcome their stereotypes of English-speaking

foreigners. Another said it adds depth to their conception of the world beyond Oaxaca and a third said that the presence of a foreign teacher in her school enhances the reputation of the school and the way the students feel about it.

When considered through the various theoretical perspectives that support this research, it is useful to understand the response of the students and their teachers through the concept of figured worlds. If the figured world of International Education, enacted, includes in its practices our abilities “to form and be formed in collectively realized ‘as if’ realms” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 49) then the enthusiasm the Mexican students have for the “foreignness” indicates that they can be “drawn to, recruited for, and formed in these worlds, and...become active in and passionate about them” (p. 49). That is, through its engagement with the students in Mexico, the ITEM can draw others into the world of International Education in such a way as to be true to the objectives of the program. In this way, the ITEM and its Oaxacan participants can nurture international relationships in the “openings” recognized by the Mexican teachers.

At the same time, although the Mexican educators, like their peers in Trinidad & Tobago, are not included in the conceptualization or design of the program, they nonetheless demonstrate the kind of agency and improvisational behaviours described by Holland et al., evident in their recognition of the material benefits available through the Canadian presence. The Mexican educators are aware that the ITEM depends on the generosity of the Oaxacans in order to enact the program. In the language of Holland et al., it is as though the Canadians and their Mexican hosts exist in separate figured worlds with “joint activities, and structures of privilege and influence—all partly contingent upon and partly independent of other figured worlds” (p. 60). Wenger would point out that the relationship is essentially a peripheral one. As educational communities of practice, the Mexicans and the ITEM share “points of contact...but they emphasize different aspects” (p. 119). The “openings” of possibility are formed at these peripheries. Unless there is more engagement in the conceptualization and negotiation of the program in these openings, the relationship between the ITEM and the educators and students in Oaxaca, “no matter how negotiable or unspoken...[reveals] discontinuities...lines of distinction between inside and outside, membership and nonmembership, inclusion and exclusion” (p. 120).

## Summary

The informants in Mexico included one bilingual/bicultural elementary teacher, one secondary teacher of indigenous ancestry and one secondary teacher who had also spent a semester in the Professional Development Program at Simon Fraser University in Canada. Each of the informants shared an appreciation for the presence of native English speakers as language models and as examples of life beyond Oaxaca. They also appreciated the involvement of the ITEM students in the community. One informant reminded us that it would be appreciated if more of the Canadians had facility in Spanish, noting that their inability to speak the language could be taxing for the host families. It would also demonstrate cultural respect if more students and faculty could speak at least some rudimentary Spanish.

As with the educators from Trinidad & Tobago, the Mexican educators were not aware of the objectives of the ITEM and had not participated in conceptualizing or planning the curriculum. Consequently, there was no mutual understanding of their purposes there, although the potential is there for more southern participation.

The next three chapters present interview data from the ITEM student teacher informants before, during and following their semesters in the south.

## Chapter 7. September

### Preparing to Go

In September, all the ITEM student teachers divide their time between on-campus orientation to the program, and visits to local schools. School visits are intended to establish initial relationships between the students and their *Education 405* School Associates, and introduce them to the classes where they will complete the long practicum that begins in January. Even though the ITEM begins before the official commencement for other PDP modules, and despite completing readings and assignments during the summer in preparation for the program, the students are anxious, excited and unsure of what to expect in their southern semester. It is a confusing time, preparing both for the imminent autumn semester in the south, and attempting to establish initial relationships for their subsequent spring semester in the north. It was under these conditions that I conducted my first interviews, some in school staff rooms, some on campus, days before the students' departure to Mexico, or to Trinidad & Tobago.

All interviews were semi-structured, their open-endedness intended to allow for individual differences and idiosyncratic concerns. The students were still tentative about what to expect, what they hoped to learn and what they understood International Education to be. From the transcripts, six themes emerged that were of importance to the student teachers. We returned to these themes in the second and third interviews.

### Comparing Educational Systems

All the students expressed curiosity about how the schools in the south would compare with their own conceptions of education, based on their personal experiences. Generally, they expected that the experience of another culture's educational system would help them to become more resourceful in their own classrooms. "How much can I bring back to teaching kids in BC?" Liam wondered (Liam, 1, p. 1). He was curious and hopeful about the benefits for those who might eventually find themselves teaching in a relatively homogenous community in Canada. Don, when describing how he thinks



differently in different languages, said he was looking forward to determining how language-related thinking might manifest itself in Mexican classrooms, and what educational applications that might provoke. All the student teachers were looking forward to their interactions with students in the southern classes, and with the teachers there. Two of the informants, each of whom had been educated in two countries, understood the value of comparing the systems. One commented, "I'm going to get a broader sense of, first of all, just education in general. [It will] make me aware of other things that maybe I myself am not even aware of at the moment, [like] dealing with the children, and different teachers" (Evelyn, 1, p. 4). The other expressed a curiosity about "how relationships are formed and what direction are they moving toward" (Rahim, 1, p. 1). One added that regardless of how she might assess the educational system in Mexico, the experience would remind her not to limit her understanding of educational practices. "Just us staying in that one training mind, like, this is the way it's done, I think it becomes very limiting" (Evelyn, 1, p. 6).

Diana wanted to look at "what they value versus what we value" (Diana, 1, p. 1) and how those values influence, or are influenced by, the educational decisions the southern teachers make. Rahim, too, was curious about moral differences and how to negotiate that—what if "they" experience our thinking as "morally wrong"? (Rahim, 1, p. 2). Reflecting on his return to Bangladesh as an adult, Rahim remembered thinking, as an initial response to the education system there, "this is so different, you know, this is not right" (p. 1). He was accustomed to being confronted with difference and was contemplating how he might perceive the education system in Trinidad & Tobago. At the same time, he wondered whether, in response to the Canadians, "[the teachers in the south are] thinking, like this is our society. This is our lifestyle. It's required" (p. 1).

According to Wenger (1998), "Different ways of looking at the world reveal different sources of continuity and discontinuity" (p. 123). Rahim, through visits to his home country as an adult, came to the ITEM with an experiential understanding of the discontinuity Wenger names when discussing the implications of locality for a learning community (p. 122). Wenger describes established communities of practice, ones that "have developed local routines and artifacts to support their work together" (p.122). Although Rahim realized that he would be faced with practices he might not be comfortable with, at this point in his semester, he had no established educational

community of his own within which to make meaning of his new circumstances. As the “ITEMites” prepared to observe communities of practice new to them, they were simultaneously developing their own community. The ITEM, at this stage, reflected this statement from Wenger: “Learning and the negotiation of meaning are ongoing within the various localities of engagement, and this process continually creates locally shared histories” (p. 125). Rahim and the other students had begun this “negotiation.” At this stage, they were asking questions that prepared them, pedagogically, for their “various localities of engagement.”

Given her new awareness that the educational system in Trinidad & Tobago has been a colonial one, Diana wondered, “How do they deal with their history?” (Diana, 1, p. 1). Diana’s question anticipated a seminar in Trinidad & Tobago by Dr. Carol Keller of UWI. In October 2004, Dr. Keller provided a thorough history of the two islands, relative to their education system. In their final interviews, all the student teachers expressed appreciation for the context provided by Dr. Keller that helped them to make sense of their experiences there.

### **International Education**

In the minds of the student teachers, it was confusing to try to separate the concept of International Education from concepts of multiculturalism, diversity issues in education, and comparative education. All were tentative as they tried to articulate their ideas. A couple stated that they were as yet unable to frame their thinking: “I guess I’ll just have to take it one day at a time and kind of develop as I go and formulate my thoughts” (Diana, 1, p. 6). Initial efforts to describe International Education included the idea of teaching in more than one country, equipped with cross-cultural or intercultural skills and perspectives that develop as a consequence and a requirement of that. Diana believed that one learns to be an International Educator by “living it” (p. 3). She felt that to be able to enact International Education, one has to become involved in educational practice outside one’s own country or at the very least, outside one’s own context.

Liam, at this stage, distinguished between International Education and International *Teacher* Education. He said,

*International Teacher Education strikes me as educating the teachers as far as cross-cultural, multi-cultural, intercultural ways, so that they're able to deal with the multicultural Canadian society...International Education—the world's becoming a small place, and many students are traversing borders and moving with their families...ESL, by nature an international type of event...my understanding of International Education would depend on whether it's my education or how I teach it to the kids. (Liam, 1, p. 6)*

Liam added that International Education included a responsibility to learn about the place where one was teaching. In discussing his previous experiences living in another country, he remembered, "I started to read up on all this stuff when I was there because this was really vital" (p. 10). He said International Education is also about "developing my knowledge of education and where it's going, particularly education as power" (p. 15).

Don offered that the profession of teaching itself can be thought of as an international body. "I'm starting to get a sort of idea that I'm also part of a community of teachers that may be 'international'" (Don, 1, p. 9). He suggested that as an architect, he might have been applying that profession, and its interrelationships, as a template to the teaching profession.

In addition to developing themselves as international educators through increased awareness, openness and understanding of diversity and difference, the student teachers talked about developing that awareness in their own students, "using that to make even the students more aware that you live in a, especially here, a multicultural society. You know, go out there and learn about these things" (Evelyn, 1, p. 6). Karen added to this by suggesting, "maybe integrating into the curriculum international resources and obviously reading up on lots of things...integrating things from different aspects and cultures and traditions and opening it up like that for your students"(Karen, 1, p. 5). She provided a personal example to illustrate her point, relating a tutoring experience with a child who had one narrow concept of what a king could look like:

*[I said], "Well, you know, around the world everybody looks different. Kings and queens can be different around the world."*

*[He said], "No! Everything should be the same!"*

*Myself, growing up, throughout school, high school and college, I kind of got tired of always learning about western history and European and that's it. I told myself that when I become a teacher I'm going to make sure I teach my students about different countries... (pp. 6-7)*

Diana expanded on this, suggesting that International Education could also require teachers and students to “figure out where things are coming from, why [we] might feel strongly one way or the other, and what in [our] background is making [us] feel that way” (Diana, 1, p. 6), offering that International Education includes not just awareness of cultural or national difference, but how these differences influence who we are and the decisions we make.

Rahim had a global vision that he applied to his initial concept of International Education. He understood International Education to be

*The connection of all the systems and theories and cultures coming together. It's the study of that. International Education is like the regional cultures and systems and studying them separately and just getting to know them more...as an international teacher it would be good for me to have an understanding of the connections and how things work in different countries. (Rahim, 1, p. 9)*

Rahim then applied his thinking to local circumstances, remarking that in his school district there are “god knows how many countries” represented. He noted that each student brings an educational history that should be acknowledged and built on, “an opportunity to mix and have success rather than to say, you know, your education is worth nothing” (p. 9). At this point, Rahim was already thinking about his role as an educator in an international community of practice. Just as Rahim acknowledges the importance of what students bring from their diverse backgrounds, Wenger emphasizes that a design for learning “must aim to combine different kinds of knowledgeability so they inform each other. A design...functions as a communication artifact around which communities of practice can negotiate their contribution” (p. 235). Whether “here” or “there,” Rahim was already “designing” what he felt was a necessary response to his students, in his concept of International Education, and his role as an international educator.

## Philosophies of Teaching

As beginning teachers, these students had already thought a lot about what teaching meant to them, and their relationship to the idea of teaching as a career or profession. All of them related to teaching from personal perspectives so that their developing philosophies included their own relationships to education and their experiences as students. In these initial interviews, they attempted to connect their emerging sense of International Education with that personal philosophical stance.

Not surprisingly, because they had all chosen the ITEM as their preferred educational program, each of them spoke about paying attention to their individual concepts of International Education, and education, generally. Evelyn's ideas were representative of the group as a whole: "becoming more aware of other cultures, or of other ways of things happening, not only in the classroom and public, but also the education system" (Evelyn, 1, p. 6). She wondered, projecting how the experience in Mexico might influence her as a teacher, "What am I going to learn? What am I going to discover about myself? And how can I use it to become better, how can I use the experience that I have there and bring it back here?" (p. 7). Karen elaborated on Evelyn's thoughts, adding that this awareness should extend to the children's families and what their circumstances bring to bear on a teacher's responsibility. "There are children here...whose parents have immigrated over" (Karen, 1, p. 1) and she expressed hope that, relative to her relationship with these families, as a teacher, "having overseas experience [would] benefit me" (p. 1).

Diana wanted, "to sit with the teachers" (Diana, 1, p. 2) in Trinidad & Tobago to examine their comparative concepts of teaching. She hoped the semester there would help her to develop a personal relationship to classroom practice that she couldn't get any other way. "I'll be teaching these guys in *their* environment. Here, we teach foreign children in *our* environment, and *that's* the difference" (Diana, 1, p. 3). Unlike most of the other informants at this point, Diana related her family circumstance to her philosophical approach to teaching. She said, "I do come from a multi-cultural family" (p. 5), acknowledging the strong influence that has had on her approach to teaching. She is of European background, that is, white, and lived with two adopted First Nations brothers until adulthood.

Rahim also connected his cultural background to his philosophical outlook—he arrived in Canada from Southeast Asia when he was 10. He views that experience as a resource, an advantage in his pedagogical relationships. When commenting on his expectations for the semester in Trinidad & Tobago, he said, “I’m going there for a purpose...I’ll probably learn more from the students than the students learn from me, right?” (Rahim, 1, p. 4). Reflecting on his own experiences as a student and how he would use those experiences to inform his own teaching he added, “You have to connect with the students first. The moment you connect with the students, then comes the learning” (p. 8).

### **Pedagogical Sensitivity<sup>17</sup>**

Each of the student teachers revealed an awareness of their responsibility to students, both in their southern practica, and in their pending careers. Although one might expect this concern to be common to all potential teachers, I have found, in my experience as a teacher educator, that it is more typical for beginning student teachers to be self-absorbed and pre-occupied with the techniques of teaching than it is for them to express any real or complex awareness of their students. Perhaps the ITEM’s focus on the students’ immersion in a new culture heightened the informants’ sensitivities—that is a question I did not ask. Their responses, however, do inform the broader research questions. If the ITEM’s philosophical and educational intent is to develop educators who can offer international education to all children, then the student teachers’ awareness of their students is important. Such a programmatic attribute has bearing on the question of whether the ITEM has something unique to offer all PDP students.

Anticipating the potential for professional development that might result from the practicum in Oaxaca, Liam commented on the “intellectual maturity” of the high school students he hopes eventually to teach. “They can really appreciate the differences in cultures and having some of these experiences to bring in to the classroom, I see it as making me a more interesting teacher to those kids” (Liam, 1, p. 1). He also felt that the

<sup>17</sup> The first of the Four Dispositions identified by the PDP as desirable attributes for teachers is “(i) Pedagogical sensitivity—understanding the primacy of the adult-child relation, its ethical underpinnings, and its pedagogical evolution...Seeing the world with children and their best interests in mind.” See *The bearing of inquiry in teacher education: The SFU experience* (Smith, 2004, p. 8).

experience would help to sensitize him to cultural differences and might help to prevent him from alienating students inadvertently: "You know, touch[ing] them on the shoulder could be an insult" (p. 1). Liam thought that the ITEM itself might model an effective response to the fact of cultural diversity in our classrooms, and our corresponding educational responsibilities:

*Just because you don't like the internationalization of the world doesn't mean it's not going to happen. So let's get ahead of it...as a teacher, prepare my students for this type of thing...with teachers like myself who've been trained this way, [our students are] going to be well prepared for the new reality of the world moving around a lot. (p. 7)*

Liam spoke for others, adding that he wanted to be able "to teach the kids and not a subject" (p. 8). Most of the informants felt that a practicum outside Canada would strengthen this resolve by further sensitizing them to the educational implications of cultural diversity and individual difference. They also expected that experience in another culture would help them to connect with their students' families, "getting to know their background, their international background...to incorporate those things in your classroom" (p. 15). Karen, like others, predicted that she would be learning from her students in her out-of-country practicum. She added that it would be important for students to be aware that teachers learn from them: "the students are learning as well as you're learning too, just opening it up like that" (Karen, 1, p. 5).

Diane hoped to witness in her southern placement "how the teachers respond to the students differently, how do children respond to the teachers" (Diana, 1, p. 1) as potential resource for new educational approaches. She confessed that initially she was most interested in the novelty of doing a practicum outside Canada. However, she quickly became curious about "what can it do to help the children that I'm going to impact in the future" (p. 6).

### **Cultural Questions**

The informants had in common a curiosity about the world beyond Canada's borders and a desire not only to hear about it, but to learn about it experientially, and to embody it for their students. At the same time, they were interested in the cultural diversity represented by their students and the community locally, and the implications

this diversity has for them as teachers. Liam had done considerable research about the area of Mexico where he would be living. “I know some of the cultures, some of the language, I know enough to start to know which direction to start looking when I’m there” (Liam, 1, p. 10). He went on to reflect on the cultural make-up of Canada, as he has experienced it in large urban areas and as he imagines it to be in more isolated communities. He talked about how International Education might look different and mean different things in different places.

*I went to high school in Calgary at a time when Calgary was just starting to get ethnically diverse, so, most of my friends in Calgary were white. You know, everybody who lived in the suburbs was white. I had a couple of friends who were of visible minorities, but for the most part everybody was kind of from that majority. Now Calgary has changed a lot. But I’m kind of thinking about some of the smaller places in Canada where there’s a lot more...small places in Saskatchewan, northern BC, where it’s homogenous and generally the dividing line is between, say, white and First Nations. It’s such an obvious divide between the two, and that’s troubling. It’s easy as a Torontonian or a Vancouverite to come and say well yeah, I’m open-minded or liberal because I can ill afford to be a racist when I’m of a particular ethnicity myself that’s of a minority. We’re all minorities. So it’s easy for me to grow up with that kind of liberal ideology. But taking that up to Ft. St. John or something like that, I wonder how I could approach it, how I could instruct that as a teacher, coming from my background where I haven’t grown up with a wrong side and a right side of the ethnic divide, or track, so to speak. I don’t know how it works up there, and I’d like to know. (pp. 13-14)*

All the students became reflective of their own cultural heritages as they approached their departure. Liam spoke about his immigrant parents and how as a result, he feels able to identify culturally with new Canadian students. Don recalled that when he was a child he was contemptuous of people who could not speak English. Now that he speaks Spanish he says, “I understand the difficulty to express myself in a different language, which is the way I got to it” (Don, 1, p. 8), meaning that he is now understanding and appreciative of linguistic difference. He added that he remembers also going through a stage of being embarrassed to be among the dominant culture in Canada. When describing himself now, he said, “I would define myself as culturally sensitive” and projected that although he was familiar with Mexico and could speak Spanish, “I’m hoping to dig deep enough to find things outside of what I know” (p. 2).



Evelyn, too, became reflective of her own cultural origins, musing about the ways her multi-lingual, multi-national background might help her to make particular connections in her southern practicum. As she considered her cultural background, Evelyn, like others, drew her sense of identity from these circumstances. She was born in Venezuela and educated there until she was 12. She told me, “it was really important to have that English because it’s your ticket to get out” (Evelyn, 1, p. 1). She wondered whether this cultural relationship to English would be similar in Oaxaca. Coincidentally, Evelyn was placed with Selina, the research informant from Oaxaca who told me Mexican students “have the idea...Only rich people can go to other countries and speak English.” Selina also believed in the idea that language learning is learning about communication. As with Diana, Evelyn’s early questions helped guide the lessons she was to learn, subsequently, from Selina and from her students.

Evelyn was also able to express her understanding of how cultural differences influence our behaviours as teachers. “You know, not just the different learning styles, but, as a teacher, how do you react to different issues that are brought up?” (p. 3). This awareness was personal.

*I consider myself Latin. I’m just Venezuelan but that’s how I see myself. I also like the fact that because I have my mom’s side that’s from Spain and my dad’s side that’s from China, we do have customs and things like that we do at home and that from my mom’s side, things that we do from Spain and going back there and connecting in that way. And then having my dad being raised in Trinidad he gives me a little bit of that Caribbean side...when we go there, my mom’s side, their Spanish is a little bit different than ours so we might pick up the accent there and do their customs. So it’s kind of, I have a little bit here and there, but yeah, I do consider myself mostly Venezuelan. (p. 5)*

Evelyn was reflective about her own cultural commitments and the implications of that as she prepared to go south. She expressed a sensitivity to the concept of nationality and how, for her, that is connected with identity. “One of the things I was afraid of, even just before becoming a Canadian citizen, I always thought, you know, if I become a Canadian citizen I’m betraying my country” (p. 5). Karen, too, although she was born in Canada, questioned her own identity when considering her semester in Trinidad & Tobago: “I don’t know if I should call myself East Indian, or should call myself Punjabi or, yeah, Canadian, or Sikh” (Karen, 1, p. 3).

Many of Diana's cultural expectations rose from research she had done about Trinidad & Tobago. She had questions about what she had read, and was wary of being limited by stereotypes: "Travel books change everything" (Diana, 1, p. 4). She also wanted to be open to the implications of culture for education, and for her professional development. She discussed the idea that through education we reproduce our cultures. "What they value versus what we value—we value independence, we value individuality, they might value something other than that...That's what I want to discover, how it works down there" (p. 1). As she anticipated the differences north to south, Diana concluded, "I think I'll kind of develop a deeper appreciation for that kind of learning" (p. 4).

Rahim had also completed an assigned research project about Trinidad & Tobago. He was excited at the prospect of stepping into another culture. "In [my home country] it's all one culture. In Trinidad it's a fusion...49% of them Muslim or Hindus and then you got African Americans [sic] and all kinds of cultures there connecting" (Rahim, 1, p. 2). As he imagined his encounters with the culture there, like most of the others, he reflected on his own background. He had come to Canada from South East Asia, although he was born in Africa. Rahim described his life in British Columbia:

*Canada, I thought it was all Caucasian people or things like that, but then my first best friend was Jewish, here in elementary school in Grade 6, and then by Grade 7, one of my best friends was Korean, one was Irish Canadian, and Punjabi and it was just, like, I always try to surround myself with not only one group but I have, get to know, all various cultures, things like that, and sometimes I feel part of that...I don't corner myself. I'm not scared to explore different cultures. (p. 6)*

He was interested in experiencing the differences between Trinidad & Tobago and Canada relative to their multicultural histories. Like Diana, he wondered, "So how does [their multicultural history] influence the people who are living there now?" (p. 5). He was interested in what he would learn by comparing their "mosaic country" to Canada. "Well, we're multicultural...we live it and we know it, we feel it...So I want to feel that in Trinidad as well" (p. 3).

## **Community**

When writing about the history of the Professional Development Program at SFU, Smith (2004) describes the focus on "community" as one of the philosophical and

pedagogical traditions of the program. He writes about the attention, within the PDP and its student teacher modules, to “community-building as a feature of learning to teach” (pp. 131-132). Smith explains that this focus is based on an “appreciation of the significance of a community sensibility in schools” (p. 132) and the belief that “communities of practice,” within the PDP and within school classrooms, when based on shared understandings and common dispositions, provide “appreciative space for inquiries into that which, dispositionally, allows a community of ‘best practice’ to emerge and evolve” (p. 132).

One of the three “Big Ideas” or themes of the ITEM is “Building Community.”<sup>18</sup> Although this theme came up less frequently among the informants of this study than it did among the ITEM graduates from the preliminary 2003 study, I felt it was necessary to explore this aspect of the data, given its basis in the ITEM curriculum. I was interested to know how or whether the students made connections with educational ideas about “communities of learning.” My own beliefs regarding community and classroom practice as supported by Wenger (1998), and as enacted within the PDP, had helped to inform the original ITEM curriculum.

In September, when the interviews took place, the student teachers related the theme of community to particular groups *outside* the ITEM, although Liam respectfully acknowledged his colleagues by ascribing a common aspect to “the people I’m associated with in this program...we come from very dynamic backgrounds” (Liam, 1, p. 3). He went on to make links with people such as his family, who arrived in Canada just before he was born. He described his parents as “looking for opportunity like many people coming from Pakistan, to Nigeria, to Portugal, all these many people of that generation in the ‘70s” (p. 12). Liam claimed a “kinship” with these various cultural groups. “My kinship is with them...I’m an immigrant, you know, a direct immigrant” (p. 12). He recognized that as a “white, blonde, tall” (p. 12) male, others might not associate him with the kinship he claims, but he feels that this immigrant group is his

<sup>18</sup> From the *International Teacher Education Module Handbook 2001, 2002, 2003*, etc. The handbook for 2000-2002 prepares new students with this statement: “In essence, we all belong to many different communities, and the ways we become a part of them and how we make meaning of them are important considerations for us as we come together as learners and teachers in classrooms; and in the larger societal and global environment” (p 4).

closest community. Liam easily made the connection between this feeling and his role as a teacher.

*Meeting [the students'] families and getting their background, their international background, trying to incorporate those things in your classroom. It almost goes without saying that to be a good Socials teacher you're going to do that. (p. 15)*

Don, who speaks Spanish well, wondered whether he would connect mostly with Mexicans, or with his colleagues, while in Oaxaca. He assumed that those student teachers who spoke little or no Spanish would consider the ITEM to be a "home base" (Don, 1, p. 1). Evelyn's question about community was similar to Don's, but hers was grounded in a curiosity about cultural connection with the Mexicans, as much as a linguistic one. "In Venezuela, they could see me and they automatically assume I'm Spanish...Now, with Mexicans, I look different than they do so they might not, and especially with my English..." (Evelyn, 1, p. 3). While wondering if the Mexicans would "claim" her, she tentatively claimed them: "I consider myself Latin" (p. 3).

Diana recognized that Trinidad & Tobago has a reputation for a strong sense of community. She suggested "Carnival" as a unifying factor. "I feel almost like there's a sense of community because the carnival brings everyone together" (Diana, 1, p. 4). As with most of the other informants, in September, she did not connect this anticipated sense of community to her colleagues or to classroom practices. Rahim, on the other hand, talked about the multicultural community where he grew up in Canada, and its influence on him and on his view of the world.

*As any other refugee or immigrant, I realized that this is a second chance. Canada is a land of opportunity and freedom and if I don't take the chance now I might never have a...so from Grade 6 I really tried to get myself involved in every area of Canadian culture and just the multiculturalism. And I feel that it has obviously changed my life drastically. And for the better. Because, from my understanding...the whole world is coming together slowly and slowly, and we're moving toward more of a global world...we do have our nationalistic views, yeah, go Canada, maple leaf! [laughs] But then beyond that, I'm sure if there's some big catastrophe the whole world will come together and that's not only for political purposes, as well as in every area of life...*

*Our education systems are there to build a society, right? That's what I figure. To build a society and to build a respectable, honest society...*

*After Grade 12, my teacher told me, "You know Rahim, whatever career you pick, pick a career that you feel passionate about. And live through your life and your career with integrity." I did listen to him...and that's when I figured, well, what do I want to do? So when can I meet the most influenceable [sic]? Kids, at a teenage level, Grade 8 to Grade 12. At that time kids are trying to figure out who they are, what their interests are, and they're trying to lay their foundations. That's where the teachers have the greater responsibility to kind of guide them in the right direction because they tend to get off track. (pp. 7-8)*

Following this passionate, meandering testimony about the way his deliberate participation in Canada's multicultural community influenced his decision to choose a teaching career, Rahim concluded by telling me about his father's warning to "watch his back" in Trinidad & Tobago. Rahim reassured his father, reminding him of his life in their "dangerous" home country. He laughed and said, "It's just about getting used to it. After a while I'll be part of the community. I think I'll blend in pretty well" (p. 13).

## **Identity**

All of the research questions for this project concerned education and the educational aspects of the ITEM program in Oaxaca, Mexico and Trinidad & Tobago. Eventually, the educational questions focus on the student teachers' development and understanding of teaching practices and their professional roles, relative to their philosophical understandings, their sense of community, and their sense of identity. The concept of identity is tied to the concept of education in the minds of many theorists and educators. Etienne Wenger (1998) states, "Issues of identity are an integral aspect of a social theory of learning and are thus inseparable from issues of practice, community and meaning" (p. 145).

Because issues of identity are so closely connected to issues of community and culture, to separate the themes sometimes felt contrived. I decided to isolate "identity" as a theme in the data, when the students themselves made it a focus of their responses to me.

Liam, as noted earlier, identifies as an immigrant with strong ties to his Irish heritage. He speaks comfortably about his understanding of this identity: "I say this in a post-modern way because I did study diaspora studies...my sense of identity is tempered by the fact that I'm aware of my sense of identity..."(Liam, 1, p.12). By this, I

understand Liam to mean that those who struggle with their own identities fall into a category that Yon (2000) might describe as ambivalent or resistant (p. 58). Liam, on the other hand, is secure in his current sense of identity and comfortable that the identity itself may not be secure. As Yon puts it, Liam is aware of identity as “elusive.”

Through his own self-awareness Liam assumes that identity development is a necessary and inevitable part of a high school student’s education. As he details his own identity on his own terms, he says, “I imagine my Guyanese friends in Toronto would probably laugh at me” (p. 58) for claiming immigrant status in the face of his white, male, heterosexual self. Still, he says he feels “ethnic” adding, “It’s the nice thing about Canada, that now we’re starting to accept that we’re all ethnicities of sorts” (p. 58).

Don, who is also a white male, son of Scottish immigrant parents, is less consciously defined by his national background and more fluid in his perception of himself in Canada and internationally. He has deliberately and enthusiastically learned Spanish over 20 years, so his anticipation of the semester in Mexico focused on the differences between Oaxaca and the other parts of Mexico he had visited. “I’m hoping to dig deep enough to find things outside of what I know” (Don, 1, p. 2) was how he articulated his expectations for his Mexican practicum. Don was the oldest member of the module and spoke of having a stronger sense of his identity than many of the others.

Don, as a gay man, and as an “anglo” who has studied abroad, commented, “I’ve been a minority, a language minority, I understand the difficulty” (p. 8) others might face who were going to be outside Canada for the first time. He told me that among the ITEM student teachers, some were openly judgmental and moralistic about his sexual orientation, but he welcomed that experience. He chose to engage the prejudice toward him as an opportunity to further his own self-understanding and to challenge those who were judgmental. “I’d like to teach with someone who I’m completely different from” (p. 6), he said. Because of his “minority” status, and because he had lived outside Canada and taken on a second language, when connecting himself to a community of international educators he stated, “I’m very moveable, I think that you should be very moveable” (p. 9).

Evelyn was also clear about her identity as a Spanish-speaking woman raised primarily in Venezuela, and educated in Canada since she was 12-years-old. She feels

an allegiance to Canada and became a Canadian citizen, but said, “I was afraid of, even just before becoming a Canadian citizen, I always thought, you know, if I become a Canadian citizen I’m betraying my country for adopting the new one” (Evelyn, 1, p. 5). Nevertheless, while identifying as a Canadian citizen, Evelyn still says “I consider myself Latin. I’m just Venezuelan but that’s how I see myself” (p. 5), and later, when referring to Spanish-speaking peoples in general she said, “It’s who I identify with, you know...” (p. 5). Evelyn’s circumstances, in particular, reinforce the importance of culture as it relates to one’s identity—although culture and identity are distinct concepts, the two, in Evelyn’s case, cannot be separated.

As she discussed her national, cultural and racial identities, Evelyn had fun with her particular mix. “I have two last names, my dad’s and my mom’s. My dad’s name is Chow and my mom’s name is Castillo...should I go with the Chow or should I go with the Castillo?” (p. 3). Furthermore, her parents gave her English names—Evelyn Margaret, not Evelina Margarita—and this too she has cobbled into her sense of self as Evelyn Margaret Chow-Castillo.

For all her clarity and acceptance with regard to her personal cultural inheritance, Evelyn remained professionally and personally open and curious about what her semester in Mexico might have to offer. Although she had always seen herself as an elementary school teacher, she was aware that in Oaxaca she had been placed in a high school. “What’s it like for me to teach high school? When I go down there, do I have any biases that I don’t even know, even though I’ve had of course exposure to different cultures?” (p. 6), and, “What am I going to discover about myself?” (p. 7).

The students who were about to leave for Trinidad & Tobago knew about the large population there whose roots are in India. Karen’s parents are also from India, and she shared questions about her own identity, provoked to some degree by her imminent arrival in Trinidad & Tobago, and an earlier course in Women’s Studies.

*My teacher was from Gujarat...we were talking about...that term “East Indian” and if we should call ourselves East Indian...It was the name of the tea company that the British had come up with...we’re not really East Indian...I don’t know if I should call myself East Indian...or Punjabi or, yeah, Canadian or Sikh. There’s so much that you can choose from...I’m still kind of confused sometimes. (Karen, 1, p. 3)*

Karen went on to talk about the experience of frequently being asked questions regarding her background. She commented that if she identifies as Canadian, “people are still not satisfied” (p. 4). As a consequence of having to define herself for others she said, “I think it makes it harder to identify yourself. I say something different to a lot of people” (p. 4).

Diana, when imagining herself in Trinidad & Tobago said, “I actually define myself I guess as a Canadian.”(Diana, 1, p. 5). She clarified that this was not a political identity but rather, cultural. While describing herself as “very patriotic” (p. 5) she added that she is still working at understanding what it means to feel Canadian. That is, as a white Canadian she continues to “understand, trying to figure out where things are coming from, why I might feel strongly one way or the other and what in my background is making me feel that way” (p. 6).

Diana also identified strongly as a teacher and was clear about integrating her personal identity with her developing professional one. As the departure date approached, Diana began to imagine the potential for professional growth available to her in Trinidad & Tobago. “Okay, a chance to travel, yes, but it’s almost secondary to what can I learn from this experience. And what can I take from it that will enable me to be a better teacher? ...what can it do to help the children that I’m going to impact in the future?” (p. 6).

Rahim was born in Libya and lived there until he was 6-years-old. As a South East Asian among Libyan children he claims a history of “understanding what multicultural means...and I consider [myself] to be a part of that” (p. 6). Thinking back to his own high school in Canada, Rahim reflected on the racially and culturally diverse population there. “Every day, you know, you group up, right?” he said, referring to the social habit of students from similar cultural communities “hanging out” together. “I used to think, like, is this really necessary?” (p. 6). Rahim mused about moving students from homogenous groups to more heterogeneously social interactions. He knew for most students it isn’t as simple as “just making friends with almost everyone,” although for himself he stated, “I don’t want to select, I want to be friends with everyone, and be a part of everything as much as possible so I can contribute and learn at the same time” (p. 12). For Rahim, personal identity is directly connected to his philosophical position



and professional vision of teaching. "We need to study global and international education because students are coming...with different educational backgrounds" (p. 10). He feels a responsibility to respond constructively to that particular diversity. "We have to make the best of it" he stated, "and that goes beyond high school" (p. 10).

### **Personal Purpose**

The third theme of the ITEM program, according to the handbook, is "Teacher as Person/Professional."<sup>19</sup> Although the student teachers did not speak directly to this theme, some of their personal and professional intents emerged through the interviews. For the purposes of this research I highlighted the comments that addressed the questions I had posed for the project.

Liam hoped the teaching experiences in Oaxaca would prepare him to teach "overseas." He also anticipated that his semester in Mexico might provide him with "a sense of how international experiences differ from one another" (Liam, 1, p. 1). He was less interested in the particulars of what he would encounter in Mexico than he was in preparing himself for what he might "bring back to teaching kids in B.C." (p. 1). By this he meant "to give them a sense of awe and curiosity" (p. 1) about the world beyond their classrooms. Liam emphasized that he has held this point of view for some time, that it was not a consequence of being in the ITEM. Through research, he had learned about the ITEM and moved from Ontario to enroll in the PDP because he felt it would complement his personal and professional beliefs. "It's something I thought about before I ever came here to start the program" (p. 3), he told me. He added that he would have taken the program even if it were only offered locally, as it was in the first three years, "because of its philosophy" (p. 7).

Don came from the corporate business world into teacher education as the oldest student in the ITEM. During the September interview, Don indicated he was most

<sup>19</sup> From the *International Teacher Education Module Handbook 2004*, p. 1. *Teacher as Person* also refers to a set of attributes outlined in *Profiles of teaching competency* (Wassermann, 1994), an instrument of "twenty behavioural profiles" used to assess the professional growth and readiness of beginning teachers. This instrument is frequently employed by Faculty Associates in their work with student teachers. The first section is concerned with "Teacher as Person." It describes teachers whose "behaviour is thoughtful," "behaviour is self-initiating," who "are reflective practitioners," who "have a clear idea about what they believe," etc.

interested in completing his semester in Mexico because he felt it was a more appealing environment than the lower mainland. He said that when he enrolled in the program “my goals were kind of to brush up the Spanish and also so that I could teach in first language...And then I saw [Oaxaca] as a kind of another classroom” (Don, 1, p. 1). Don was already looking beyond his role as a classroom teacher to other possibilities: “I would like to teach teachers [and] I would like to get a PhD eventually” (p. 10).

For Evelyn, on the other hand, the choice to go to Mexico with the ITEM was directly connected with her image of herself as a teacher.

*I wanted to be in a place where I could actually teach kids whose first language isn't English and so then that way, when I come back here...I've had a little bit of experience, I know what these kids go through, and that would help me out a little bit with the kids I meet here. As well as just looking at the Mexican education system, what do they do that maybe we don't do here in Canada, and you know, some of [the methods] could be good for here, and I can do with a little bit of transfer and just try out different methods. (Evelyn, 1, p. 1)*

Evelyn chose to attend SFU because of the teacher education program, the ITEM in particular—she enrolled with the question, “how can I use the [semester in Mexico] to become better, how can I use the experience that I have there and bring it back here?” (1, p. 7).

Karen was frank and clear: “I expect to have a good time and learn lots” (Karen, 1, p.1). She described the ITEM as an “exchange program” and added, “I’m just hoping that this experience will help me in my teaching.” Like the other five informants, Karen had been outside Canada several times before enrolling in the PDP. Like the others, she chose the program because, as she said, “I love traveling” (p. 1). The trip to Trinidad & Tobago was also appealing to Karen because, since deciding to become a teacher, she has resolved “to make sure I teach my students about different countries” (p. 7) beyond what is designated by the local curriculum. Karen expected her experiences in Trinidad & Tobago to enrich her professional resourcefulness.

Diana also “loves to travel” (Diana, 1, p. 1). Enrolling in the ITEM fit with her experiences doing “a lot of different things in different countries that aren’t touristy, and I wanted to experience that again” (p. 1). She anticipated that the semester in Trinidad & Tobago would add to her teaching competencies. “I love working with kids, I worked in

orphanages. I've worked in Australian swim schools, I've worked all over and it's always with kids, so I really felt that this sums up what I'm about. And I really want to do that internationally" (p. 2).

Diana added that she expected to be disoriented in Trinidad & Tobago. To experience that confused state would be useful as an empathetic tool for connecting with students who come to local schools from other countries. She described these children as "stripped, and I think my job as a teacher is to help them still develop who they are, while they're having these difficulties and adaptations and stuff" (p. 3). This objective is reflected eventually in Diana's self-consciousness as a (temporary) racial minority in Trinidad & Tobago. Her quest for a deeper, more empathetic approach opens her to a new awareness to which she speaks in her final interview.

Rahim had been educated in South East Asia until he was 10-years-old. He noted that the education systems in his home country and in Trinidad & Tobago originated in Britain. As well as comparing the Trinidad & Tobago system to Canada's, Rahim was interested to see how the British influence manifested itself there. "It does have its influence to the Trinidadian system, for sure, I know I'll see some similarities" (Rahim, 1, p. 1). He acknowledged that there would be a "fun" aspect to the sojourn in the south but asked the rhetorical question of himself, "are you just going to go there and party for three weeks?" (p. 9). Reiterating his earlier wish to "contribute and learn at the same time" (p. 12), Rahim focused on what he could learn from the students in Trinidad & Tobago, remembering himself before he came to Canada. "I'll get to see, as a teacher now, how did it feel back then, and how would I approach teaching those children" (p. 1).

## **Implications**

The initial interviews helped establish for me, a sense of what the students anticipated, based not only on what they already knew, but also on their sense of what they wanted to know. It is interesting to note that many of the questions they expressed in this set of interviews guided what they eventually "brought home."

Looking at the interviews through the various theories I have found helpful for this work, I find the ambiguity Aoki predicted *and* clarity of purpose among the informants. The ambiguity is evident in the students' varying concepts of identity and community,

confirming the “condition of negotiability” Wenger (1998) says is both a consequence of ambiguity, and necessary to make meaning. The identity theories help us recognize both personal and professional agency, as the student teachers locate themselves in their home communities, in the teaching profession, and in the field of International Education, while imagining themselves in the communities of the south. The proposed discourse of possibility, derived from various post-colonial voices, reminds us that the students’ beginning concepts and beliefs are located in a broad historical context which formed both the students and the communities into which they were about to enter. The social theories of learning give us a means to examine the personal and professional development of the student teachers within the parameters of the ITEM, and also help us to make meaning of the concept and enactment of International Education, specifically.

When describing what she expected to learn in Trinidad & Tobago, the delineation Diana made between what “they” value and what “we” value suggests a concept of culture according to “an understanding of difference [that] relies on an understanding of culture as the social attributes that distinguish groups” (Yon, 2001, p. 134). At this point in the program, Diana claimed the figured world of the ITEM, within its Canadian context, as her “frame of meaning within which interpretations of human actions are negotiated” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 271). As she prepared to enter the community and education system of Trinidad & Tobago, Diana reviewed her position, one of privilege—she had the means to take the trip and spend the time in the south—and of deference—she anticipated that she would learn from the teachers there. We see in Diana’s preparations, the “practiced identity” (p. 271) that characterizes agency available to individuals within their particular figured worlds. A question that opened here, is how or whether Diana’s figured world(s)—of culture, or International Education—would evolve as she enacted more or less agency, improvisation, whether she would accept that “space of authoring” (p. 272) in response to what she would encounter in the world “down there.”

What most of the students wanted (and needed) to know had to do with confronting the education systems in the south, within a context that would help them to learn from it. In the case of the student teachers who went to Trinidad & Tobago, through Dr. Keller’s seminar they would begin to acquire what Wenger (1998) calls “a repertoire

of negotiable resources accumulated over time” (p. 126). This developing repertoire not only would help the students understand various educational practices in Trinidad & Tobago, it also contributed to the development of community within the student teacher group itself.

Liam was able to make connections regarding the concept of community through his own identity as an immigrant. From this he extrapolated the importance of knowing his students' backgrounds and extending himself, as a teacher, to their parents. He was already imagining classroom community and envisioning how to teach to that idea. He evokes Yon's (2000) description of “Maple Heights” students in Toronto. About that school, Yon writes, “I have drawn upon the concept *routes* rather than *roots*<sup>20</sup> as a way of thinking about differences between culture as fixed attributes and culture as process” (p. 134). Yon, like Liam, takes this perspective in order to “help us to engage the complex ways of belonging and becoming” (p. 134) reinforcing the importance of a sense of community and participation in a figured world.

The student teachers who communicated the most confidence about their own sense of identity were the two white male informants. They had common British ancestry that, I believe, consciously or not, links them to an original Canadian colonial identity. They may not have claimed this identity, but within the context of their Canadian childhoods, such a status will have been conferred on them. They were both clear about entering into this project from a particular stance, an authorial stance that I believe has roots in their status as white Canadian men of British ancestry.

Although they had this confidence in common, and it was Don who claimed to be fluid in his identity, Liam, I think, had the more fluid sense of himself. Don seemed to base his idea of adaptability on his comfort in unfamiliar situations. I interpret that sense of comfort to be connected to his own, more modernistic sense of self. Whereas Don seemed to have a relatively static concept of identity, his own and others', Liam, commenting on his “mobile” Canadian/Irish diasporic background, was more open to the

<sup>20</sup> Coincidentally, early ITEM programs began with an activity called “Routes and Roots.” At the beginning of the *Education 401/2* semester, student teachers located their diasporic journeys on a world map, providing family pictures and at other times, accompanying narratives. This activity was, and still is, reproduced in the classrooms of many ITEM graduates, functioning as a community building activity and curricular connection.

idea of questioning the concept of identity itself. He recalls some of the young men described in Daniel Yon's (2000) high school study. Yon says of those students, "the very act of naming one's identity is also a moment of recognizing the limits to the name" (p. 59).

Diana was emphatic about her nationality—as the only white woman in the group of informants, she described herself unequivocally as Canadian. Don, Liam and Diana shared a certain clarity, self-confidence, and cultural history but their individual sensitivities were, in due course, expressed very differently.

Rahim linked his concept of identity with community, and early on expressed his desire to become a part of the society he was to discover in Trinidad & Tobago. True to his word, while in Trinidad & Tobago he deliberately sought to blend in with the surrounding community. Consequently, much of his learning there, like Diana's and Evelyn's, was built on his anticipatory questions. "Communities," Wenger (1998) writes, "hold the key to real transformation—the kind that has real effects on people's lives" (p. 85). In September, the student teachers, through their questions about communities in the south, the links they were trying to make regarding their purposes there, and through participating in the evolution of their own ITEM community, were preparing for the transformative education Wenger (1998) predicts.

Rahim also recognized the significance of addressing the various identities of his potential students. This indicates his initial awareness of the importance of the relationship between "students...with different educational backgrounds" and education. Rahim echoes Yon (2000) who says, referring to schools and schooling, that our concept of education "cannot be divorced from the larger social context of the global city, wherein the school is located" (p. 126). Rahim, in his first interview, perceived that "difference, globalization, diaspora, and identity...may expand the parameters of the knowledge which we bring to bear on questions of community" (p. 126) and, in Rahim's case, on International Education.

As they engaged the concept of International Education, all of the informants, with the exception of Don, expressed an interest not only in the idea of International Education, but also in the process of understanding and contributing to it. What is not

evident is a shared or individual concept of “nation.” Their ideas about “international” seemed instead to come from a multicultural perspective.

Don’s unique approach to the concept of International Education involved applying a template from his former profession to help him organize his thinking about teaching. He suggested that as with his life as an architect, as a teacher he would have a community, internationally, that might have implications for his own practice and professional development. “[P]lac[ing himself] in [its] social field, in degrees of relation to—affiliation with...—identifiable others” (Holland et al. 1998, p. 271), Don began to explore the parameters of this figured world of education, not in terms of its purpose, but of its affiliations.

As mentioned earlier, those most clear about and comfortable with their identities were the two “anglo” men. Employing a culturalist view, I suggested that these two have been positioned relatively securely, in the context of their Canadian upbringing, through socially powerful discourses. In the theory of figured worlds, Holland et al. assert that these men are “identified, and identify themselves, in the context of their affiliation or disaffiliation with” (p. 33) certain forms and practices. When located in other contexts, as students in Mexico, in this case, how might their identities be influenced? In what ways would the ITEM “distribute” (p. 41) these men in the Mexican context, what affiliations would they make, and how might their own improvisation and agency affect their sense of identity as teachers and International Educators?

Liam addressed the idea of affiliation obliquely, with his remark regarding the relationship of power to International Education. He is aware of the colonial aspects of education, not only concerning what an education might confer such as white male privilege in his own case, or, a means of escape from poverty, for example, but also for what an education system might reinforce. When Liam spoke of “education as power,” he was acknowledging the way education often reinforces social circumstances—the political hierarchies to which Spurr (1993) refers—as well as to its liberatory potential. I believe that Liam, who seeks to participate in International Education and to be an International Educator, was articulating an exploration of what Holland et al. (1998) call “positional identity” within a figured world. That is, he was speaking about “acts that constitute relations of hierarchy, distance or perhaps affiliation” (p. 128), in this case, the

acquisition of an education in order to alter one's place in a hierarchy. He was also speaking about the power one already has as an educator to reinforce one's current "affiliation" with and within one's figured world(s). Given the current and developing status of International Education, and the moral perspective Liam revealed in his later interviews, I think Liam was speaking about taking a responsible and ethical position when enacting the conventions of the figured world of International Education. His comment exemplifies "the development of social position into a positional identity" (p. 137) as described by Holland et al. At the beginning of his year in the ITEM, he was already speaking about who he might be, and the consequent power he might have, at the conclusion of the program.

As the students responded to the question, "What, at this point, is your understanding of International Education?" they began participating in what Wenger (1998) refers to as negotiability. He says that to make meaning, we connect through our identities. By beginning to identify as International Educators the ITEMites were negotiating the concept of International Education and what they believed to be their role in it. Wenger says,

Negotiability refers to the ability, facility and legitimacy to contribute to, take responsibility for, and shape the meanings that matter within a social configuration. Negotiability allows us to make meanings applicable to new circumstances, to enlist the collaboration of others, to make sense of events, or to assert our membership. (p. 197)

Through this negotiation I heard the students begin to contemplate the meanings and to consider their membership in the figured world of International Education. Like Liam, others spoke of an ethical as well as philosophical concept, negotiating culture and ideas about teaching and learning all at once.

Karen, Evelyn and Rahim made connections early on, between concepts of identity, culture and the practice of International Education. In September, Karen first spoke about what Yon (2000) calls her "diasporic identity" (p. 57). It became a theme for her throughout the program. The questions Karen asked in September guided the way she made meaning for herself, and eventually for her students. At this stage, Karen represented what Wenger (1998) called "identity as learning trajectory. We define who we are by where we have been and where we are going" (p. 149).



All of the students engaged the concept of International Education throughout the program through personal experiences, developing a sense of “identity as a relation between the local and the global” (p. 149). Rosa Hernández Sheets (2005) establishes relationships among language, culture, identity and cognition. She reminds us that as teachers, we inevitably impose an “ethnically influenced orientation” (p. 65) in our classroom practices. In the data from the interviews, I found many direct and implied references to the students’ developing sense of identity and the ways this awareness influenced their evolving ideas about teaching, learning and their relationship to the profession and to the concept of International Education.

Absent in the students’ discussions about their upcoming semester in Oaxaca or in Trinidad & Tobago, are questions about what their hosts might expect. Granted, these interviews were conducted at a busy and anxious time when the students were preoccupied with preparations for departure. Nevertheless, with the exception of Evelyn, who voiced a curiosity about how her particular cultural orientation might be read by Mexicans, and whether she might impose her own cultural orientations in significant ways in her classroom, there seemed only to be presumption that theirs was a universally beneficial, welcome project. Similarly, only Rahim and Liam addressed the issue of race, and what some of the implications that politic might have for educational and social dynamics in the south.

None of the students offered a critique of the implications the ITEM might have for the southern residents. If we consider the ITEM to be a kind of research project, given that it is designed for Canadian student teachers to “get” an education from their experiences in the south, we might look to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) as she describes “amateur” researchers who studied (among) the Maori. She writes, “These encounters remain influential in that they also involved an attitude” (p. 83) on the part of the researchers toward their hosts, “confidants...and close friendships” (p. 83) notwithstanding.

The student teachers seemed unaware that the ITEM is part of a complicated tradition of one-way research. Smith reminds us, “There is a direct relationship between the expansion of knowledge...and the expansion of empire” (p. 88). I realize that as a

researcher of the ITEM students, and one who has herself sought “knowledge” from the southern educators associated with this project, I too am implicated in this relationship.

Finally, the data reveals no curiosity among the student teachers about the residential differences from site to site. In Oaxaca, the students live with Mexican families in their homes. In Trinidad & Tobago, the students live in residence at UWI, with other “foreign” students. The question was never raised to me, nor did I ever hear a student ask why homestays are not also part of the “immersion” of student teachers who spend the semester in Trinidad & Tobago.

## **Summary**

Unlike the presentation of interview data from the educators of the southern sites, in this chapter I have synthesized the interviews of all the student teacher informants, combining those of both sites. From the student teacher transcripts in response to my questions, I identified eight categories or themes that either preoccupied the students, or which were subject to my research, summarizing comments and questions from all six informants in their respective thematic sections. I tried to include contradictory perceptions, as they presented themselves, as well as to establish any common themes and interests. I tried also, to point out where there were silences.

Because these interviews took place prior to the student teachers’ departure, the data from their responses reveal an anticipation of site-specific circumstances and experiences. At the same time, the student teachers are interested in educational issues, generally. I concluded with a theoretical assessment of the implications the data have for the research and for the evolution of International Education as a concept and a practice.

In the next chapter I present data and analysis from the on-site interviews.

## Chapter 8. On Site in the South

...it would be helpful to and respectful of the Mexicans... if the ITEMites had at least a rudimentary understanding of Spanish... 'It is to be very nice, to show interest in the culture... We don't have two official languages here'.

(Selina, 2004, p. 13)

### Wish You Were Here

To interview the student teachers during their practica in Trinidad & Tobago, and in Oaxaca, Mexico, I flew to the southern sites in the fall. My first visit was with the ITEM in a suburb of the capital city of Port of Spain. There, I stayed in an apartment with Paul Bishop, the Faculty Associate, while participating in the events of the week as organized for and by the students. During the week, the students were in schools, in classrooms with children and School Associates and, also, on campus participating in workshops and presentations.

Despite the heavy heat and humidity of October, the campus classroom at the University of the West Indies (UWI) was surprisingly cold—Paul had recommended that I bring along my polar fleece as a defence against the enthusiastic air-conditioning. It was under these conditions, zipped into my northern jacket, that I conducted my first interviews there.

By contrast Oaxaca, in November was fresh and mild, warm enough to work in shirt-sleeves, but cool at night. Like Trinidad & Tobago, the sun shone every day. There was no rain, however, and no oppressive humidity. Two of my student teacher interviews in Mexico were conducted in the schools and a third at my *pension*. In Mexico, too, I was involved with the program every day as a visitor, and as the instructor for the students' undergraduate course, *Education 370*.

While in the south, the students were less concerned with comparing the school systems than they had anticipated in the first set of interviews. They were most preoccupied with living in a culture that was different from home. It has been my observation that at this stage of professional development, most students are only vaguely aware that schools themselves have distinctive cultures within the larger culture

of their surrounding communities. As the Canadian student teachers negotiated life as foreigners in the larger community, so did they engage with cultural aspects particular to their school classrooms. Unlike the students in Trinidad & Tobago who live in the university residence, the student teachers in Oaxaca live with Mexican families where they are immersed in particular family dynamics as well as immersed in the Spanish language. Don reflected on this experience: "I've one family and one teacher. And I don't necessarily think my family or my teacher are indicative of all other families and teachers in Oaxaca" (Don, 2, p. 3). Where others may have been tempted to generalize from their experiences, Don kept in mind that his circumstances were better assessed for their particularities than for their representative possibilities.

### **Comparing Educational Systems**

The students understood that because of the purposes of the ITEM program, they were expected to think about differences in the school systems and styles of education. Because of their limited experiences as pre-service teachers in British Columbia schools, however, they had little data with which to compare. I had the impression that although they didn't yet feel qualified to assess the two systems, relative to each other, they were conscientiously attentive to the contexts of the southern schools and the relationships they were establishing with the students and teachers there.

Like Liam, they all mused about whether their teaching would change when they began to teach in the north. He said, "The way I'm teaching here might be quite different from the way I teach back in Vancouver" (Liam, 2, p. 31). Don fantasized about a scientific study that would make it possible for him to "take exactly what I have done in Grade 3, take that to an identical Grade 3 classroom in Canada and first of all, look at it culturally and how [the students] are going to perceive it" (Don, 2, p. 2). Evelyn, who like Rahim, had been schooled in two different countries, not only wanted to compare her classroom with what she remembered of Canadian and Venezuelan education, she was interested in looking at individual classroom differences in Oaxaca, as well as teaching variations according to subject area.

*One thing that I wanted to do was just see the different...like, for math or chemistry or things like that, just to see how they teach it...It's not only*

*English, but other subject matters. Because you can pick up so much from other people. (Evelyn, 2, p. 14)*

Evelyn also reminded me that in Venezuela, she had only attended private schools. Because most of the ITEM student teachers in Mexico were placed in private schools, Evelyn added, "I want to see just working in a public school, because I never really was in a public school in Venezuela" (p. 15).

Similarly, Rahim, was interested in other subjects not only for methodology. He added, "I would like to try a variety of things, cross-curricular activities as well as have the students be more active" (Rahim, 2, p. 5). Rahim wanted to observe and to teach in ways that were new to him and to the students in the southern classrooms. Like Evelyn, Rahim made comparisons between the school where he was placed in Trinidad & Tobago, and the schools he had attended as a child.

*I'm really trying to relate it to Bangladesh...I see how it's different, I see how they are different. How the exams are so important to students. Why they are important to students. How the socio-economic backgrounds are affecting the students as well as the learning style, the teaching style...I'm going back to my grade two to five time. (p. 6)*

Rahim also commented that being immersed in the education system in Trinidad & Tobago had already begun to effect change in him. "I can already feel inside me that I am going through some changes...Where does it fit into the bigger picture?" (p. 6).

Diana and Karen had very different reactions to their schools in Trinidad & Tobago. Karen stated that although the school system there is very different from the one in British Columbia, "I didn't feel awkward at all...I felt connected to it" (Karen, 2, p. 8). She attributed her comfort to the fact that "I know a little bit about Islam" (p. 6), as she was placed in a Muslim school. Although she was Sikh, she identified closely with the students and faculty of Indian background. Diana, on the other hand, said, "All I'm doing every day is questioning" (Diana, 2, p. 5). Her questions were not just about the schools in Trinidad & Tobago, but about education in Canada.

*I did come down here, thinking, you know, Canada is, like it's Canada, come on! It's like a really great education system. And I'm questioning our system now! Which I hadn't done before I'd come. 'Cause I was like, it's Trinidad, you know, back home everyone says, oh, it's a Third World country, it's very poor you know, you'll really help. It was always, "You're going to help, you're going to help these people." But not "You're going to*

*learn, you're going to learn from these people." I feel like I'm learning from them way more than I'm helping them, which I think is not expected.*  
(Diana, 2, p. 3)

Listening to Diana, I thought again of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999). "[P]eople 'of colour', the Other, however we are named, have a presence in the Western imagination, in its fibre and texture, in its sense of itself, in its language" (p. 14), and she might suggest that Diana, too, had been invested with this imaginative presence.

Diana's surprise was replaced by questions about education in Canada, and education more generally. By the time we met for the interview in October, she had begun to interrogate her own assumptions. Diana told me that many of her expectations were a result of conversations she had had with friends in Canada who were from Trinidad & Tobago, originally. She said, "One of them, her dad's chief of police in Port of Spain" (p. 4). Yvonne Brown (2005) remembers, when writing of her experience growing up in Jamaica, under a similar education system as that of Trinidad & Tobago, "From the official knowledge regimes the colonized others learn their inferior worth" (p. 229). I wonder whether the Trinis who informed Diana, also bore the sense of that "inferior worth" identified by Brown.

Diana believed that had she not enrolled in the ITEM, she would not have been so inclined to "ask why" (Diana, 2, p. 5) of the system at home. Like Karen, she was moved by the lecture by Dr. Carol Keller, the Dean of Education at UWI. His seminar provided an historical context for the education system there. Karen said, "He talked about the history of education in Trinidad and about Caribbean people...I've been making a big connection with that" (Karen, 2, p. 10). Similarly, Diana referred to "that lecture on why Trinidad & Tobago schools are the way they are" (Diana, 2, p. 5) and remarked that her consequent questioning of the system at home is "more of an in-depth level that I don't think I would have gotten" (p. 5) had she been in another program.

As early as October, Don, in Oaxaca, was also thinking about the ways particular attention to educational issues may be culturally driven. For example, he referred to programs in British Columbia that attempted to address bullying. He discussed these with his School Associate.

*We've gotten into a dialogue about bullying. And [anti-bullying programs are] not something that's in the Mexican school system. They're just like,*

*oh, that's children. Boys will be boys. But [my SA] doesn't feel that way, and certainly I don't think the BC education system looks at it that way, and I don't come from a personal feeling that way, so we've been able to dialogue on that. (Don, 2, p. 7)*

Don's description of the conversations he had with his School Associate represent what Wenger (1998) describes as communities of practice where one group will "let outsiders in to some extent, usually in the course of providing or receiving a service" (p. 117). These instances, according to Wenger, "present opportunities for learning for both" (p. 117). Wenger refers to these exchanges as "the opening of a periphery" (p. 117) and adds that peripheral relationships can represent "a very fertile area for change" (p. 118). As the ITEM, as a newly developing community of practice, or figured world, connects peripherally with the established education systems in the southern sites, exchanges occur, like the one between Don and his School Associate, that can generate a particular kind of learning that is unlikely to occur independently, within the boundaries of each community. For Don, this dialogue reinforced a "Canadian" position on bullying. For his School Associate, it supported a position she felt was not culturally compatible with others in her own figured world, or community of practice. This peripheral relationship may at times also exist as *Nepantla*, the in-between space where "you question the basic...tenets...inherited from...your education" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 548) and where change or transformation occur.

### **International Education**

Despite a cynical assessment of the ITEM expressed by Liam's School Associates in Canada, Liam valued the idea of International Education and the efforts of SFU to provide a program that attempted to contribute to that concept. In fact, because of what he perceived to be a narrow view of International Education among the teachers at the school where he would do his long practicum in British Columbia, Liam was inspired to get as much as he could from the experience in Mexico.

*I anticipate a lot of the Social Studies teachers at my school who are graduates [of another university] are somewhat resistant to this whole thing—I mean, for me going out and getting a tan, in Mexico. They were resistant [in September] and they'll be resistant when I come back with a tan. And I was all about arguing for the benefits of the program and*

*everything. Hands on experience? I'm not sure. It's untested ground.*  
*(Liam, 2, p. 32)*

Liam continued, stating that the experience so far, had provided “the rudimentary equipment to think about” (p. 9) the concept of International Education. Reflecting on the students in his classroom in Canada he commented that he had had them provide biographies so that he could learn about their backgrounds “to later build a rapport with each individual. So as an international teacher and how that can effect me, it’s almost like each one of them brings a whole world to me that I can tap into” (p. 15). Whereas the teachers in his Canadian practicum tend to ignore their students’ countries of origin, according to Liam, Liam instead was beginning to see that International Education could provide a framework for establishing a kind of mystery in his classes. The teacher and the students, given their various backgrounds, “lead some other life. I thought that this is something that could work for me because I have the other life. You can allude to things, international experiences...it draws children in...” (p. 12). He went on to say that his personal background, and the backgrounds of each student, gives them “possession of knowledge that nobody else has” (p. 12) and that this “mystery” knowledge can be used as a tool to encourage students to engage personally in the concept of International Education.

Liam also looked at International Education as the practice of teaching in various countries and the burden that places on the teacher: “The students [in Mexico] do expect, I guess, me to have some understanding of what our role is as teachers [here], their role as students, their interactions with each other” (p. 9). He also tried to be mindful of occasions when “I’m imposing some of my cultural values on them” (p. 9). He was referring, in this case, to the Oaxacan habit of whistling at one another for attention. Liam disliked being whistled at and asked his students not to do it. “You can’t judge the culture, it’s been around a couple of millennia longer than I have, but I can judge what I want to take from it” (p. 10). I thought of Aoki’s “space of tension” when Liam spoke of cultural habits he found unacceptable. In the discourses of International Education, Liam raises a question examined by Yon (2000) who writes about “subjects who are producing and acting upon structures even as they are constrained by them” (p. 126). As he explored and enacted International Education, simultaneously, he was “constrained by” habits and expectations with which he was uncomfortable.



Other student teachers at this stage in their professional development still felt that they had yet to formulate a concept of International Education. “I don’t know that I still get that” (Don, 2, p. 1), “I think I’m still working on it” (Evelyn, 2, p. 1), and “International Education is becoming to mean to me [something that is] about identity, finding out who you are and where you fit, especially when you’re traveling” (Karen, 2, p. 2). Don resisted generalizing his experience to represent the concept of International Education. He said, “I am immersed in that I live with a [Mexican] family...they feed me a lot of the clues. But by the same token I’m only getting an individual experience” (Don, 2, p. 3). He added, “The thing I’m learning internationally is that kids are all the same” (p. 3) and went on to say, “but they also do come with different underlying things that you may not see. So there’s a language underneath those obvious pieces that I don’t know that we fully understand yet...some of it’s cultural and some of it’s individual” (p. 3).

Evelyn felt that she would better be able to formulate a concept for International Education “once I get back to Vancouver and then I start comparing my experiences here, and then teaching there, *then* I’ll be able to have a set definition, or maybe just a working one for every different place I go” (Evelyn, 2, p. 1). Evelyn discussed different definitions or practices of International Education depending on each teacher’s experience. When referring to another student teacher among her group in Oaxaca, a young woman whose initial education and roots are in east Asia, Evelyn said, “For us it’s different because we’ve experienced [education] in a different way” (p. 8). When reflecting on some conversations within her student teaching group that she felt had been judgmental of Mexican habits she said,

*For people of North American culture, they bring their views and that’s just the way they see it, and they do, and by just completely blocking off, how can you understand something if you haven’t really just allowed yourself to be open to it instead of just bringing in your views and letting that cloud your vision....you have your views but at the same time you have to be open to what else it could mean...I think it’s a bit easier for me because I’ve had the chance to experience various cultures even within my family. (p. 8)*

Evelyn was speaking of the potential of an international educational experience like the ITEM to open up students to educational and cultural possibilities. She was also commenting on the potential for the program to set students up to develop or reinforce

prejudices by applying their own understandings to unfamiliar, and sometimes uncomfortable circumstances. This concern is consistent with Brown (2005), Smith (1999) and Willinsky (1998) who remind us that we have been educated to see the world and others in particular ways.

Evelyn continued to think about her own concept of International Education, imagining herself teaching in other countries, "Would I be able to fit in...is that something I could do?" (p. 9) and whether the experiences she was having in Oaxaca were helping her to prepare for this. At the same time, she wondered about the students in her high school class in Oaxaca, and where they fit in the concept of International Education.

*Having [teachers] coming in from Canada all from different backgrounds, and seeing that they are not just "hueros,"<sup>21</sup> they have other cultures or they've been to other places. And that kind of interests them as well. Which is, a lot of them want to leave and check out other places, you know, go travel in the States, or learn English, or even Canada, and even just going abroad as well. So it gives them a chance to actually see and explore. "Oh, you know, if they can do it, we have other options as well!" I'm seeing that from them. (p. 12)*

Evelyn's thinking mirrored that of her School Associate, Selina. Although Selina had lived in Canada, she was committed to remaining in Mexico. She deliberately tried to model by her own example, and through the ITEM, possibilities for her students beyond Oaxaca.

As with students from other years, Diana had begun to think about International Education as an approach, or a state of mind. "International teaching is really making me question things, which is good" (Diana, 2, p. 5). Rahim took that idea a step further when he spoke about "new meaning," explaining with his physicist's mind the phenomenon of various cultures and peoples "coming together in a fusion and creating something that is completely new" (Rahim, 2, p. 2). He also made the distinction between International Education and an "international *teacher*. At the moment I would go back, I wouldn't feel that I am only a Canadian teacher because I've already experienced teaching in another country" (p. 3). He added that this experience would help him to

<sup>21</sup> *Hueros* is slang for "white people" or "anglos."

look for different learning styles as well as to sensitize him to “where kids are coming from” (p. 3).

### **Philosophies of Teaching**

In the September interviews, the informants had spoken generally about their personal relationships to the profession of teaching and the connection between that, and the themes of the ITEM. For the most part they were just beginning to construct a philosophical perspective and were open to how this would be informed by their experiences in Trinidad & Tobago, and in Oaxaca. All of them understood that “international education,” as an attribute of this credo, was implied in the PDP expectation that they would develop “a clear, coherent and justified view of education” to include a “personal vision of what one can achieve as an educator.”<sup>22</sup>

Liam assessed his developing pedagogical beliefs by commenting on the resourcefulness necessary “when you don’t have a lot to work with” (Liam, 2, p. 3). He and the other informants had quickly become aware of the relative poverty of their host schools. Even the private schools in Mexico, when compared with schools in British Columbia, had comparatively fewer material resources. As Liam noted, “You’re not using technology to teach” (p. 3). In the case of some schools, even pencils were scarce.

The student teachers focused on the responses of the southern students to their teaching, and to the relationships necessary to become effective teachers. Liam compared what he was doing in Oaxaca, with what he imagined he might have been doing had he remained in the lower mainland for this semester. “I think the stress for me in Vancouver, the accent on my learning experience would be totally about teaching...forgetting that the teacher is a whole person” (p. 3). Considering “the whole person” Liam understood his international experiences to be integral to his teaching identity and philosophies. He believed this was also characteristic of the other ITEM students: “Most of the people in this group have traveled before, and they’re a bit ‘lefty’

<sup>22</sup> From the 12 Professional Development Program Goals, *PDP Handbook 2004-05*, p. 2 (see Appendix A).

and so because of that, we're maybe more receptive," suggesting that the ITEM student teachers can and expect to be influenced professionally by their lived experiences. I take this to mean that Liam's developing sense of International Education includes professionals who, at least theoretically, seek Nepantla, "the place where different perspectives come in to conflict" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 549). In Wenger's (1998) words, Liam envisioned International Education as a community of practice to be challenged by situations that can become "the occasions for the production of new meaning" (p. 84).

Liam studied the diversity in his Mexican classroom and made links to what he expected to find in Canada. Because of the large mestizo<sup>23</sup> population and the subtleties of race and cultural mixing, Liam asserted that in his Oaxacan classroom "the lines are finer" (p. 11) than he knew them to be in British Columbia. He was learning to appreciate that although visually, a class may appear to be homogenous, there may be diverse, fine distinctions among them. "So having to learn those distinctions within the class...indigenous, mestizo or ethnicities or identities...I think I can probably accept those finer lines when I go back, as well" (p. 11).

In addition to his respectful approach to student identity, Liam recognized the place of diversity, philosophically speaking, as it relates to culture and ethnicity but also of experience. He was committed to including students' experience curricularly, as well as to helping them establish an identity for themselves. He saw this as an educational goal. He referred to Rahim and others whose origins are in South East Asia but who have lived much of their school lives in Canada. "Rahim [was] in one of those no-places. He [was] re-identifying, re-establishing...and Michael...he's really in a difficult spot, he's not white...he's had to create an identity of 'on the bridge' so to speak" (p. 19). Liam linked these circumstances to what he understood to be his responsibility as a secondary school teacher. That is, he believed he should be supportive of students who were struggling with their identities and saw his experiences in Oaxaca to be developmental to this end.

*I become frustrated with myself because I'm used to communicating at a certain level...and find myself reduced to being a child. I have to start*

<sup>23</sup> *Mestizo* refers to people of mixed ancestry, and most often implies an indigenous heritage combined with other cultures, in this case, Spanish or other European peoples.

*thinking like an eight year old, communicating like an eight year old...it's those experiences I remember...I know what it's like to be a language learner, immersed in a culture. (p. 6)*

Don added to the connections between language, culture and education. He said, "there is a language that's underneath those obvious pieces that I don't know that we fully understand yet...Some of it's cultural and some of it's individual" (Don, 2, p. 4). Both Don and Liam connected the personal and cultural to their developing philosophies.

Don pointed out that just as the ITEM students in Mexico took their experiences with them into their classroom practices, so might teachers do that "at home." He said,

*All the visits to the museums, all the visits to the other schools, all the restaurants you go to, all the cafes you go to, everything you experience that you have in the street, all the mescal drinking that Angela's been doing, it's all cultural, you can see that it informs what you do in the classroom. And maybe that's innate, in Vancouver, maybe everything you're doing is filtering into your classroom. (pp. 3-4)*

It isn't possible to know whether Don would have developed this insight had his semester been conducted in his home territory. I would argue, though, that this insight comes more quickly in a "foreign" environment. Because the students understand that everything they do in the south is intended to be educational, the minutiae of daily life tends to be inspected for its educational implications in a way that is less likely at home. A student from the preliminary study in 2003 explained to me that she considered herself to be a student 24-hours a day, while she was in Oaxaca. She took it on as an identity and an assignment. For many, this intensity enables an accelerated learning opportunity. In this case, Don quickly learned to appreciate that "communities of practice are...part of broader constellations in which their learning is relevant. Every practice is hostage to its own past and its own locality" (Wenger, 1998, p. 234). Every practice also has the potential to be richly informed by its own past, and its own locality, in home localities, as well as "away."

Each of the student teachers was provoked by experiences in the south to look carefully at what they believed to be important in their commitment to teaching. For Liam, teaching in Mexican classrooms reinforced and broadened previous out-of-country experiences and the meanings he drew from them. For Don, connections were clarified between who teachers are outside our classrooms and what we bring "in" to our work.

For Diana, the contrast between north and south, religious and secular, rich and poor, colonial and Canadian caused her to question everything she thought she understood about teaching. "I'm questioning everything: who I am as a teacher, what kind of teaching, who I am as a person...This is time to reflect. So I'm really looking into it, even the religion aspect" (Diana, 2, p. 5). Diana was also influenced by her School Associate in Trinidad & Tobago to look closely at "the backgrounds of the children...she's really teaching me how to feel about the children's pasts" (p. 7).

Evelyn commented on the experiences of student teachers who did not speak Spanish, as they became immersed in Oaxacan daily life. Her bilingualism helped her to connect with the Mexicans, but she observed where this was difficult for others. "If you spend the first month resisting...you kind of miss out on a lot" (Evelyn, 2, p. 10). Seeing this, Evelyn committed to "being open to it." She described her responsibility to get the most from unfamiliar circumstances: "It all depends on how much effort, how willing you are...you've got to step up to the plate..." (p. 11). For Evelyn, the degree of commitment and confidence necessary to take on new challenges—she was placed in a high school although she is a primary teacher—helped reinforce for her an attitudinal aspect to her philosophical perspective.

In Trinidad & Tobago, Karen immediately felt comfortable working in the Muslim school. She compared this with her feelings in her practicum school in British Columbia. "The school back home I did not connect with right away...I think that had a lot to do with the fact that the majority of that school was actually Caucasian" (Karen, 2, p. 7). She had previously volunteered in other schools "which have more 'brown', and I think I felt connected in those schools" (p. 7). Although she did not articulate explicitly the effect this awareness had on her teaching philosophies, Karen understood that the differences were significant to her. "I think I feel more connected with this school [in Trinidad & Tobago] because it's a mix of African, Muslim and Indian children and maybe that has a large part to do with it" (p. 7).

Rahim began the semester with a strong philosophical stance. His experiences in the high school in Trinidad & Tobago broadened his concept of what the practice of teaching might encompass. "I wouldn't keep myself into a one dimensional teaching style" (Rahim, 2, p. 5). He was very deliberate in his observations and enthusiastic

about his involvement. "I feel really comfortable, confident...I believe I have an open mind, that anything that comes my way I would try my 100% best to do it. Doesn't matter if the end result is failure or not, I don't see it that way. The main thing is experiencing it" (p. 6). Rahim's commitment to participation represented his philosophical belief in education as "experiential reflection" (p. 6), a reference to the PDP Goals and to descriptions of professional development as outlined in the *Profiles of teaching competency*.<sup>24</sup> His understanding of the habit of reflection as professional practice is coherent with Wenger's (1998) description of learning that develops from "the ability both to engage and to distance—to identify with an enterprise as well as to view it in context, with the eyes of an outsider" (p. 215).

### **Pedagogical Sensitivity**

As stated earlier, it is difficult to separate a philosophy of teaching from one's perspective with regard to other aspects of the profession. The overlaps here, generally concern the student teachers' awareness of their students, current and potential. In the southern sites, as much as the experience placed personal demands on the student teachers, it also sensitized them to attending to children and youth in new ways. For example, Liam, who spoke earlier of his frustration with having to communicate and think "like an 8-year-old," was mindful of his adult students at the language school in Oaxaca. "I wanted them to appreciate that to discuss those things [with us] they have to be pretty high level of English...I was congratulating them...this is something I think about as a language learner" (Liam, 2, p. 6). He expressed his recognition of the importance of a reciprocal relationship between teacher and student. He remarked that language learners need to be told they are achieving proficiency: "I need someone to tell me that...that's a way I can feel I can give back...it's a real reciprocity there. I'm open and I'm giving, and they're open and they're giving" (p. 6). Expanding on the idea of relationship, he talked about how much he enjoyed the students in his classes. "They're interesting, they're fascinating, you know, [but] a lot of them [think] nothing interesting

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix A. Rahim refers here specifically to Goal 3 which promotes "The development of...reflective practice" and to competency #8, which describes "reflective practitioners" who understand that teaching is an "examined act" (p. 12).

has ever happened to [them]. I'm like, how little you know—tell me about it and I'll tell you how interesting!" (p. 16). Again he related their limited self-awareness of their identities, sustaining a theme he had expressed earlier. "It's a critical time for these kids...it's so make-or-break for identity-making, you know" (p. 19).

Don wondered about the Mexican children's perception of the Canadian teachers: "I wonder what I mean to the kids" (Don, 2, p. 3). Mostly, however, he said "the thing I'm learning internationally is that kids are all the same. Just the same" (p. 3). He added, though, that "they also do come with different underlying things that you may not see" (p. 3) although he was not ready to ascribe difference solely to culture or nationality. "Some of it's cultural and some of it's individual" (p. 3). Don feels that Canadian and Mexican cultures have very few significant differences. As far as the children are concerned, "They are all going to have the same innate experiences—they're all going to laugh, they're all going to fight, they're all going to cry, they're all going to want to learn," and he continued, "they're all going to be motivated in similar ways in that these cultures, I think, are similar" (p. 3).

He declared an appreciation for difference that seemed not to be connected with his experiences in Mexico so much as it revealed a life-long understanding. In speaking of a child who had completed an assignment in opposition to what he had requested, he remarked, "She probably learned something else...which I think is great. It's the kind of student I was. I would do something different. I think difference is really good" (p. 4). Although Don did not connect the child's behaviour with his responsibilities as the teacher, I was reminded of Hernández Sheets (2005) who wrote about children whom we overlook, scholastically, by overlooking connections with them culturally or linguistically. "Diversity pedagogy also recognizes that, while teachers may not always be teaching, students are always learning in the classroom. However, students may not always be learning what the teacher intends" (p. 19). If the "difference" Don appreciates is not addressed curricularly, what *do* "different" children learn, and what is the role of the teacher in such circumstances?

Evelyn discussed some ways Mexican students might benefit from the presence of the Canadians. As a bilingual teacher, she focused on the value of "native English speakers" for the Mexicans. "To actually hear someone speak and get the right



pronunciation—it really helps them a lot” (Evelyn, 2, p. 12). She also talked about how Canadians might represent possibilities to the Mexican students, “You know, if *they* can do it, we have other options as well. I’m seeing that from them” (p. 13). Evelyn commented too, on the difference between Americans and Canadians and how the presence of Canadians might help the local community. “A little bit of opening up and seeing a slightly different culture that maybe isn’t American, as well. A lot of them have certain hostilities with Americans” (p. 13).

In Trinidad & Tobago, Diana reflected on the reaction of the children to her whiteness.

*They wanted to touch all my freckles and I let them. I took my hair down and they plaited my hair—they braided my hair for a good hour, because that’s what they needed to do, and I understand that...that’s what the kids needed to do to be with me....They’re all around you, there’s 10 girls braiding and they’re all talking and so they get that closeness. (Diana, 2, p. 6)*

Diana explained that once her differences had become familiar to her students, she established a more formal relationship with them. “We explained to the children that we are here and we are new but we are also teachers...We have to find that balance. After that, now they know when it’s fun time and play time but they also respect me as a teacher” (p. 6). Diana did not articulate, however, what her expectations of the students were in this more formal, teacher/student relationship.

Rahim, too, spent time observing and familiarizing himself with the students. He looked into “what type of socio-economic backgrounds they have. Also what type of academic backgrounds they have” (Rahim, 2, p. 1). Like Liam, who was also a secondary teacher, Rahim acknowledged the importance of knowing “where kids are coming from” (p. 3). He made a concerted effort at his school to understand “what’s going on” and how the whole context of the community is “affecting the students as well as the learning style, the teaching style” (p. 6). He steadily made connections between his experiences as a student in Bangladesh and the students’ lives in Trinidad & Tobagan schools. He noted that because of the focus on exams and grades, many “already feel that they are a failure” (p. 7) and this strengthened his belief in the importance of “having that connection with the students” (p. 7). Rahim also spoke with humour about his observation that students can learn and talk at the same time.

*They're talking with their friends, they're pushing each other, passing around notes and Mrs. J is screaming her lungs out...I'm thinking, like, nobody's listening because in Canada we assume that because the students are talking and the teacher's teaching then they're not learning...One thing I found out, even though the kids are talking they're learning at the same time. It's amazing... (p. 8)*

Rahim reminded me of the experiences common to many ITEM graduates who spent their first semester in the south. These student teachers return to British Columbia classrooms with a different expectation of what is an acceptable conversational noise level and activity level, generally. Many student teachers repeat comments from their School Associates in Canada, that indicate a concern for “noisy” classrooms. The student teachers, accustomed to this as “normal” in Mexico and Trinidad & Tobago, are interested in their own perceptions of what is acceptable and what may interfere with learning. At this stage in his PDP, Rahim is learning about “talking and learning at the same time” in a way that would not happen in many British Columbian classrooms.

### **Cultural Questions**

As he had in September, Liam reflected on his own cultural heritage when encountering cultural idiosyncrasies of Oaxaca. Speaking of Oaxacan families working in the United States he recalled a student in his practicum class who “hasn't seen her mum in 10 years....It's like an absentee mother...someone she speaks to...in New York state” (Liam, 2, p. 21). Liam linked this to his own effort to “come back and settle back in Ireland” (p. 21), his parents' birthplace. He talked about the diasporic notions of motherland and how he and the other “returning... 'Wild Geese',” sons and daughters of Irish immigrants, were received by the Irish. Liam left Ireland after a few years because, he said with a laugh, Ireland “is not that great” (p. 22). The experience, though, helped him connect with the “cross-over” families of Oaxaca. He said that the cultural dimension of his own experience kept him mindful in the classroom, “learning from the students what to respond to, what not to respond to...learning from the culture, learning gratitude...seeing classrooms of 50 with the barest of resources” (p. 1-2). Already he had learned from the Mexican students to “find out where they are, don't just start in anywhere” (p. 1-2) when planning what and how to teach.

Liam offered cultural characteristics he felt were generally descriptive of Oaxaca. "There's a certain politeness, a certain acceptance by people in Oaxaca that make it different from, say, if we were in Monterey or Tijuana or Mexico City...they're keen to have foreigners come to see their city and see their culture because they are proud of it" (p. 4). Liam felt a deep respect for his host city and described it as "an open place. I haven't met a lot of sour people" (p. 4). He compared his experiences there with an earlier visit to Croatia where one young man had expressed intense hostility toward Liam's privilege and consequent mobility: "He was quite angry. He was, like, 'What the hell are you doing in Croatia?...Why is it that you get to be Canadian, you get to come here and I can't even get a passport?'" (p. 5). Liam was moved by the incident and told me that it reminded him to be grateful for his circumstances, "but also grateful for the places that I go ...that are open societies, that are open enough to be able to say, 'Yes we want you here'" (p. 5).

Liam then commented on the culture of the school where he had been placed. He felt a tension among the teachers. "There seems to be political issues within the schools here" (p. 7), although he wasn't clear what the issues were. He also said that the teachers ignored him. "It's simply intuiting something, because nobody speaks to me" (p. 9). The students, on the other hand, were enthusiastic and he said, "They do expect, I guess, me to have some understanding of what our role is as teachers" (p. 9). This expectation from the students helped him to assume his position there.

Liam knew that some of his decisions in the classroom would communicate a cultural bias. "I'm imposing some of my cultural values on them when I say, 'Don't whistle at me'" (p. 9) and he acknowledged a school culture ("not necessarily Mexican culture" (p. 10) of students being late for class "all of the time" (p. 10). Liam and his teaching partner's decision was to say to the students, "we're not going to change the culture of the school, but for our class, we only ask that you're not late for our class" (p. 10). Eventually the students conformed, although Liam recognized later "a western assumption, you know, time! Time! Time! We have to pack it all in!" (p. 26). Liam was the only informant to comment on distinct school cultures. He observed,

*The assumption that many of us were working under is that, oh, we're in the Mexican education system and this is the way it is. No, we're in a school culture, a community culture, there's a whole bunch of cultures at*

*play, here. You know, there's an interplay. It's the same in Vancouver. You couldn't go back to Vancouver and sit in some school up on East Hastings and expect it to be the same as a school in Port Moody. (p. 24)*

Unlike Liam, Don thought that there was little difference between “North American culture, British culture, English-speaking culture” (Don, 2, p. 2) and Mexican culture. From his observations as one who has traveled and lived in several countries he felt that “all cultures are melding into each other” (p. 2). Later, though, when comparing Mexico with Canada, he said, “I certainly think that educationally, some of the values are very different” (p. 4). He did not, however, elaborate on this apparent contradiction.

Because I hold a different perspective from Don regarding the subtleties of culture and the educational implications of those subtleties, I feel, to some degree, that he is both “here *and* there” in his recognition of the relationship of culture to learning. I think it's true that sometimes in our efforts to be sensitive to difference, we become hypervigilant, missing the forest for the trees. On the other hand, to claim that there is “little difference” between English speaking cultures and Mexican culture is to choose an educational approach that conveniently simplifies our work. Brown (2005) asks us not to “emphasize our false socio-historical similarities” (p. 228), but to exercise “a critical multiculturalism that begins by studying and examining the legacy of...trauma, accommodation and resistance of the embodied subjects who inhabit the contemporary multicultural classrooms and workplaces” (p. 229). Brown also asks, “What sorts of knowledge and ethical preparation do teachers need...to be able to hear, feel, see, do and think in order to help that colonized other understand who they are and how they came to be?” (p. 229). And what can a program like the ITEM offer a blue-eyed, British-born man to address what Brown sees as a teacher's responsibility to his or her students, co-workers and to the curriculum?

Don did discuss an interest in the construction of stereotypes. He was frequently approached in Oaxaca, and asked if he was Canadian. He responded with, “Why would you ask me that?” The reply was often, “You don't seem like an American.” (p.7). The speakers, however, were typically unable to articulate the “Canadian” characteristics that provoked the question. Don was also frequently asked if he was gay. He said, “I think people are a little fluid here...I think there's a lot of bisexuality going on here...it's a

pretty gay town” (p. 11). Speaking with his host family about this he pointed out to them, “Well, you’ve got drag queens on TV, and you’ve got transvestites on TV” and added, “I haven’t heard really disparaging things [about gay people]. I think it’s a real Catholic church thing” (p. 11). Don then conflated the stereotype of “macho” Mexico with Spain. “As much as I knew Spanish culture and Spain, for as macho as [Mexicans] say they are, gay is in their culture” (p. 11). He did not, however, draw any comparisons between gay culture in Oaxaca with gay culture in other communities where he had lived, or connect it to his teaching identity or educational philosophies.

Evelyn spoke of her re-connection with her Latina self: “When I walk down the street, it’s like, yeah, I’m coming home...” (Evelyn, 2, p. 13). She identified strongly with cultural aspects in Oaxaca that resonated with her Venezuelan upbringing. She also commented on aspects of the culture that disturbed others but were familiar and acceptable to her. For example, several of the Canadian women became upset when men whistled or called to them. Evelyn offered, “In Canada it’s like sexual harassment, but because I’m from Venezuela, it’s something I’m accustomed to” (p. 7). She felt the other ITEMites’ reactions were rooted in their own cultural contexts: what the catcalls mean in Mexico is “a little bit different” (p. 7) from what they mean in Canada. Evelyn compared responses. “Michelle doesn’t like it at all—she feels like she’s always being stared at...I just ignore them” (p. 6).

She was also interested in gender roles and the apparent rigidity of family responsibilities compared with her Venezuelan family. In Oaxaca,

*My host dad will sit at the table and wait till [his wife] serves him the dinner and it doesn’t matter if he’s two feet away from it, he’ll just wait there...she’ll be eating, he’s ready for the next plate, so she has to get up and do it. She’s always the last one to eat—he’ll never wash a plate... (p. 2)*

At the same time she described how, when just she and the host father were at home, he prepared a full meal for her and refused to allow her to help him wash up. She was interested in these apparent contradictions and also in what seemed to be generational challenges evident between the parents and their daughters. She related a conversation between her Mexican “sisters” and their father. “We were having this huge discussion that came up on rape and abortion...they’re Catholic...and for him it was like, no, there’s

no way" (p. 3). The daughters insisted "abortion has to be here for people who want that option" (p. 3). Evelyn was interested not only in comparing cultures, but in the ways culture evolves, suggesting "a view of culture as an ongoing process attuned to the ambivalent and contradictory processes of everyday life" (Yon, 2000, p. 123). Evelyn, like Rahim, grounded her openness to the processes of culture and its implications for education in her own lived experience as "other" in a Canadian context.

Evelyn also commented on some of the resistant reactions of her peers to unfamiliar aspects of Mexico.

*I've had the chance to experience various cultures, even within my own family....for other people who have just been accustomed to one, if that's what you've grown up with, then, it's only natural to resort back to that. But if you've had a chance to see other things, then you're a little bit more willing to be open to different ways. (p. 8)*

She was hopeful that her colleagues, through sustained experience in a new culture, would relax their resistance to unfamiliar ways. Her hope was that eventually the experience would help them to become more receptive to difference, "more open to different ways," and more curious about their own presumptions and defences.

Karen raised the question of student teachers who felt that they had little claim to an "interesting" culture. When describing her attraction to her Indian connections in Trinidad & Tobago, she noted that "Some people are kind of feeling like we're just Canadian and we don't really have that" (Karen, 2, p. 2). She was referring to the white students who found little connection to the culture in Trinidad & Tobago, and, at the same time, little sense of connection to Canadian culture. She went on to say "people always say a Canadian can be anything...but then, why don't I feel like that?" (p. 8). As Karen was discovering more about her Indian heritage through dance and education in Trinidad & Tobago, other ITEM students were questioning what they felt was a lack of cultural heritage, by comparison.

Karen and Rahim organized a seminar for the other student teachers about the diversity of South East Asia. "People are interested in a class about finding more about, you know, who exactly is a Muslim, what is Muslim, what is being a Hindu and what is Sikh" (p. 12). Religion became a familiar topic among the student teachers in Trinidad &

Tobago, given the presence of religious prayer in schools and festivals in the community. Karen remarked,

*I grew up believing in Jesus as well...we watched the movies like 'Moses' and 'The Ten Commandments'. ...I don't practice Christianity. I do believe in his teaching. Somebody asked me if that conflicts with my own religion but I don't really feel it does. (p. 12)*

Karen compared the comfort she felt in Trinidad & Tobago with circumstances in Canada. "I'm surprised sometimes when people are embarrassed [about being Indian]. I see it in my community a lot—my generation." In Trinidad & Tobago, she enjoyed the apparent pride the "Trinis" had in their Indian identities. At the time of the interview, Karen was so divided about her relationship to Canada and her strengthening identity as an Indian, she declared that she wanted "to teach overseas more so than teach back there. The big thing is that I just don't feel a connection" (p. 9).

When describing her adjustment to life in Trinidad & Tobago, Diana said, "I didn't really go through culture shock so much. I went through barbed-wire and bars on the window shock!" (Diana, 2, p. 3). She wondered about the local environment and its influence on education. She also questioned her own ambivalence regarding teaching practices in Trinidad & Tobago and what she valued at home.

*I feel like I have just a different way of dealing with the children and different ways of balancing. Because academics is so high, here, and I like that. And I like the creativity and imagination that's encouraged at home...now I'm trying to find a balance between the two. (p. 3)*

Although Diana had been told, "Don't expect to learn. So I didn't." (p. 4), she felt she was learning a lot. As she questioned the education system and circumstances there she began to critique "our" system too. She was surprised both by the positive impression she had of schools in Trinidad & Tobago, and by her consequent re-assessment of the British Columbia school system.

Rahim's curiosity was focused on a different model for multiculturalism from the one he knows in Canada. "It's a new definition here again...I'm experiencing it, and trying to make sense of it" (Rahim, 2, p. 2). Like the others, he had learned about Trinidad & Tobago's history and mused, "It's just amazing how, over a couple of hundred years they have gone through so much but then still they are existing as one" (p. 2). He acknowledged that there are problems in Trinidad & Tobago, but considering their

history, “they have created something that is really unique” (p. 2). Rahim, as he had hoped, felt he was able to “blend in” and participate in many of the local activities. Like Karen, he felt this afforded him certain opportunities, locally, that were not available to many of the other student teachers.

## **Community**

Consistent with their September interviews, the student teacher informants placed more emphasis on the idea of community as it related to other groups than they did to their own experience within the ITEM, or as classroom teachers. In Mexico, Liam distinguished between the Oaxacan community and the ITEM group, acknowledging a mutually beneficial exchange between the two. “I do think there’s some benefit to the culture here as well [as for us]. My [host] family learns from me...it’s very open, it’s a nice relationship” (Liam, 2, p. 5). Liam and other informants did mention relationships within the student teacher group that served to connect them. They talked about nicknames, sharing stories at social gatherings, and sharing teaching ideas. However, there was not the same awareness of the group (or the classroom) as an interdependent community as there had been for the informants in my preliminary study. Don did acknowledge that the ITEM program was designed to support community cohesiveness among the student teachers. “Those options are all laid out for you...unless you decide to make a conscious decision not to [participate]. To some degree people have taken less and some people have taken more but I think everybody has to trip all over that stuff” (Don, 2, p. 5). There was evident affection among the student teachers, but no apparent bond other than mutual involvement in the program. “When we do have time together...we’re all about each other” (p. 12), comparing their various experiences in the local classrooms.

Similarly, in Trinidad & Tobago, the students seemed more interested in Trinidad & Tobago and what constituted the underlying community connections there. Diana commented on the apparent importance of religious studies in the schools. “I like how it brings the kids together and I like how it teaches them morals...I like how it gives a sense of community to the schools” (Diana, 2, p. 9). Karen also appreciated “all these prayers and pledges and national anthems” (Karen, 2, p. 8) for the cohesiveness it seemed to effect.



Karen and Rahim, who are both of South East Asian ancestry, focused primarily on the aspects of community that were racially based. Each was often mistaken as “Trini.” Karen said, “I actually liked it. It kind of made me feel like I belonged to Trinidad and I like that feeling” (p. 3). She compared that experience with the kind of connections she sees in her neighbourhood at home. When her family first moved to their cul-de-sac in a Vancouver suburb “the white families started moving out and there’s only this one [white] couple that’s still living there” (p. 5). She added that being in Trinidad among all “brown” people is “kind of like where I am, in Canada...it’s a large community, too” (p. 5). Karen went on to describe the associations she had with Trinidadians of Indian descent at the university residence and in the schools. She participated in an Indian dance in a festival at the university, and said, “I liked being part of that” (p. 10).

Rahim was the only one to refer to the ITEM explicitly as a community. “A group of 16, that’s us!” (Rahim, 2, p. 1). He focused more, however, on other students at the UWI residence. “I’m interacting with other people, especially at [the residence], where most of them are international students, and how they’re coming together...” (p. 1). Rahim was “grubbed” or initiated the day after he arrived, by others in the residence and said, “Wherever I go, I feel like, here I am, I feel like I’m a Trinidadian” (p. 3). He acknowledged that his physical appearance made this possible but also “inside I feel, well, you know what, I’m part way there” (p. 3). Rahim was deliberate in his efforts to fit in, in Trinidad & Tobago, and to contribute. Although he is Muslim, he joined a Christian bible study group and felt welcomed. He also joined the [residence] football team: “I would just bring my boots and I would just play with everyone, just talk to them, just interact” (p. 4).

In these interviews links were never made between the concept of community and its relevance to teaching and to education. All the informants were conscious of their own relationships to various communities but, with the exception of their awareness of school religious affiliations, there was no acknowledgement of the PDP’s emphasis on community nor the ITEM’s “big [educational] idea” of “Building Community.”

## Identity

Each of the informants, with the exception of Don, raised the notion of identity and its relationship to the role of the teacher, to learning and to education. Liam examined the concept of “international teacher” relative to his professional identity and consequently to his teaching practice. “It’s almost like each [student] brings a whole world to me that I can tap in to...” (Liam, 2, p. 16). He recognized ways that he could reflect back to his students what each of them brings, thereby helping them “ at a time in their lives when they’re teenagers and they’re building identity” (p. 16).

Liam compared himself to the character of Jose Francisco in a story by Mexican author, Carlos Fuentes (1995).

*There’s a man of two worlds and finding himself at home in-between them, it’s a very strange identity, to be rejected by two cultures and to form your own...Now I look at Jose Francisco who is, in essence, the opposite of me...I’m proud of being an Irishman...and I’m proud of being Canadian. (p. 17)*

Liam went on to describe men like Jose Francisco whom he’d met in Oaxaca. He said that for them, “it’s like finding identity in difficult places” (p. 17) recalling Holland et al. (1998), Wenger (1998) and Anzaldúa (2002). From this Liam extrapolated the concept of identity and community in urban Canada. “There’s a huge increase in these nuclear mobile families so it’s not something that’s going to go away” (p. 20). He connects his role as a Social Studies teacher to what students bring in their “identity cross-over” and “notions of a motherland” (p. 22).

Evelyn, like Liam, was highly conscious of identity, although hers was an entirely personal perspective. In Canada, during our first interview, Evelyn had been polite and friendly, but reserved. She offered minimal response to the questions I asked. She seeming genuinely interested, but not confident in answering them at that time. When I saw her in Mexico two months later, she was different. She was outgoing, vivacious and expressive. Because she was so busy and had so many commitments, hers was my final interview in Oaxaca, booked for the night before I left. One of the first things Evelyn said to me when I asked her to begin was, “I came here and it felt like home!” (Evelyn, 2, p. 2). She was comfortable with her host family, comparing traditions from her Venezuelan upbringing, and enjoying the similarities. In this environment, living in

Spanish, "seeing the stores open at night...walking down the street and hearing salsa" (p. 2), Evelyn began to experience a new sense of independence.

*I find myself growing quite a bit, even just personally...I thought that I would be more dependent than I really am. I find myself learning, well I know this, I know that. I'm actually pretty independent when it comes right down to it. I remember my mom telling me, don't worry, you have the skills, you just haven't had a chance to really put them to use...It was just like you want to get that chance to see what you're all about. (p. 11)*

For Evelyn, the experience of being on her own in Mexico confirmed a personal identity that informed a professional one. About her classroom experience she said, "I knew that I would get really into the classroom, I just didn't know that I would be into it this much" (p. 13). About her teaching community she declared, "You just feel like you're just part of this group!" (p. 13) and about Oaxaca and life in its Latino community she emphasized, "I just feel like I belong here" (p. 13).

Karen had similar feelings in Trinidad & Tobago. When I asked her what she was learning, she replied, "about identity...I've been really thinking about my identity, like, who I am....I'm starting to feel more Indian" (Karen, 2, p. 1). She said, "I've been having fun with it...I prefer to be known as the Indian than the Canadian. I just find it more interesting for myself" (p. 1). Karen talked about growing up in Canada, not relating at all to cultural icons like hockey and maple leaves: "Those have been given to me" (p. 6) she said. "I grew up with those things but I don't connect with those things at all" (p. 6). In this interview Karen said that in Trinidad & Tobago she felt she had the opportunity to choose her own cultural and national identity. "It's different being in countries where...there's a majority of your kind of people there" (p. 4). Karen talked about people in Canada who rejected their Indian identity. "They want to be Canadian, and maybe white..." (p. 14) and admitted she had had those feelings herself.

In Trinidad & Tobago however, Karen felt encouraged to connect with her Indian history.

*Carol Keller...talked about the history of education in Trinidad...and I thought about that again. I've been making a really big connection with that...I feel like I'm being guided somewhere, like I'm on a journey, being here, I do. I feel like there's lots going on. (p. 10)*

Karen made a strong personal connection between her experiences in Trinidad & Tobago and the purposes of the ITEM. "At this point I really just feel like International Education is about finding, it's about your identity, who you are and how you fit in" (p. 11).

Diana's sense of identity, evolving through her stay in Trinidad & Tobago, had to do with her sense of herself as a teacher. Diana was confident with her abilities to manage children, having taught in a variety of international circumstances. Early in the semester, however, she had been assigned to a classroom where, for the first time in her life,

*I completely lost control of it, completely...I tried every single trick I knew...I still had children sitting under the desks, jumping from desk to desk, on top, running around the classroom and hitting each other with rulers...losing control was a great experience! (Diana, 2, p. 1)*

Diana said she had to decide there and then if she wanted to be a teacher. The loss of control, she said, had been important. "You need it every once in a while because you feel so comfortable" (p. 2). As a consequence of thinking about this event, she felt that for the first time in her life, she was absolutely clear about her identity as a teacher. Diana added that her new clarity "is a really good thing because you have to know" (p. 11). The time in Trinidad & Tobago also allowed her to reflect on other aspects of her life and choices she was making. "So, it's good...I'm really enjoying it, and I have a two hour phone bill to prove it!" (p. 11).

Rahim spoke of a new sense of understanding as a result of his few weeks in Trinidad & Tobago. "What I thought in Canada is what really diversity meant, what multiculturalism really meant, but it's a new definition here again" (Rahim, 2, p. 2). He said to his colleagues there, "I'm going to be somehow a different person when I go back" (p. 4). Like Karen, Rahim felt at home. "Obviously I blend in" (p. 4). He declared that he felt like a Trinidadian. He also began to feel like a teacher: "I'm thinking, now that I'm a teacher, how would I go about to change that? How can I actually teach something so the students will learn something valuable?" (p. 6). At this point, for Rahim, the answer to that question was "the most important thing" (p. 6).

## Personal Purpose

Once the students had been at the southern sites for a few weeks, their sense of themselves and of what they could expect of the program had broadened. In some cases they seemed to have been jolted into a perspective that surprised and invigorated them. Between the time I interviewed them in September and our encounters in the south, it was as though they had changed channels and were caught up in a new and different program.

Liam had enrolled in the ITEM with the understanding and hope that it would help prepare him to be an international teacher domestically, and also help him to prepare to teach outside Canada. By October he was already aware of how his experiences there were fulfilling these expectations. Other students had also begun to consider what later became a primary focus—they started to imagine themselves teaching in other countries as a professional and personal goal. As their professional aspirations intersected with personal experiences and challenges, many of the students began to value not only what they brought to the program, but what they began to understand as student contributions to the curriculum. Just as the “inter” in “international” was understood to be a place of possibility for them as teachers, the openness they spoke of, Evelyn, Rahim, Karen and Liam in particular, became a site of generativity. Each of them began to think about as well as to feel the importance of the intersection where the personal and professional meet.

During this interview, Evelyn was already wondering whether she could teach in a middle eastern country: “I think I would have a lot of conflicts there...I have friends that are from Iran and there's times when I hold back...[I tell them] I'm just letting you know that I have trouble with that” (Evelyn, 2, p. 9). Evelyn was not at ease with what she felt were her own biases. She also struggled with the idea of choosing an environment that might require her to compromise her values, anticipating that metonymic “inter-space” Aoki forecast. She felt that her time in Mexico would continue to help her develop the wisdom and skills she would need to teach elsewhere. “You know, I can actually do this” (p. 12). In and out of Nepantla, a “site of transformation” (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 548), Evelyn was demonstrating Anzaldúa's theory of an emergent, new identity.

Don talked about having to choose consciously and thoughtfully from the activities open to him in Oaxaca. “One of the things I wrote to myself was, ‘Take every opportunity’...I can sleep later” (Don, 2, p. 5). He wondered about his concern for flawless lesson plans overriding a chance to participate in an outdoor school Mass, for example. He said, “There’s a lesson there—I’ve got to be a little more fluid and go to the Mass” (p. 5). He went on to remind himself, “I’m not here to change their world. I’m here to try a couple of new things” (p. 10) and concluded by realizing “I’m pursuing the themes that I have always pursued” (p. 14). Don’s expressed purpose in Oaxaca continued to be a largely pragmatic one, enabled by his fluency in Spanish, his confidence, and his status relative to his Mexican hosts.

Compared with her September interview, Karen was clear: “I want to teach overseas rather than in the lower mainland” (Karen, 2, p. 8). As noted previously, she felt much more in touch with the community in Trinidad & Tobago than with lower mainland schools in British Columbia. Karen also envisioned herself influencing policy, eventually, in her home schools. “Teaching [Canadian children] about the Punjabi culture, yeah” (p. 16-17). In due course, “I think of being a principal, or to even just go beyond teaching and just maybe working with the system and changing and working on a school board...I don’t see myself staying just as a teacher” (p. 16-17).

Diana planned to settle in Canada when she returned home. Like others, she had traveled extensively before joining the ITEM. Now she was ready to stay in one place and start a career and a family. She saw the semester in Trinidad & Tobago as a chance to clarify her beliefs and to initiate a habit of professional development. She admitted to having an idea, originally, of spending her semester “helping” the Trinis. “I thought I would come down here with all my crayons, all my supplies, here you go, let me help you! Not! Wow! [I’m] overwhelmed with what I am learning” (Diana, 2, p. 4).

From the start, Rahim was intent on absorbing as much as he could from his time in Trinidad & Tobago. His understanding of what was available to him broadened and deepened. “I tried myself to get into as much activities as possible...just talk to them, just interact...I’ve been learning so much everyday. Everyday I feel that I am coming away with something” (Rahim, 2, p. 4). He predicted that he would be changed when he

returned to Canada: “There would be some things I would be doing differently, interacting with people differently...be more open and honest about who I am” (pp. 4-5).

At this stage, those informants who expressed an awareness of personal change were unable to articulate clearly what those changes were. None of them, however, regretted participating in the program and none of them were anxious to return home.

### **Learning about Learning about Teaching**

A category I did not develop from the data of the first interviews concerns the students’ awareness of learning to be teachers. By the time we met for the second interviews they had become conscious of themselves as learners and conscious of their students’ learning. Interestingly, they were better able to articulate their new consciousness regarding teaching and learning than they were their personal development. The former seemed to have developed as a kind of constant metacognition while personal change was sensed, as yet unexpressed. In Wenger’s (1998) terms, the student teachers were in the process of negotiating meaning, revealing “a flavor of continuous action, of gradual achievement, and of give-and-take” (p. 53). Through the perspective of Holland et al., this process is symptomatic of beginning teachers taking up their authorial stance, assuming a “space of self-authoring” (p. 190) while moving tentatively into the figured world of teaching, more specifically, of International Education.

Liam joked that “classroom management” was the first teaching challenge he had become aware of. Because of the vitality of the students and the language considerations—Liam spoke little Spanish—he quickly had to learn various ways to sustain a learning environment in the classroom. Fortunately for Liam, he was paired with Evelyn. Although she seldom spoke Spanish in the class, they were able to support and learn from each other. “I’ve been able to observe somebody who’s at the same level as me so it’s not like maestro and disciple...we’re really free to speak about the things that we’re doing well and doing poorly” (Liam, 2, p. 2). Although this student teacher partnership is traditional for most students in *Education 401/2*, in this circumstance, where Liam spoke no Spanish and Evelyn was a primary teacher in a high school setting, the partnership itself became a stronger focus and resource than it does

ordinarily. Liam quickly learned to take his cue from his students “responding to what they need to learn, as quickly as possible. Asking them where they are” (p. 3). He returned to an earlier theme: “You’ve got to trap them into that idea of mystery, the charm of it. And then when they get it you say, ‘YOU got this. You got this! There is no charm, there is no mystery. It’s easy for you!’” (p. 14). He returned too, to his sense of responsibility for high school students and their developing identities.

*How do I create identity at 15 or at 30, or more so at 15? ...that is something to be aware of, something to speak to, and these experiences speak to that as well. I’m a transient, in a sense, and I want to see how these kids become adults as transients. There’s so many transients here in Oaxaca. (p. 20)*

Don, too, was able to talk about experiences as a student teacher in Oaxaca, and how these events helped him to contextualize his teaching. “It’s an experience that never ends until you decide to unplug it. So it is the fact that learning just doesn’t only come in the class” (Don, 2, p. 4). He was speaking here of reconciling his professional identity with his public self, while at the same time revealing an awareness that what goes on outside a classroom has bearing on learning for students, too.

Diana appreciated the opportunity to approach the children through her School Associate’s counseling perspective: “We have to learn where they’re coming from so that we can take them to where they need to go...I don’t even think she knows she’s doing it” (Diana, 2, p. 7). Diana referred also to the circumstances of some of the impoverished children, and the economic conditions that affected their lives.

*We have one little girl, she’s seven, did not speak a word until this year because at home she’s told that if she speaks she gets punished because they don’t want their children to talk because their children are a nuisance. [The SA is helping us to recognize] how important it is to see every child as an individual outside of the classroom. You can read that in a book, but we are really feeling it in this classroom because of the background of our kids...even though I’m going home to more upper class families, I think I still want to investigate each child. (Diana, 2, p. 8)*

In Oaxaca, Evelyn had her first experiences teaching English language learners. “That’s helped me a lot with my teaching methods” (Evelyn, 2, p. 11). She felt that the Mexican high school English classes were helping her think about an approach to children in British Columbia schools who do not speak English. “Trying to learn how to



teach those kids, and still get to them without being able to speak their language. What do you do?" (p. 11). Rahim again spoke of the apparent chaos of the "Trini" schools. He was convinced that "the classroom dynamic, even though it looked chaotic, learning was occurring" (Rahim, 2, p. 7). Rahim's observations reminded him to have faith in the students. "The students won't connect [when] they feel rejected by their own teachers as well. So if we as teachers take the first initiative to actually get the students' trust, we can go on from there. We can start to build on that" (p. 8).

## **Implications**

At this stage of their professional development, the ITEM students were focused intently on their interactions with the local communities and, for the most part, with their identities, culturally and professionally. Development was evident in the "inter" spaces (Aoki, 1996; Wenger, 1998; Anzaldúa, 2002; Kincheloe, 2004), the points of contact between themselves, the cultures within which they were living, and the school children. Evelyn repeated the importance of becoming and remaining open. At the same time, she recognised the potential for some ITEM student teachers, overwhelmed with the intensity of immersion in such unfamiliar circumstances, to reinforce prejudiced perspectives.

All the student teachers' responses to the semester were idiosyncratic of their particular needs and interests. Each was preoccupied with identity, either culturally or professionally, and each believed that the decision to complete the semester in the south was a good one. Several of the student teachers spoke about the implications of their heightened awareness of cross-cultural relationships and international histories for classroom practice in Canada. Just as before the students' departure, however, there was little commentary on the implications of the Canadian presence for the southern hosts.

I was not explicit in my questions with regard to the concept of International Education from the point of view of the hosts. As a consequence, I recorded no comments from the informants regarding their impressions of their host's vision of International Education. As the student teachers were deciding what they believed to be International Education, conceptually and enacted, their considerations seem to be

limited to “us” going “there.” In fact, at this point, several of the informants were already contemplating their lives as teachers abroad. Their developing versions of International Education focused on where Canadians, with their experientially informed understanding of International Education, could go. There never seemed to be a question about whether their southern colleagues could also consider these options. When writing about indigenous communities as the sites of “Western” research, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) says, “Embedded within each of these...interests are views about knowledge, more specifically, about the inherent dominance of Western knowledge” (p. 100). The student teachers seemed to be developing a concept of International Education based solely on their own experiences as Canadians in the South. For me, what seemed to be missing was a reciprocal construction of meaning, and a sense that the international relationships on which this semester was built, were asymmetrical at best.

## **Summary**

During their semester in the southern sites, the informants continued to make links between education, culture and identity. These concepts overlapped and informed each other. The concepts themselves began to change for the informants, as circumstances in the southern sites offered new perspectives and challenges. Whereas the students had expected to focus on comparing the education systems in the south with that of British Columbia, instead they became intent on looking at themselves culturally and professionally, in response to their southern environments. During this semester, they also began to consider the possibilities of and requirements for teaching in other countries.

During this semester, the students began to formulate a concept of International Education based on their own experiences. Their beginning ideas included mobility and the development of a certain professional authority, based on the experience of teaching outside of Canada. There was minimal evidence of a concept of International Education as a reciprocal project.

## Chapter 9. When All Is Said and Done

I would like a single line of ancestry, Mama. ... I would like one line full of people who have no reason to forget anything, or forgetting would not help them or matter because the line would be constant, unchangeable. A line that I can reach for...when I feel off kilter...I want a village and a seashore and a rock out in the ocean and the certainty that when the moon is full the sea will rise and for that whole time I will be watching what all of my ancestry have watched for, for all ages.

(Dionne Brand, 1999, p. 246)

### Recommended for Certification

The student teachers completed the first semester of their teacher education program, in Mexico and in Trinidad & Tobago, at the beginning of December. They began their qualifying practicum, *Education 405*, in Canada, in January 2005. All of them were placed in schools in the lower mainland of British Columbia for 12 weeks, eight of which consisted of full time teaching.

This teaching semester includes on-campus seminars to support in-school teaching. Some of the on-campus seminars included *Education 370: International and Intercultural Education*, the course I conducted with all the ITEM student teachers, including those who were my informants. The principal project for *Education 370* involved an in-class Action Research inquiry. The students were also assigned supplementary readings to complement the course intent to “examine the relationships between culture, learning and schooling from an intercultural orientation and...examine contemporary issues in teacher education from an international perspective” (see Appendix B). So as the instructor for *Education 370*, I remained in touch with the informants over the course of their teaching semester.

Following satisfactory completion of *Education 405*, student teachers are recommended to the British Columbia College of Teachers for professional certification. All of the informants for this research completed the semester successfully, and subsequently, their final semester. Some of the students also completed a supplemental course between semesters, wherein they conducted yet another practicum outside Canada. Karen, for example, flew to Colorado to teach in a bilingual elementary school

for a month. At the same time Rahim taught in a secondary school in England. Evelyn attended a conference for student teachers and educators in Mexico City.

The final interviews for this research were conducted following the *Education 405* semester, and in one instance, after *Education 404*. During three interviews the audio recording equipment malfunctioned. In these cases, a second interview was conducted. The informants were unfailingly cooperative and helpful, commenting at their repeat interviews that they appreciated the serendipity that provided an opportunity to reflect more carefully on the interview questions. They were also thoughtful of new perspectives developed through the coursework they had done with me, and from their interim practica and intervening theoretical and methodological course work. Each felt that the coursework and additional experiences confirmed, and in some cases, deepened the learning they attributed to their participation in the ITEM.

From these interviews, recorded between April and August 2005, I collected the final interview data for this research. These data, then, are reflections by new teachers on their practicum experiences at the southern sites, as understood through their recently completed qualifying practica. In my notes following the transcriptions of these interviews I have written, "Something that seems to happen by interview three is a trope, a willingness to look *in* at local circumstances and make connections with what they learned 'out there'" (personal notes, August 2005).

### **Comparing Educational Systems**

By the time the informants had completed their Canadian practica, their interest in comparing educational systems had evolved into an appreciation for the ways their southern experiences in other schools had helped them cope with their practica in Canada. That is, their understanding was largely pragmatic and appreciative rather than intellectual or theoretical. Liam, whose interview was delayed until he had completed his entire PDP, feels that the out-of-country experience is the "forte of the program" (Liam, 3, p. 1).

*I don't think that I would have learned an appreciable amount by doing my 401/402 practicum here...So although my initial reaction to going into 405 was that I was a little ill-prepared for the types of lesson planning I would need to do and the types of bureaucracy I would deal with in Canada, that*

*sort of stuff is pretty easy to pick up as you go. Whereas...having the intercultural aspect of going to Mexico and understanding different teaching styles, learning styles, different language barriers, different ideas of multiculturalism and minorities, things like that I think gave me a much better stead. (p. 1)*

Liam maintained this appreciation despite the lack of support and occasional criticism of the program, from his School Associates in Canada. "I was actually told here by everybody involved in my practicum in Canada that I need to achieve more balance" (p. 3) between his interest in the students' intercultural contributions and the curriculum as prescribed. He commented, "They didn't really see any practical application for [the out-of-country semester]" (p. 2).

Nevertheless, Liam valued his practicum in Mexico for what he learned about the importance of making relationships between the students and teachers as well as between students. He noted that in his Canadian practicum: "There's very much an aloofness, a separateness, I think, between students and teachers" (p. 9). Although secondary teachers in British Columbia have more students than those in his Oaxacan school, reflecting on the rapport he had been able to establish with his students in Mexico, Liam still wanted to "try to form that bond with *all* my kids in Canada" (p. 9).

Don felt that there was little extraordinary value in the southern experience relative to his northern practicum. Aware that others found the semester in the south to have been significant to their professional growth he countered, "I could do that here, or I could have done that there" (Don, 3, p. 10). He told me that his semester in Mexico had essentially provided a more pleasant venue to complete his first semester and that, for prospective students, he would recommend the ITEM for that. "If you could be a part of it in Vancouver or if you could be a part of it in Oaxaca where it's sunny and warm, go to Oaxaca. To me, the setting is great!" (p. 25)

For Evelyn, who was educated in Venezuela until adolescence, the most striking difference between her experiences in Mexican schools and her Canadian practicum was the attitude of the public toward teachers.

*It seems like in Mexico or in Venezuela there's a lot of respect for teachers. There isn't a lot of, you know, classroom management things, it isn't a big problem. They just don't deal with it. It's not tolerated and that's it... there's that sense of respect for the teacher. (p. 2)*

Evelyn fulfilled her original expectation of comparing alternative educational systems. She spoke of “seeing different ways of teaching” (p. 10) in Mexico and the value that had for her in her final practicum. By her final interview she was preoccupied with her awareness that “as a person [in British Columbia], it’s just completely different how [teachers are] viewed” (p. 10). Because of the respect she felt in Oaxaca, she found that “here, it’s kind of disheartening” (p. 10). By comparison, in her experience “a teacher [in British Columbia] isn’t given the respect that they deserve” (p. 10).

In the semester preceding this third interview, Evelyn had attended a teacher education conference in Mexico as a representative from Simon Fraser University. There she spoke with student teachers preparing to work in indigenous communities. She spoke with some who were building a school. “The student [teachers] in the community, they made the bricks [for the school] and they were building their own future...that makes you realize how much love and passion they have for their career” (p. 10). She also acknowledged that contrary to this evidence of passion, some Mexicans train to be teachers simply in order to work. “A lot of people are...yeah, there are no jobs right now so let’s be a teacher” (p, 13).

Evelyn also felt she had learned from comparative circumstances regarding indigenous populations. Because she is bilingual, she was able to understand many of the nuances of language necessary to understand political idiosyncracies in Mexico. She spoke of the pride of the indigenous people in Oaxaca, and the diversity of languages and “nations” within the local Indian community. At the conference in Mexico City, on the other hand, these identities were absent.

*I said well, is there diversity in your classrooms? ...Do you have any indigenous programs? They were like, no we don’t really have to deal with indigenous people here because there aren’t any, when a day before we’d been in a bilingual school with Spanish and Zapotec and Zikki (sp?) and Mallat (sp?). ... And it was like right in the heart of Mexico City, downtown! And we’re like, how can you say there isn’t when you have them right here? But that was not part of it...(p. 24)*

Evelyn felt that the various circumstances of indigenous populations in Mexico relative to education would help her to approach similar issues in her own practice. “You see them as a community and their issues, it allows you to think about your community and what issues you’re dealing with” (p. 25).

Karen's observation that "what's missing here [in British Columbia is] that personal connection" (Karen, 3, p. 8) recalls Liam's reflections. In Trinidad & Tobago, she appreciated "a different type of atmosphere, a different relationship with the students [and] families" (p. 8).

Diana raised a theme common to the earlier on-site interviews: "I appreciated everything I had in [*Education*] 405. Every crayon, every pencil..." (Diana, 3, p. 1). She incorporated her new awareness of British Columbia's relative abundance in her curriculum, teaching her students through their Social Studies unit, that in other schools "some of the kids didn't have that" (p. 1) resource or opportunity.

Diana also felt that she had learned a greater appreciation for religious diversity and ways to honour this. "The thing that I really liked in Trinidad & Tobago...[was that] all the different religious holidays were celebrated and taught" (p. 3). She also continued to question the balance between a Canadian curriculum that encourages "creativity and imagination" (p. 3) and a more traditional approach such as the one in her school in Trinidad & Tobago where "those kids' printing and reading were a lot more ahead than my kids here" (p. 3).

Diana was unable to make comparisons with teaching methods, however, saying, "for my whole practicum [in Trinidad & Tobago] my teacher was there maybe three days" (p. 5). Although she and her ITEM partner were left on their own to teach, Diana did not comment on her understanding or possible implications of the School Associate's unexplained absence.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, Diana had visited the private Canadian school for affluent families in the capital city. She felt that all of the ITEM student teachers would have benefited from witnessing this contrast. Like other ITEMites, she expressed a wish that there had been more opportunity to visit more schools, both private and public. "It would have been nice to have even just a week to go to the schools you want" (p. 11).

Rahim sustained the theme of appreciation for the "really close bond with the students" (Rahim, 3, p. 2) that he had had in his southern practicum. Despite his short time there, he said, "I felt really wanted and I felt a belongingness in the school" (p. 2). Rahim also appreciated the opportunity to visit a variety of schools there. "It really gave me a perspective of how the different schools are and what kinds of socioeconomic

backgrounds those kids have, as well as how the society's working there, in different denominational schools" (p. 12). He added that by seeing the diversity of schools one can then "go back into history and study" (p. 12) the circumstances behind each particular educational situation.

## International Education

It's just more of that dilemma where it just gets you to think.  
(Evelyn, 3, p. 41)

To illustrate his concept of International Education enacted, Liam described his relationships with his students. He expressed empathy for students new to Canada: "they were outsiders who had to accommodate and adapt" (Liam, 3, p. 4). He "tried to use a kind of embedded curriculum, a way of treating these kids that was a little different" (p. 2) although he acknowledged that his School Associates never "warmed up" to his approach. While he taught, he would refer to his students' national and cultural backgrounds, explaining, "that really helped me out and I think the kids really appreciated it, too" (p. 2). He believed that teaching in Oaxaca, had afforded him some sense of "what it feels like to be in those [outsider] circumstances" (p. 2). Liam related that some of his students in Canada "really get off on" reference to their home countries and his interest in their backgrounds.

*It was like a reminder that we're all from bridge cultures, at least different places with a cross-cultural context. Whether you're born and raised in Canada, and so are your parents, they came from somewhere, that this Irish lad was no different from the Pakistani kid sitting next to him or the Pakistani Canadian sitting next to him in terms of having to integrate their cultures. So I brought all those aspects in to try to get a richer heritage in the class. (p. 6)*

When I asked Liam what his definition of International Education is, he replied, "Inevitable" (p. 13). He spoke of the immigrant history of Canada and of the "waves of North Americans going over to [Asia] to be ESL teachers" (p. 13). He suggested that those who are leaving to teach represent a "mercenary" aspect to International Education and recommended that "to counteract that, I think we should professionalize it." By this he meant that while educating new teachers to work in local public schools, programs such as the ITEM can also professionally prepare those who intend to teach



outside their home countries to appreciate cross-cultural and international relationships as well as to consider curriculum from an international perspective.

Liam also pointed out that of the 32 ITEM graduates from his module, more than half, including himself, were planning to leave Canada to teach, right away. He saw this overseas teaching as an extension of their international education:

*There's not a lot of opportunity [right now] in the lower mainland to teach so people are seizing the opportunity to go overseas and banking on the fact that those opportunities overseas will translate into great experience for when they come back. (p. 13)*

Liam had come from Ontario expressly to participate in the PDP. He plans eventually to live and teach in Vancouver and looks forward to a career in education in what he describes as "an international city" (p. 13). Considering his own imminent departure he said, "I'm internationalizing myself" (p. 14) in order to be a more resourceful teacher for the students he anticipated meeting on his return to Canadian classrooms.

*You can't function in this world without having a sense of the world, a global perspective, and if I can get that across to the kids and maybe teach them some other languages, English, French, Spanish, things like that, I can give a sense that these are really necessary skills just to function as a person but also to be a good person, to be a moral agent in the world. (p. 15)*

Compared with Liam, Don was not particularly thoughtful about the concept of International Education or what implications his practica might have had for the field. He admitted, "I don't think that any of that twigged until I was done teaching [the children in British Columbia]" (Don, 3, p. 4). As he spoke, however, Don related the story of Jack, a student with Spanish-speaking parents who attended Don's local practicum school. For years the boy had refused to speak Spanish. According to Don, when Jack and his sister had begun school in British Columbia they "were kind of discouraged from speaking Spanish and kind of treated like they were stupid...Jack lost the desire to speak the language" (p. 6) with his family and with their Latino community.

As part of their *Education 370* project, Don and Evelyn organized a Spanish reading club at the local school. Jack joined and within weeks discovered that among the other students his Spanish had status. Before long, he began to speak Spanish at home.

Jack's father came to the school "with tears in his eyes" (p. 6) to tell Don and Evelyn, and to thank them.

After relating this story, Don still maintained that his experiences in the ITEM didn't affect his concept of International Education. He said, "I think I came [to the ITEM] equipped. Or, it may have been reinforced" (p. 10).

Reflecting on his already well-developed sense of International Education, Don suggested that, in the future, the ITEM might consider "making the experience more dramatic" (p. 15). He proposed that ITEM students "stay with families who weren't middle class, and teach in schools that weren't rich, and stay outside Oaxaca" (p. 15). He admitted that for some of the student teachers, immersion into Mexican life had been a challenging experience, but for others to "get more 'aha's" he felt that "student teachers need to be taken out of their comfort zone" (p. 20).

Don went on to suggest student teachers in all modules spend time in unfamiliar environments. "Whether or not that is downtown east side...native schools are perfect if you're not native...to have to function in another, on another level" (p. 20). Although he originally denied that he was challenged in Oaxaca, because he was confident in Spanish, later he recalled the stress of "always one foot in one [language] and one foot in the other...that's what they need" (p. 20).

Don felt that for the Mexicans the ITEM represented "native speakers...for free!" (p. 18). He said that the presence of the Canadians was primarily pragmatic for the Oaxacan students. "Our language...that's what they want us for" (p. 18). Later he added,

*I hope that some of those kids remember...those Canadian teachers, and it has a kind of a good memory associated with it...Maybe that helps these kids in wanting to go and travel the world...knowing that their existence isn't the only existence that there is. (p. 18)*

Don eventually attempted to articulate what International Education meant to him, through his experiences in his Canadian practicum. He described how he had made an assumption about one of his students, based on a limitation he had imposed on the child. He had asked his students to identify their country of origin and, on a map, link it by string to Vancouver. Don laughed when he recalled he had insisted that each child

choose just one ancestral country because of his short supply of string. Looking back, he realized that because Justin had chosen Portugal, Don had made racial, cultural and linguistic assumptions about the child. "I've got him categorized!...so I've got a Caucasian child in my class!" (p. 22). As it turned out, Justin's parents were both newly immigrated, his father from Portugal and his mother from Thailand. Don later described Justin as "a little Canadian kid" (p. 22), typical, because of his hybrid background, his Canadian English and his friends with similar blended histories. "In a classroom you have to really look at the diversity of where everybody is from and what their home life is...it's based on everything that makes children individuals. [International Education] is another layer to it" (pp. 22-23).

Following her final practicum Evelyn was very clear and passionate about what she had come to believe about International Education.

*I talk a lot about culture, but it's so much more than that. It's the culture, it's the way of being, it's being able to be open-minded and being aware of yourself and your influence on others, especially as a teacher. It's what you bring to the teaching and how it effects how you teach your own students. Also, just being able to change your point of view...based on being in a different place... (Evelyn, 3, pp. 16-17)*

Unlike Don, Evelyn felt that the Mexicans saw the ITEM student teachers appreciatively, beyond just the value of learning English. She felt that they believed the opportunity to be with native speakers was a privilege. She agreed with Don that the presence of the ITEM might "open a different avenue. [Give] them the opportunity to do something else" (p. 13).

Evelyn related the position of the Mexicans to her understanding of a Venezuelan relationship to English. "It was a good resource for them. It's good for tourism...they're like, well we can just get better pay" (p. 3). She asked her adult Mexican students "Why are you taking this? Why are you coming to English?" (p. 3). They replied, "It's one of our ways out" (p. 3). For Evelyn, this response was familiar:

*I know it from when I was in Venezuela. If you're in a bilingual school first of all, it's because you have the money. And second of all, it's because university in Venezuela, you'd try to go out and do it in the States or in Canada if you could...So, if you had that English...(pp. 3-4)*

As a consequence of her understanding of what English represents to these poorer, southern countries, Evelyn describes her feelings about the ITEM enterprise as “conflicted” (p. 9).

*We're like, 'Oh, yeah, we're coming here and we're going to teach these students English and help 'em out'....what right do we have to come and say, well English is so great, come and learn it, and they have all these [indigenous] languages they're losing because they don't speak because...because we're coming here with English and that's more important. So I kind of feel, well, what am I doing? Is it a benefit to the community or is it more a detriment...? But I also say, well, in a way, it's a way of opening a different avenue... (p. 9)*

Evelyn talked about International Education as a teacher education process. She described how it has helped her to become more aware of the diversity of identities in her classrooms and how to respond as a teacher to these circumstances. That is, to *practice* International Education, she believes she has had to *become* an International Educator. This process includes her experiences teaching in Oaxaca, what she learned at the student teachers' conference in Mexico City, and her involvement in the ITEM and in *Education 370*. She integrates all these with her own personal, cultural background to find meaning.

*A lot of the experience I had in Mexico, I used in [my practicum in] Vancouver. A lot of the experience I had in Mexico opened my eyes to many things I probably would have missed. First of all, the culture, that they're all the same—they're not all the same. I had the idea because I'm from Venezuela and I am mixed. I know that people are culturally different, but just being even more aware of it...and finding ways to better know somebody. (p. 9)*

She continued to talk about how each experience had helped her to broaden her approach. She began to ask, “What am I doing that could possibly be biased?” (p. 17) and to question how her actions might affect her students. Evelyn recommended the ITEM for the ways it positions student teachers within an unfamiliar culture. She acknowledged that although Mexico was not such a departure for her, “I had other awarenesses” (p. 21). “I become more in touch with myself, my own culture...how it affected me and the way I teach...it opens up your eyes to different teaching styles...different ways of being” (p. 21). She also believes that International Education

as experienced through the ITEM “challenges you to put yourself out there and be willing to learn about things from a different point of view” (p. 21).

As with Don and Liam, Evelyn recognized that “even if you don’t get a chance to go away, you still will experience different cultures and cultural activities here in your own class so you have to be aware of it” (p. 25). She believes, as an international teacher, that this openness and awareness on her part signals to students in her classes, “you have entered an environment where...[you] can explore, try new things and ...be [yourself]...bringing your own experiences from different places” (p. 29). For Evelyn, International Education is about “creating the space” (p. 32) for a breadth of experience and exploration: “It’s not just a museum” (p. 25).

Evelyn had read *Diversity Pedagogy: Examining the Role of Culture in the Teaching-Learning Process* (Hernández Sheets, 2005) following her final practicum and felt that its focus on language, culture and learning had much to offer the practice of International Education. She was again able to make personal connections. She reflected on her transformation from a young student in Venezuela to an immigrant in a Canadian classroom.

*I remember coming here, and for me it was like this fight. I didn’t want to accept Canadian culture. I needed to be myself. ...I’d join in, but it was like you have to know that I’m Venezuelan and I’m proud of it. And I’m not going to let, I’m not going to accept your culture.*

*And for a while it was like, am I being just...? You know, if you had an opportunity to come to this country, are you being, you know, is it rude for you to be doing that? And I questioned myself, and I thought, no, they have to know that I’m proud of who I am. And then I started thinking, well there’s so many students that come and they at times have to leave that behind in order to fit in, and so I started [asking myself], well, what did you do?*  
(p. 37)

By considering her own experiences, by making an effort to stay open and aware through her weeks in Oaxaca and her practicum in British Columbia, Evelyn was able to integrate many of Hernández Sheets concepts into her own developing philosophy of International Education. At the end of the interview she said, “I know my role in it. Now what do I do?” (p. 43). She felt a responsibility to “start coming up with stuff and things to do in order to made a difference and to make a change” (p. 43). To the ITEM and the

PDP she posed this question, “What are you going to do to prepare *your* student teachers to deal with [International Education] even if they don’t go abroad?” (p. 43).

Karen valued “looking at culture and how culture is really important in education” (Karen, 3, p. 2). As Don and Evelyn developed insights through their Spanish reading club, Karen’s in-class project for *Education 370* illuminated for her, a relationship between cultural identity and education. She had assigned a family history research project to 10- and 11-year-olds.

*I did the family routes project with them ...There was a lot of students who didn't know anything, they had never ever looked at their family history or roots (routes?) and never had bothered to ask their parents, 'Oh, where are we from? What's our story?' And there were a lot of students who were like, 'Wow, I didn't know I was part French!' And they were really happy when they found out...They felt like they had gained something. I think that was big for me, really taking culture as an important thing in the classroom, that everybody has a story. ...that helps you connect with kids...and the students can connect with each other. (pp. 2-3)*

Echoing Evelyn, Karen feels that one of the requirements and consequences of International Education is “about finding out about who you are. You need to know about yourself, first. If it’s not important to you then I don’t think it will come across...with the students” (p. 11).

Karen also had unanswered questions about International Education. She wondered at the purpose of “going to these different areas” (p. 1) to teach, and what applications, after all, these experiences might have to local teaching. Responding to her own question, she suggested, “when you do go to a different place you are more aware” (p. 1). Like Evelyn, Karen believes that to be taken out of one’s environment helps one to be “better in tune with” (p. 1) conditions one might otherwise overlook. And like Evelyn, Karen suggested that the out-of-country aspect to International Education might help teachers “realize certain things about [themselves]” (p. 1) relative to their positions in Canada and internationally.

Consistent with the other informants, Karen feels that “educating students about what’s going on in the world...and breaking down stereotypes” (p. 1) are goals and consequences of International Education. She adds that one of the things International Education *does* is to “create new ideas” (p. 1). As Liam believes in a moral aspect to

International Education, and Evelyn sees the process as contributing to necessary social change, Karen believes International Education to be “also about social change in the world...beliefs about using education to make changes” (p. 1)

Karen pursued the idea of the connection between International Education and international inequities. She referred to *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (Sachs, 2005), a series of essays that examine contemporary global economic disparities. She said

*I think International Education can kind of help to lead students in that direction. At least for me I think it has pushed me more to that...you're seeing different conditions in these different environments and you're connecting more with the outside world rather than sitting here and becoming disassociated with countries far away...as a teacher...I can bring that real life experience back to my students rather than just opening up a textbook and saying, okay, we're going to learn about China. I can say to my students, 'I went to this place that we're talking about'. And I think students become more interested... So they can connect with something that is more real rather than just this picture in the textbook...I think if we can do that at an early age, like at elementary school, we'll make better citizens. I really do. (pp. 11-12)*

Along with Liam, Karen sees herself as an embodiment of International Education for her students. Like Evelyn, she understands it as “definitely a personal experience” (p. 17). In contrast to her experience of feeling disconnected as a South East Asian in a local school that was mostly “Caucasian,” she felt that to be an outsider in another country offered her additional opportunity to open her mind. She held that the experience “forces you...to become less judgmental, to change as a person” (p. 17). Karen made the distinction between feeling isolated as a Canadian in Canada, based on her race and ethnicity, and one's status as a visitor to another country.

Diana shared the view that a different perspective helps teachers to be more thoughtful about what they take for granted in their home contexts. She claimed to have become much more reflective about educational practices in British Columbia than her sister, who was a “domestic” PDP student. “You've seen an outside view now, you've seen another educational system, so now you try and find the best of both worlds” (Diana, 3, p. 3). Diana also became more conscious of the diverse experiences of various communities in Canada. As a white woman in Trinidad & Tobago, she had been the subject of considerable attention. “Okay, this is what it feels like to live every single

day with people staring at you. And every single day with people questioning who you are and why you're that way." (p. 9)

*You start to like it, because you don't get that much attention at home! And then by the end, you're starting to think, 'Well, no, I don't deserve it', it's almost a nuisance, and then you get home and think, 'Well, it wasn't that bad! It was nice to have all that attention...' It's a real weird cycle. I hadn't gone through that before. And I wonder how minorities here would go through the same thing. Like I knew I could go home...*

*I grew up in a multicultural family, I had two adopted native brothers, right? People stared at us when we were little, but I never thought of it from my brothers' point of view. (p. 10)*

Diana emphasized that the lived experience has educational value that is unavailable through any other means. She concurred with the other student teachers, that to learn to teach in an unfamiliar environment helps to develop a perspective that, however immersed one might be in theory, can only be learned experientially. "It just helped me to develop further as a more empathetic teacher, more worldly teacher" (p. 9). When asked to explain her understanding of International Education, Diana replied, "I think it's that there is no perfect system. Draw on all different systems..." (p. 15).

Diana seriously questioned the suitability of the ITEM's presence in one of the small, poor schools in Trinidad & Tobago. According to Diana, before the ITEM's arrival, there had been little reinforcement of the children's accomplishments or abilities. The ITEM students introduced more positive classroom protocols and, as the principal of the school remarked in Chapter Five, elevated the status of the school through their presence. Diana felt that the children suffered when these conditions were withdrawn. As noted in an earlier chapter, when the ITEM student teachers' practicum ended, the children were angry and disconsolate. "We came in...and then we left" (p. 6-7). She asked, "Was it right for those kids?" (p. 6). She wondered whether, in its wish to provide a respectable, innovative program, the PDP had also considered what was best for the children. Diana asked, "Was this program meant to recognize SFU and make it stand out more, or was it really thinking about the kids?" (p. 6)

Rahim identified as "an exchange student—actually going to another country for a purpose, to study...I would get a chance to interact with students and teach as well" (Rahim, 3, p. 1). This out-of-country student status was part of his concept of



International Education. When speaking of the educational advantages of this situation he said, "It gave me a new perspective. Actually, not just one but it gave me many new perspectives that what really it means to have an identity—it's not just one. We can have multiple identities" (p. 1). Rahim was speaking of his experiences living in the university dorm among students from all over the Caribbean and other parts of the world, students who had also lived and been educated in more than one country. He spoke of his own life in relation to the students there, saying, "I used to feel there has to be just one [identity], the tradition, but then, I don't have any tradition because [my past] has been so mixed up" (p. 3). This "international education" among his "mixed up" peers, helped Rahim to contextualize his own experiences: "It's okay to have that, because I wasn't alone there" (p. 3). When speaking of the other dorm students' response to him as a Canadian, he admitted, "The fact that I had roots to Bangladesh as well as Libya made me feel more accepted, it's true. If I was just born in Canada, and lived all my life in Canada, then maybe I wouldn't get that much priority" (p. 15). Implied in Rahim's reference to his roots in Bangladesh and Libya is the fact of his race, relative to the students in the dorms. Frequently the label "Canadian" is synonymous with "white" and as such, the other "Canadian" students were less integrated into dorm life than Rahim. His South East Asian ancestry and his early years in Libya provided a kind of currency the white Canadians lacked. Rahim's experience and understanding of International Education was grounded in racial as well as cultural appreciation. "I kind of blend in wherever I go. I really take the initiative to do that" (p. 30).

Looking specifically at Trinidad & Tobago, Rahim spoke of its colonial history and remarked how "[colonialism] has effected the world that we live in today—it will forever. We cannot ever change that" (p. 4). He also commented on the influence of colonialism at it relates currently to education, and projected how this might inform his understanding of contemporary International Education. "We're a little bit of everything, especially in Vancouver—everything's coming together" (p. 6). When comparing Vancouver to the countries he visited in Europe between semesters Rahim remarked, "I saw how diverse we are, in a way, how open we are" (p. 6). When comparing the diversity of Vancouver to Trinidad & Tobago, he declared, "I was shocked! What? Diwali is a national holiday...And Eid was a holiday...the communities there are very well respected and who'd have known if we hadn't gone there" (p. 13).

In his classroom practice, Rahim believes that to connect with the students through shared awareness of life beyond the classroom is an important characteristic of International Education. "Math is not the most important thing in the world...This is the time where [the students] should be exploring new things, and learning new things and tasting new things" (p. 9). So while teaching Math, he interjects questions about the students' backgrounds and their view of their futures. He suggests possibilities and works to open their minds.

*Here and there I'd slip in jokes about Trinidad & Tobago. And the kids would be interested. They'd be, like, 'Cool, our teacher was in Trinidad and he has taught in Trinidad'. And I would tell them about how the kids behaved there, and what kind of Math they learned there. (p. 11)*

Like the other informants, Rahim believed in personally and professionally embodying International Education. Just as Evelyn acknowledged that the presence of the Canadians might inspire Mexican students, Rahim saw himself as representing new possibilities to students in Trinidad & Tobago, and in local schools in British Columbia.

When asked to articulate his understanding of International Education Rahim replied, "I used the word 'diversity' a lot. But now it's more 'awareness': being aware first of all, of who we are, and where we are. And what are the connections" (p. 20). He also spoke of the potential of International Education.

*Communication has been so much improved over the last 100-years that societies are having a hard time catching up to it. There is a lot of divisions...But I think, through the notion of International Education, education which is the foundation of a society, I think it can bring it all together. (p. 20)*

Rahim proposed ways that International Education could enrich education in North America. "I see often people coming from Third World countries and having a tough...they bring their education systems in here, their different knowledges, their different histories and what are we doing about it?" (p. 21). His own immigrant experience influenced this vision of what International Education locally, might be. He envisioned himself and his background as curriculum for the "experiment" (p. 21) of International Education.

Rahim felt that his year in the ITEM was his best post-secondary education. "I wrote about what I wanted to write about. That's the most important thing. It made me

feel important, that I was contributing to something, that I got to share” (p. 22). I understood Rahim’s experience and concept of International Education to include the participation and contributions of teachers and students alike.

Rahim had recommendations for the PDP and the ITEM regarding International Education. To be truly international, he suggested that the PDP employ “a Trini Faculty Associate and a Canadian FA so that they can work together” (p. 17). Rahim recommended “Trini teachers coming over here. Maybe...Why not? What’s stopping...what could be a single possible reason other than money?” (p. 17-8).

For students not enrolled in the ITEM Rahim suggested, “Visit a band school. Go to a Muslim school...it really seems to be a co-requisite...to be in another orientation. It’s essential” (p. 20). He maintained, however, that when compared with the out-of-country semester, “I can’t think of anything that would really fulfill that total experience” (p. 20). For Rahim, the semester in Trinidad & Tobago, and subsequently the “International Practicum” between semesters, in England, prepared him to be

*Not afraid to go to the U.K. and say ‘Hey! I have legitimate grounds to be a teacher here!’ I’m starting to consider myself an international teacher. Or more like an international educator. I like that word better because teacher sounds like you’re only in the classroom. (p. 25)*

## **Philosophy of Teaching**

Without our efforts to acknowledge multiple sites of expertise and to reflect on how expertise shifts or gets stuck in our collaboration, we might not have realized what we did not understand.

(Toohey & Waterstone, 2004, p. 308)

The final interviews show evidence of consistent and coherent overlap between the students’ conception of International Education and their evolving philosophies of teaching. By the time they had completed their final practica, the informants had a sense of International Education as it related to their broader understanding of their roles as teachers and their concepts of education. Liam believes one of his responsibilities is to “model some of that” teaching behaviour that represents “a way of treating these kids” (Liam, 3, p. 2), affirming what they bring, culturally, to the class. He sees this approach as a departure from “a dry conventional way of educating” (p. 2) that he had witnessed

from teachers at his local practicum school. As such, he recognizes himself as “being the fish out of water” (p. 4) but justifies his stand as a professional response to the fact of Canada’s multicultural society. “To try to ignore that or turn your back on that is just naïve and short-sighted” (p. 17).

In Liam’s experience, teachers and students in Mexico were much closer to each other, and less formal, than what Liam witnessed in his practicum school in British Columbia. Liam realized “that’s what I learned [in Mexico]. That I really really care about” the students. Consequently, he is committed to “the kind of personal connection with my students” (p. 8) that he had experienced as so beneficial in the south.

He also spoke of International Education as an effective process of education for new teachers—he acknowledged that one of the benefits of an out-of-country practicum is that it offers, in a positive way, “a skewed perspective” (p. 19). It challenges “what education has to offer and what it’s all about” (p. 19). Consequently, Liam believes there is an aspect to good teacher education that includes “taking student teachers out of their element. Making them uncomfortable to some degree, in order to teach them what their boundaries are and what their conceptions of reality are” (p. 19). He believes that his experiences in Mexico, in adult French immersion and in his imminent internship in Korea help him to “have a sense of the world” (p. 16). “They make me a better teacher for all the experiences.” (p. 27). His vision is to “get that across to kids” and that by so doing enhance each student’s potential “to function as a person [and] also to be a good person, to be a moral agent in the world” (p. 16).

Don acknowledged that “the way I think when I came to the program is different because of the language and because of the experiences and my age and the experience of being ‘other’ I see things differently” (Don, 3, p. 10). He feels that philosophically he already assumes an intercultural approach to education although, “in some ways, I ignore it” (p. 2). He was able to identify particular situations that heightened his awareness of cultural or international attributes, but he did not generalize, philosophically, from these events. Further, he didn’t speak to a credo of education other than to acknowledge his developing comfort with the context of the classroom.

Evelyn was moved by the possibility for change she believes is a consequence of International Education, not only curricularly, but personally and professionally. The first example she cited was the response of the high school students in Mexico to teaching styles that were radically different from those they were used to.

*We did more dynamic activities [and the students]...were like, 'What's going on?' You could see it in their faces. 'We don't do this! Where's the teacher? Where's the worksheet? Where's the book?'...slowly they became accustomed to that kind of teaching. (Evelyn, 3, p. 15)*

From that experience Evelyn recognized "that there is a possibility of changing...[if] I could do that in that amount of time, I could do so much more!" (p. 15). She became progressively more conscious not only of how she might influence the students positively, but also of the power she had to suppress them. "What am I teaching them by the activities that I am giving them? What kind of biases am I having by doing things like that?"(p. 17). Evelyn said she also became aware of her own cultural education "and how it effected the way [she] teach[es]" (p. 21).

She drew on her past as a student new to Canada, and of presumptions that had been made about her English competency. Although she was bilingual, "my brother and I are placed in this little room and they have this little chalkboard and we're supposed to stay there...they're teaching English and I'm like, I already know English!" (p. 30). She reflected on the experience of being labeled, of not really fitting, of not having the right accent. "It makes me aware of what you can do to kids without even..." (p. 31). She acknowledged the ambivalence of not wanting to "impose my views on them" (p. 40) while at the same time recognizing the need for change, and that "the only way that change occurs is if you kind of think outside your box" (p. 40). Wanting to effect change through diverse experiences while committing to allow for students' cultural idiosyncracies presented itself as a "dilemma"(p. 41) for Evelyn. Still, she was upbeat about "the possibility of where it can go" (p. 42), all the while, asking herself in her enthusiasm, "is the love that I have for teaching enough to make me a good teacher?" (p. 29).

At Karen's final interview she declared, "in a way I can't express" (Karen, 3, p. 3) how the out-of-country semester had influenced her beliefs about teaching. "Traveling in general just changes you, you can have positive and negative experiences, I think you

learn from both” (p. 3). She emphasized that for teachers, “it’s really important to know who you are, who your identity is, because it gives you a more clear focus what sort of a teacher you want to be” (p. 7). The semester in Trinidad & Tobago enabled Karen to take new risks. “In a different setting, it forces you to deal with it more, and maybe you can deal with your weaknesses” (p. 17). Karen believes that such experiences help teachers to become “more knowledgeable, more resourceful, smarter...” (p. 19).

Diana felt that the opportunity to compare different educational systems helped her to become a more balanced teacher. “The way I view education has changed from going down to Trinidad & Tobago ” (Diana, 3, p. 2). She feels that one advantage of being so far from home is the inherent imposition of time and distance that is unlike other programs. This extraordinary time and distance affords beginning teachers the opportunity to reflect deeply on their beliefs. “ I had to rely so much on myself, reflecting and everything...I was so away from everything else that I had time to think about it” (p. 3).

Diana believes that had she done her first semester in Canada, she would not have experienced the fundamental changes necessary for her to be a critically minded teacher. “When I first started...I thought, ‘By [*Education*] 405, I’ll be a teacher!’...Now I realize, yeah, good luck! There’s so much more to explore and learn and understand” (p. 16). As an example she talked about the contrast between the teaching emphasis on skills she witnessed in Trinidad & Tobago and the emphasis on creativity in her practicum school in British Columbia. She sees value in both approaches and is grateful to have had the opportunity and time to assess the contexts and merits of each. As a result of the distance and time to reflect, she says, “I even teach [swimming] differently. I just became a different person in eight months. And I think that’s been the biggest jump I’ve made so far in my life. A change in who I am...(p. 17).

Consistent from his first interview through his final reflection, Rahim’s primary focus was on his students. In his May 2005 interview he said, “I mainly focused on the kids...I have to look in their hearts. I just have to keep my eyes open” (Rahim, 3, p. 5). He believes it is his responsibility to make links with “the social system...[how it is] working and how that effects our education system” in order to help students find a place and in order for teachers to know “what directions we want our kids to go” (p. 5). He

added, “My job [with the students] is to be aware, who’s reaching out, how much they’re reaching out. I’m recognizing them...” (p. 24).

Rahim credited the PDP and the ITEM for helping him to develop these sensibilities. “I just became so more aware of not just education, but society, history, every aspect of life...It has really opened up the door for me. It’s like I was in jail and I just found my freedom” (p. 23). Allowing for hyperbole, the sense I have of Rahim’s philosophical position is that he is inspired by his belief that as a Math teacher, he has more than just Math to teach. He said of himself and his students, that as Canadians we are “a bit of everything” (p. 6) meaning, given our diverse backgrounds and interests and our shared lives here, “we can’t separate ourselves from” (p. 6) each other. “This is an identity issue, right? The reason I’m speaking about this is because obviously I’m going to be bringing this into my classroom” (p. 8). He spoke then of his own domestic conflicts, feeling opposing cultural demands from his own family while living in a broad, diverse Canadian culture. “Do I have to pick and choose, do I have to take sides or not?” (p. 8). He acknowledges that this “fighting with my own self, a bit” (p. 8) is something that will inform his teaching relationships: “I’m going to be identifying with my own students as well” (p. 8). He believes this philosophy developed as a consequence of his participation in the ITEM. “Because we have been in the ITEM we have experienced something that other modules haven’t...because we’re part of something special, we have to share that with the rest of the world” (p. 11).

Through his experiences in the PDP Rahim has come to believe that for him, “teaching...is a lifestyle. If I choose to become a professional, I’ll be a professional 24/7” (p. 10).

### **Pedagogical Sensitivity**

Because the ITEM focuses on intercultural aspects of teaching, learning and school environment, the informants generally were attentive to the needs of their students beyond academic concerns. In their efforts to connect curriculum to the themes of the program, they tended to see their students in an international, or at least, intercultural context. Diana confessed that despite a broad background of working with children internationally, until she enrolled in the ITEM, students “...were just kids coming

into my class and that was it" (Diana, 3, p. 1). At the final interview she emphasized that as a result of working with her School Associate in Trinidad & Tobago, she recognized the importance of learning about the children's "back-life," a term for the students' history and living circumstances. In addition, "I found out how important it is to know the parents. And how much the parents are the kids!" (p. 2). In her final practicum, Diana had focused on international issues, encouraging the students to research their own ancestral backgrounds. "I became so passionate about this that that passion fueled my kids...In turn they infected their parents and it just kept going..." (p. 14). Through that "back-life" Diana taught to the whole child.

During the final interview, Diana continued to be disturbed by the experience she had when leaving her practicum in Trinidad & Tobago. Commenting on the reaction of the children to the ITEM student teachers' departure she said, "It was the [children's] anger at the end that scared me" (p. 9). As she questioned the motives and consequences of the ITEM program she noted, "You're going to move on, and you're going to have great experiences but [the children] are going back to [the status quo]...It's the kids we've got to keep in mind, as teachers. So that did bother me." (p. 8).

Karen, too, came to value the relationships between the teachers and their students in the schools in Trinidad & Tobago. "There really was that personal connection there...it's a different type of atmosphere, a different relationship" (Karen, 3, p. 8). Acknowledging that such relationships help teachers to understand the students in the classroom, she said, "It gives you a different perspective on the student...seeing the home life...that always impacts the student" (p. 9).

Liam maintained that the "back-life" of secondary students is important to him, too, particularly as it relates to immigrant students. The students told him they appreciated this. As far as he could tell, however, none of the other Social Studies teachers made connections with students based on their cultural origins. The students also told him "through anonymous comments" (p. 14) of racist remarks from other teachers. He cited an example of a teacher imitating students' accents in class, in front of the students. He felt that had he not made connections with the students through honouring their histories they would not have disclosed this humiliation to him. Noting



that at times he was the only white male in the classroom, he added, "I've learned that very often *I* have to adapt" (p. 5).

Liam also appreciated the close relationships he witnessed and experienced between students and teachers in his school in Oaxaca. Drawing on this, he talked about the tragic family circumstances of one of the students in his Canadian practicum. He felt he could connect with her, even though throughout the semester, "she tested my patience" (p. 8). He was surprised at the protocols that made it difficult for him to communicate with the student, all the while appreciating that the system was intended to protect her.

*I wanted to offer my support and condolences to her. I found that as much as I wanted to do that, I had to go through certain channels to do it. So I had to contact counselors and other teachers to make myself available to her. I don't think that would have been the case in Mexico. I think you would have just been able to go out and see that student. And make yourself directly available to them. And I guess, that's what I learned. Is that I really, really care about this girl. (p. 8)*

Evelyn's connection with her students was evident in her appreciation for their diverse "back-lives" and cultural circumstances. As she spoke of "finding ways to better know somebody" (Evelyn, 3, p. 9) through her teaching practices, she became conscious that "the more I did it, it made me think even more about what am I teaching them with the activities...what kind of biases...?" (p. 17). While struggling in her final practicum to be true to her beliefs in her teaching while dealing with the day-to-day minutiae of classroom life, when speaking after class with her School Associate, she had begun to cry. Explaining her tears she said, "I just don't want to fail these kids as a teacher" (p. 19).

Rahim's beliefs are consistent with the others who feel it's important to have a perspective on the whole child. "Being in Trinidad & Tobago definitely has given me an awareness of where students are coming from, not only how their knowledge is building" (Rahim, 3, p. 5). He believed that to be an effective teacher, "I have to look in their hearts" (p. 5). Rahim sees his role less as an academic mentor than as a life mentor. Although he doesn't dismiss the importance of his subject area, he believes that without connection to the students, and without the students putting their education in a personal, social, and cultural context, their learning has little meaning. He challenges his

senior students by asking, "Why are you doing this, or, how would this effect you in the future? Then, when would you do that?" (p. 5). He tells them, "You guys should be happy that you're doing something great" (p. 5), trying to impress upon them the privilege of education and their accomplishments at having come so far already. He concludes by emphasizing,

*When kids see that their teacher is coming to class with an open heart, not judging them, they see it. They reach out and my job is to be aware, who's reaching out, how much they're reaching out. I'm recognizing them. (p. 24)*

Among the six informants, Don was the only one who resisted identifying students according to their cultural or linguist heritage. "I don't want to hear any of that. They're not 'ESL'. They're Canadian kids...this is what Canada is. And I just didn't ever see anything that clued me that [their learning difficulties] was the language" (Don, 3, p. 23). Despite his facility with Spanish, Don hadn't recognized the Latino students in his practicum. "I don't think that any of that twigged until I was done teaching them" (p. 4). At the same time, Don was open to examining his resistance to connecting with his students in this way. He described Jack, the boy who had stopped speaking Spanish at home until he joined Don and Evelyn's Spanish reading club. The Spanish "was at a child's level, but he knew it and so it gave him status and confidence...these people want to learn this and I know this" (p. 4). Don also admitted that his resistance to considering the linguist backgrounds of the children was due to his own concept of the term "ESL." "Maybe it's not about the fact that they speak another language. Maybe that's because 'ESL' means to me 'foreigner'...It means, on some level, *doesn't belong*" (p. 23). He added that as far as he was concerned, the children, despite their various other languages and cultures are "from here, as much as anybody else is from here" (p. 23). Distinct from the others who see difference as part of a unifying possibility in their classrooms, Don emphasizes sameness as his approach to building classroom relationships.

### **Cultural Questions**

The student teacher graduates tended to conflate the themes of international education with issues of culture and cultural identity. Where they made distinctions was

when speaking about particulars—individual characteristics such as language, country of origin, and religion. They were also able to discuss the culture of individual classrooms and schools. Liam, for example, described the school where he completed his final practicum as one with “a tendency to fall into a rut” (Liam, 3, p. 4). He added, “They were very good at what they did but they didn’t account for multiculturalism” (p. 4). He noted, through the story he told of the teacher imitating his students’ accents, that the teacher was an example of one of several who “just wasn’t aware of the changing nature of the classes he was teaching” (p. 4). As a consequence, Liam assumed that one characteristic of that school was that “[immigrant kids] spent most of their time, especially if they weren’t born here, integrating into ‘our’ culture” (p. 5). He added, “It’s not just the language acquisition, although that’s part of it, it’s just cultural acquisition” (p. 17).

He considered the “more personal relationship” (p. 4) that teachers in Oaxaca have with their students to be a cultural trait, one that he valued. He felt that he had learned from it—“it’s a very warm, embracing culture...I hope it translated into my teaching experiences in 405” (p. 4), adding that his inclination to “show an interest in [the] culture [of his students] and invite them to bring their culture [to the curriculum] is Canadian, too” (p. 5).

Liam’s understanding of culture extended beyond shared national traits and histories to include economic status. He noted the poverty in Mexico compared with the relative affluence of Canada and remarked that it is important for the student teachers to be made aware of this. He spoke about unemployed Mexicans traveling to Canada and the United States, comparing that migration to Canadians whose mobility is typically within our own borders. Liam considers himself to be “an exemplar of the typical Canadian” (p. 17). As such, he is first in his family to be born in Canada, he speaks more than one language, and he is “highly mobile” (p. 17). He believes that, as an educator, it is important to recognize these cultural characteristics and the way Canada’s multicultural nature continues to change through the behaviours and desires of immigrants like himself.

By contrast, Don asserted that Canadian and Mexican “cultures are so similar” (Don, 3, p. 3). When speaking of a secondary school classroom in Oaxaca, whose

students were from an especially poor neighbourhood, he said, “you know, the whole deal about going to the class in this really rough neighbourhood, it was like, nothing. To me it was just like, the kids are kids” (p. 12). For Don, comparative colonial histories and European influences accounted for his perception that North America and Mexico share a cultural homogeneity. He felt that any difference, economic, linguistic, racial or cultural, was insignificant to the purposes and practices of education. Don felt that effective cultural difference would be more available to the ITEM if the program’s out-of-country location was “more dramatic...[for example] a small village in Peru, or Africa, or wherever” (p. 12).

Evelyn, on the other hand, commented that although she did not experience cultural dissonance or language problems in Mexico, “I had other awarenesses. For me, it was more like I became in touch with myself...It made me think more about my own culture and how that effected the way I teach” (Evelyn, 3, p. 21). Contrary to Don, she saw considerable cultural differences not only between Canada and Mexico, but within Mexico, itself. She referred to the indigenous populations there, noting that in Mexico City many indigenous teachers hide their origins: “I’ve become a teacher, therefore I cannot be indigenous because I am *less than*” (p. 7). She compared this with indigenous communities near Oaxaca. “It was more being proud of it. I think it was because they were so close to Chiapas” (p. 9), referring to the nearby indigenous community that has engaged in longstanding political challenges to the Mexican government. Speaking of the importance of recognizing and acknowledging cultural difference Evelyn is emphatic:

*Just because a group of people look pretty similar, they have so much more than that. There’s other cultures and you can’t just be, ‘Oh yeah, they’re all the same, they’re Mexican’. Well, they’re not all just Mexican. They have different cultures, they have different values, different beliefs...*  
(p. 5)

In an effort to be true to her belief about the importance of culture in her teaching, Evelyn designed a project for her students called the Heritage Tree, where her students “put whomever [they] consider to be [their] family, and where they’re from” (p. 17) on the branches of a tree, which they then added to the classroom “forest.” She felt that this activity was successful in supporting the children to connect with each other and with the curriculum.

Similarly, Karen designed a class project where her students investigated their family's migrant routes to Canada.

*A lot of interesting things came out of that...a lot of students didn't know anything, they had never ever looked at their family history or routes and never bothered to ask their parents, 'Where are we from? What's our story?' ...They were really happy when they found out. They felt they had gained something. That was big for me, really taking culture as an important thing in the classroom, that everybody has a story. (Karen, 3, pp. 2-3)*

Karen added that the project had helped her to connect to the students. She suggested that it would be a good thing to do at the beginning of the year because the activity also helped the students to connect with each other.

Karen also appreciated the field trips in Trinidad & Tobago that helped her "to learn more about the people there, about their backgrounds and what Trinidad is about" (p. 9). She recommended that

*We need to do that here...visit churches, mosques...and even bring people into our classrooms from representatives of different backgrounds...it's not only about learning about a culture by traveling, it's about learning about it here, in your own homeland. (p. 17)*

Diana commented on the acceptance of religious diversity that seemed to be a cultural trait in Trinidad & Tobago. "All the different religious holidays were celebrated and taught...there wasn't that shame that is kind of being taught here, now, about religious things" (Diana, 3, p. 3). She feels that her experience of "Trini" attitudes and witnessing their national respect for diverse religious beliefs and practices "helped me to develop further as a more empathetic teacher, more worldly teacher" (p. 3). Diana reiterated Karen's suggestion—"take me to temple, let me learn about some of these different cultures instead of just teaching me how to teach them. Teach me to understand them" (p. 13). In her first efforts to practice her beliefs, she encountered surprising receptivity among the students as well as a collection of stereotypes. "They're 6 and 7 [-years-old], so, come on, of course there's going to be stereotypes. But then we started learning about it, all these stereotypes get broken down" (p. 14).

Rahim, with personal roots in South East Asia, also appreciated the national holidays of Eid and Diwali in Trinidad & Tobago. He noted that the festivals were "just...a part of every day life" (Rahim, 3, p. 2) there. His strongest impressions of the

significance of cultural identity developed in the student dorms at the University of the West Indies, where the ITEM students lived. There, international students, mostly from other Caribbean islands, engaged in discussion about political and social issues. Rahim quickly learned of the importance of national distinctions among these students, and of their interest in him.

*The dorm life comes in! There's so many different cultures coming together. Even though you believe that all Caribbean cultures are all one, which I used to believe before, it's not true. You've got students coming from all different islands and bringing their own foods and international food days and talking to them and getting to know individually, how things are back home for them. (p. 2)*

Rahim was also able to make personal connections among the students, many of whom had mixed racial, cultural and national backgrounds. "The fact that I had roots to Bangladesh as well as Libya made me feel more accepted, it's true...so mixed up. And it's okay to have that because I wasn't alone there" (p. 3). Rahim was also moved by the students of African descent who were in awe of his Libyan birth. "They knew their forefathers came from Africa, but they don't know where in Africa, and when they heard I was born in Africa I swear to god their eyes lit up" (p. 3). He wondered during the interview what it might mean for some of those students to go to Africa. Then he asked the same question of himself, "If I knew some location in Pakistan or Afghanistan that this is where my forefathers came from, how would I feel about that?" (p. 3). Reflecting on the dorm experience, Rahim concluded, "You're in the middle of everyone, and if you have an open mind, you're bound to make good friends and become part of their culture very quickly" (p. 8).

Further commenting on aspects of culture, Rahim discussed his interim practicum in London, where he stayed in the home of a dorm friend from Trinidad & Tobago.

*I was happy that it felt like I was in India while I was in their home because everybody spoke Hindi and a bit of English all mixed up...At the same time I would go out and hang around in London. It felt that I was carved up, but then I felt good. (p. 8)*

Rahim's "carved up" feeling seemed to be common to the informants who were of colour, or whose families had recently arrived in Canada. Their identification with the

phenomenon of claiming particularities from the general aspects of their “home” cultures helped them to establish relationships with and among their students. They also began to be able to articulate the educational implications for cultural connections within their teaching practices.

## **Community**

By the conclusion of their final practicum, the students integrated the theme of Community with pedagogical practices associated with the recognition of culture. Evelyn observed a sense of community among the teachers in her Oaxacan school. “You see them as a community and their issues, it allows you to think about your community and what issues you’re dealing with. And what you’re doing to support that” (Evelyn, 3, p. 25). Diana also recognized the importance of community in both practicum schools. “I got to know each of the teachers, each of the students, the principal” (Diana, 3, p. 4). In addition, she developed a community theme as curriculum, with her primary students, beginning with the classroom community and extending to the neighbourhood and eventually to global communities. Karen, as stated earlier, recognized her cultural heritage project for its potential to develop classroom community. “That’s a good activity even to do at the beginning of the year, where you can connect with the students and the students can connect with each other’ (Karen, 3, p. 3).

Diana also acknowledged the opportunity she had in Trinidad & Tobago to participate in the dorm life that so affected Rahim. Instead, she chose to limit her relationships there to the ITEM group. Similarly, the other student teachers acknowledged the support and camaraderie they were able to feel from their student teacher peers. Liam said that he hopes to stay in touch with his colleagues—“there’s fantastic opportunities through them...in particular parts of the world or particular school districts in British Columbia” (Liam, 3, p. 27). He also talked about his volunteer work in the children’s lending library in Oaxaca. He described “a sense of community” (p. 9) with the other volunteers and with the children who used its services. Don, like Diana, pointed out that the student teachers had a choice to immerse themselves in the local community as Rahim had, and as did one of his contemporaries in Oaxaca, but that others chose to rely on and contribute to the community of the ITEM group. “The camaraderie of that group is also valuable. I learned different things from those people.

And definitely have gotten support. You know, those people have my back” (Don, 3, p. 25-6). Evelyn acknowledged that she, too, learned from her ITEM peers. Having the group support, she says, “allows you to really put your self out there and to be more willing to see other things through the eyes of others and getting their experiences and bringing that back in to your [final] practicum and using that” (Evelyn, 3, p. 22). Karen echoed Evelyn’s comment:

*Being in the ITEM module we obviously share similar interests...Just being in the module...having support for one another...We got to work with each other and each other’s ideas. And also a lot of us had traveled to other places and even taught in other places so we were able to bring that to each other, too...For me, it makes me feel comfortable to talk about my ideas and share those ideas. (Karen, 3, p. 5)*

Rahim felt at home in the larger community of Trinidad & Tobago. “In Trinidad, it’s a little bit different, you feel really close, like you have a really close bond with the students” (Rahim, 3, p. 2). He also recognized occasional tension between “Trinis” of African descent and those whose ancestors were from India. “I could feel it, even when nobody spoke of it, I could feel it...Yeah, there’s a huge tension” (p. 2). He compared the stresses among the Trinidadian communities to the kinds of tensions that we might find in Canada, with the First Nations people, for example. Similarly, Evelyn recognized comparable struggles in Mexico—“They’re trying to keep those indigenous communities alive. Well, what are we doing here?” (Evelyn, 3, p. 25).

Rahim concluded by talking about how sad he felt to leave Trinidad & Tobago, where he had really felt at home. “Coming back, I really missed Trinidad, I really did, I felt so sad. I have to be honest, even though my family’s here...I felt sad because I felt that I was leaving **my** country. I felt that much pride, being there, of doing the things I got to do” (Rahim, 3, p. 24). Later, laughing at himself, Rahim admitted that he had also felt sad when his final practicum concluded in British Columbia. “I was practically in tears when the girls started giving me hugs and I thought, ‘Oh man, this is going to happen every year as a teacher, right?’” (p. 24). It’s hard to assess whether the sadness he felt, leaving Trinidad & Tobago, spoke more about his investment, culturally, and the ways he felt his identity was reinforced, or about his investment in his role of teacher. For Rahim, perhaps this was a case of mourning both “this *and* that.”



## Identity

Graduates of the ITEM typically layer the themes they relate to the concept of International Education. Each of them, with the exception of Don, speaks about the importance of knowing oneself, the ways the ITEM experience in the south influences that self-identity, and the developing perception that our identities are constantly in flux. Liam said, as he reflected on the experience of being immersed in an unfamiliar language “walking a mile in somebody else’s shoes...can help me understand myself” (Liam, 3, p. 19). He believes that his family’s history of moving from place to place, and his own subsequent life traveling and working internationally, has established him as “an exemplar of the typical Canadian” (p.17). He allies himself with the other “ITEMites” who, like many Canadians of his generation, are the first in their families to be born in Canada, or who were born elsewhere, who speak more than one language and who, as adults, are mobile.

Don fits Liam’s criteria, although he resists assigning one identity to himself or to others. He feels that to identify students in his classes according to their cultural or linguistic backgrounds is to single them out as being “not from here” (Don, 3, p. 23). “I don’t like it, ‘cause they’re from here as much as anybody else is from here” (p. 23).

By contrast, Evelyn felt that her semester in Mexico had helped her both to crystalize her sense of herself and her cultural identity, and to raise important personal and professional questions. Examining her own sense of identity through her Mexican and Canadian semesters, she inspected her own past as a “new Canadian” in elementary school. “I remember coming here and for me it was like this fight. I didn’t want to accept Canadian culture. I needed to be myself” (Evelyn, 3, p. 37). She reflected on “students that come and they at times have to leave that behind in order to fit in” (p. 37) and wondered at the effects of this on one’s sense of self. She contrasted her own resistance to Canadian assimilation with that of her brother who “was, like, ‘Whatever!’” (p. 37). Understanding the idiosyncratic nature of identity formation, Evelyn also understands her concept of identity in terms of her teaching persona, “seeing [herself] as an educator and how, because [she’s] exposed to all these different cultures” (p. 41) her classroom practices may evolve from or reveal certain biases. “What is my

responsibility as an educator? ...that role is not just about your own culture but your self and how that effects the students” (p. 41).

Evelyn went on to talk about the details of her multicultural self: “In Venezuela, if you’re from that kind of [Catalan] Spanish heritage, you *think* you’re the very best...then I have Chinese culture...I’m so intrigued by it, like, the ‘Chow’ part... olives... calypso... we come from a multicultural home. Which part do I identify with most, if so, why? What draws you to it? Is it because of the person you are?” (p. 45). Referring to Hernández Sheets (2005) she emphasized, “That first chapter definitely gets you to think a lot about how important that role [of teacher] is...and what you do and how that effects the way of being” (pp. 41-42).

When asked about her most significant experience in Trinidad & Tobago, Karen answered, “Finding out about myself and looking at myself and my identity and who I am and how others see me and identify me, and how that makes me feel” (Karen, 3, p. 6). She talked about the response of the Indo-Trinidadians to her, of the connections she made with students, their families, and staff in the Muslim school where she completed her practicum. Although she is Sikh, “I went to a few of my students’ houses for dinner, for Eid...I kind of felt like I fit in” (p. 7). For Karen, this experience helped to confirm subsequent teaching decisions that supported her students’ sense of their history through the heritage project where each child “gained” a story to tell.

“Being the racial minority in Trinidad really helped me to understand where some of the kids in my class were coming from because I’d never felt that before” (Diana, 3, p. 9). Diana talked about her self-consciousness as a white foreigner there, “I don’t blend in and I can’t blend in. So it’s better just to stay in my room because I don’t want the attention right now” (p. 10). Diana recognized that although this experience had helped her to become “a more empathetic...worldly teacher” (p. 9), still, “I knew I could go home” (p. 10). She was reflecting on her status as a member of the privileged class in Canada, acknowledging that her discomfort in Trinidad & Tobago was temporary, whereas for her students, to be of colour in Canada is a lifetime assignment. She added, “It’s like you’re stripped of your Canadian identity and you’re just a white woman...a couple of times I felt almost like a target” (p. 10). As she spoke, she tried to

imagine being a racial minority in a Canadian classroom with the added complexity of not speaking English.

*I even tried to imagine—I couldn't imagine—I felt like that, yet I spoke the language! What would it feel like to feel like that, and not even have the communication? To say, no, I'm tired. No, do everything yourself. Couldn't even imagine. (p. 10)*

In order to work against the idea that “it’s almost scary to be different” (p. 14), Diana developed a unit in her practicum to help her grade two students acknowledge and appreciate difference. “Even just starting with 6- and 7-year-olds, it was a *huge* impact” (p. 14).

As far as her own identity is concerned, Diana laughed and said, “I still haven’t figured that one out!” (p. 16). She said that her ideas have broadened as a consequence of her practicum in Trinidad & Tobago. She now feels that there are “so many more components and so many more elements...I don’t think I’ll ever get an answer” (p. 16), but that she did become a different person through the program. She believes there has been a recognizable “change in who I am” (p. 17).

Rahim attributes most of his developing understandings of identity to his “dorm life” in Trinidad & Tobago. “It gave me many new perspectives that what really it means to have an identity—it’s not just one” (Rahim, 3, p. 3). He described the students with whom he socialized there. “A lot of them, they didn’t know, you know—they knew they were from Trinidad, they knew their forefathers came from Africa, but they didn’t know where in Africa” (p. 3). These students’ response to Rahim’s African birth moved him deeply. “It was like a piece of the rock that I picked up from Africa and brought it to them, it was like it was from the holy city or something like that” (p. 3).

The Caribbean students’ regard for their ancestral origins provoked Rahim’s reflections on his own identity. While recalling conversations with Karen he remembered, she “always asks this question, ‘Well, what does it mean to be Canadian?’ And I tell her, well, just narrow it down, a Canadian means you are everything, you know, a bit of every thing” (p. 6). Rahim mused about whether this concept of Canadian identity may have evolved from being constantly *mis*-identified as “Middle Eastern, Iraqi, Irani, Afghani, Pakistani...when I came to Canada nobody knew in my elementary school where Bangladesh was so I identified myself as an Indian” (p. 7). For Rahim, these assigned

identities led him to examine the concept of identity and to think about how he sees himself. Being identified as Indian in school inspired him to study the history of South East Asia. He learned about his historical connections to India, so when others assumed him to be Indian, he thought, "What's wrong with that?" (p. 7). As noted earlier, Rahim asks, "Do I have to pick and choose? Do I have to take sides?" (p. 8).

Rahim shared with me stories of his late-night trips into the capital city of Port-of-Spain. Because he was the only male among the ITEM students in Trinidad & Tobago, and because he could pass as a Trini, Rahim had freedom to do this, although at the time, he didn't speak about his excursions with his Faculty Associate. He felt happy to blend in. He "just walked around...I'd have doubles [a Trini snack] and go stand by tables and there'd be old people singing and playing chess and I would just stand there" (p. 15). He enjoyed the spectator role, recognizing educative value in these personal field trips:

*If I did that I would get to see the real Trinidad...12 hours is night time, and ...that's a life, too...No-one's talking to each other, we're just having doubles, just standing next to each other...I just listened, my observational skills have grown a lot since then! (p. 27)*

Blending in helped Rahim to feel as though he belonged while it afforded him the opportunity just to observe. When he left Trinidad & Tobago, the vice-captain of his football team hugged him and said, "Boy, you're a really nice fellow! And that comment, coming from him really meant something to me!" (p. 16).

Rahim is comfortable with multiple identities, comfortable with feeling "carved up," and able to relate all of this to his profession. "I used to think...I will have my teacher's life and I'll have my own, personal life, but the more I think of it, I'm thinking, the career that I'm picking *is* my life" (p. 10).

### **Learning about Learning about Teaching**

Rahim began to formulate his ideas about personal identity and teacher identity through his engagement with the ITEM and its program. He chose to see teaching not only as his job, but as his life. Liam, when connecting his personal identity with teaching, said, "I'm internationalizing myself in order to help kids understand the importance of being internationalized in the global community. It's an internal process that gets

externalized as I teach” (Liam, 3, p. 15). He added that he imagines himself now, “living in Vancouver...it’s very much an international city. So to be the best educator I can be, that has to be addressed” (p. 15). Like Rahim, Liam’s concept of education articulates with his sense of identity. “I am modeling a behaviour to the children. It’s like, you can’t function in this world without having a sense of the world” (p. 15). He relates this sense of the world to his ITEM experiences in Mexico, describing the value for him, a secondary school teacher, of working with elementary-aged children in the library in Oaxaca.

*My work there was inestimably important to me, for one reason, literacy is a big issue for me and any way I can be involved in promoting literacy, particularly in a poor neighbourhood like that, to young children, I found that really useful. (p. 9)*

Through this volunteer work Liam found professional satisfaction as well as learning “a great deal about different styles of teaching adults versus children” (p. 12).

Liam focused on some educational particularities of the ITEM. “How the kids interact and their expectations...is very different between Mexico and Canada. That’s almost part of the forte of the [ITEM] program as well” (p. 1). He compared the ITEM with other teacher education programs, noting that the international experience can often be difficult: “I’ve never felt quite so uncomfortable in my life...That kind of level of discomfort teaches me, I know I’m learning something because I’m not comfortable” (pp. 25-26). Despite the discomfort, Liam felt he benefited.

*Having the intercultural aspect of going to Mexico and understanding different teaching styles, learning styles, different language barriers, different ideas of multiculturalism and minorities, things like that I think gave me a much better stead. It prepared me in terms of a kind of career preparation. (p. 1)*

From the beginning, Don was clear that his enrolment in the ITEM had two purposes for him—he wanted to spend a semester in Oaxaca where “it’s sunny and warm” and where he could practice Spanish. His second goal was to discover and develop his teaching skills. He accomplished the second goal by “watching other teachers” (Don, 3, p. 7) and reproducing what he felt were effective strategies. “I’m very monkey-see, monkey-do. I can copy ‘em” (p. 13). For Don, the practicum provided an opportunity for him to discover that “without having the theory...I could innately handle

things with kids” (p. 7). “I wanted the lesson planning, unit planning information—that was the kind of stuff I wanted” (p. 15).

When reflecting on the larger themes of the ITEM, he raised, “the bigger question of whether [the Mexicans] should [learn English] or not. But the answer’s really simple in a global economy... Their number one industry is tourism. So, English...” (p. 17). Regarding language learning generally, he insists, “all Canadian children should speak another language, absolutely. And it’s not about economics, it’s about brain” (p. 17), meaning, he recognizes the intellectual and cognitive benefits of competency in two or more languages.

Because of her familiarity with Mexican, Canadian and Venezuelan schools, Evelyn spoke again of “that respect” she hoped for, as a teacher. Her own regard for the profession contributed to this expectation. As a beginning teacher she understood, “I had to work on that” (Evelyn, 3, p. 2), learning to earn respect through respectful teaching. She made strong connections between her semester in Oaxaca and her practicum in Canada. “A lot of the experience I had in Mexico I used in Vancouver...Mexico opened my eyes to many things I probably would have missed” (p. 9). When asked about her most significant experience in Oaxaca, she replied, “I’d probably have to say making the students become more passionate about learning again” (p. 13). Her own passion for learning extended to questions about how to reach isolated children, and whether overriding lesson plans or “sticking to the list” of the lesson plan was more important when a child’s needs were being considered. “That little five minutes, [the child] just wanted that time and that made me think about the fact that I was—just the list—I don’t want to be a teacher of just the list” (p. 11). Evelyn continued to be aware of questioning her own biases as she developed professionally. Her reflections on cultural and linguistic questions raised philosophical and metacognitive observations about her own teaching in her final practicum. “The more I did it, it made me think even more about what am I teaching them with the activities that I’m giving them? What kind of biases am I having by doing things like that?” (p. 17). As she summarized the influence of her Mexican semester on her approach to teaching, she said, “It opens up your eyes to different teaching styles, different ways of being...It also challenges you to put yourself out there and be willing to learn about things from a different point of view” (p. 21). She pointed to

the cultural and identity issues the ITEM curriculum could model for other teacher education programs. In Evelyn's view, this focus supports all students

*To make them feel important as individuals without having to neglect who they are or forget who they are... to see that second language or third language or that different way of learning as an advantage, a strength and not a detriment. (p. 43)*

She was grateful to have been a part of the program, because although the intercultural issues that the ITEM studied may not be features of all schools, she feels ready "to deal with those kinds of changes, because they are going to come" (p. 43).

Karen appreciated the field experience of Trinidad & Tobago, she believes that all teacher education programs and public schools should incorporate such hands-on curricula. She was supportive of the ITEM program because "it really made me think about things that I've always kind of thought about but I've never really had the place to really explore them" (Karen, 3, p. 19). She feels that field experience helps teachers and students "become more critical thinkers of culture" (p. 4) and that examining these issues requires "putting yourself out there and not fearing the unknown...Just being open to it...you need to have an open mind" (p. 19).

Diana echoed this opinion by adding that in a practicum in a suburban Fraser Valley school, for example, "you're seeing a heck of a lot of difference than if you were in downtown Vancouver" (Diana, 3, p. 12). She used this comparison to support the idea that all student teachers needed to experience diverse educational settings, and those opportunities are local as well as international. Diana added that by going out into the various communities, "instead of just teaching me how to teach them, [it] teach[es] me to understand them. 'Cause the cultural thing has really helped me to understand my students" (p. 13).

In Trinidad & Tobago Rahim learned to appreciate differences in teaching styles. When a math lesson was unsuccessful he asked for help from his School Associate. The next day, using her suggestions, "it was like night and day. The kids understood it, they were like, I've seen this method before" (Rahim, 3, p. 1). Rahim felt that the flexibility he had to develop in his southern practicum "affected [my teaching] in every way possible" (p. 4).

He also began to accept that for him, teaching “is a life style” (p. 10). He believes that through this profession he can and is responsible to “do the things that I feel are important in this world” (p. 10). He described teaching as a “gateway” (p. 10) for him to “do good work. And maybe down the years I can look back and feel that I have done something right” (p. 10). Then he joked, “If one student comes up to me and says, ‘Thanks for teaching calculus...’” (p. 10).

Rahim says the term in Trinidad offered him a kind of helpful solitude. Being on an island, being the only male in the group, he felt that the experience was “like a meditation” (p. 33) enabling him to “tie it all together” (p. 32). Without the experience in Trinidad & Tobago he says, he wouldn’t “be able to go out there because then, to a certain extent, it wouldn’t be authentic...it would be a performance” (p. 25). Regarding International Education specifically, Rahim says, “everything I have done, from Trinidad to here, has been triggered from within me. I *felt* it...I felt it, I was part of it” (p. 32). By that he meant that he sees himself as an ambassador for a concept of education that is about strengthening relationships “here” and “there.” “I really feel that this is one of the ways that I can really go out there and contribute not only in education but in many aspects of life” (p. 32).

## **Reciprocity**

The questions I set for myself in this research included examining further ways to conceptualize the field of International Education through experiences and contributions of the ITEM. I was interested to learn whether and how the student teachers recognized a reciprocal relationship between the ITEM program and the educators and communities in the south. Liam commented on discussions he had heard among adult students in Oaxaca. “I’ve heard all kinds of things about how it wasn’t a perfect situation, us being [at the language center]” (Liam, 3, p. 12). He wondered about the relationship of the Universidad Benito Juarez in Oaxaca, and SFU, adding, “I wasn’t really privy to that, I didn’t see any of that” (p. 12).

Don saw reciprocity in the exchange of English lessons for the teaching experience the Canadian student teachers acquired. “They want us here for our language” (Don, 3, p. 18). He also hoped that perhaps the SFU students might have



influenced some Oaxacans to explore beyond their environment, “maybe that helps these kids in wanting to go and travel the world” (p. 18), or, “let’s be a teacher” (p. 19).

Evelyn felt that a kind of reciprocity was imbedded in the lessons she prepared.

*We talked about things that they were passionate about and we’d introduce vocabulary so they could talk about what was going on in Mexico. We gave them a chance of practicing and experiencing in a different way. I think, in a way, it allows them to also think outside the box and use different methods of learning. So just opening [them] up... (Evelyn, 3, p. 33)*

Evelyn also acknowledged the value of a general education, informing the students about Canada, provoking their curiosity, answering their questions. “It’s like seeing them be so interested and wanting to have an opportunity to learn and to speak to somebody from there. A lot of them had that” (p. 33). Evelyn also described a reciprocal relationship within her host family. Because she was fluently bilingual and identified as Latina, she was able to develop a close bond with them. In particular, she recognized the opportunity for the host mother to have the ear of a sympathetic foreigner.

*Everyone would go their own way and then she’d be around the kitchen and that was the time when we would sit down and just talk. And she was like, ‘It’s been a long time since I just had the chance to sit down and talk because I’m usually alone’. And you know, she’d talk about that and then she’d start opening up. (p. 35)*

Like Evelyn, Karen understood that the opportunity for the Trinidadians to learn about Canada from Canadians was part of the exchange. “We’re giving ourselves, introducing them to Canadians, the Canadian system...they asked me many questions...so we get to talk to them about our country...and they get to make connections with people from other countries” (Karen, 3, p. 15). Karen included the material resources the ITEM brings as well as the presence of the student teachers as a support to the school staffs. She suggested, “there may be students who never have the chance to leave Trinidad...I think it maybe kind of opens up their eyes to different things and gives them opportunities” (p. 15). To clarify, she added,

*It’s not only about us being in a different setting and us learning how to cope in a different setting and becoming these “International Teachers,” you know. It’s about you being from a different country and impacting these students and how are they perceiving you. (p. 15)*

Diana referred to "dorm life" when thinking about reciprocity. She said that many of the Caribbean students had misconceptions about Canadians. The exchange, she said, is that Canadians also were able to diffuse some stereotypes they held of Caribbean people. Concerning teaching, she spoke about Trinidadian teachers noticing the value she placed on displaying the students' work, on the importance of routines, and of reinforcing learning and good behaviour. The School Associate "usually came after school, if she was there, and we'd tell her...it was almost as if we were educating her, I think" (Diana, 3, p. 15).

Rahim added to the idea that for the southern hosts, a broader picture of Canada and Canadians was available through the ITEM student teachers. He remarked that Trinidad & Tobago and Canada share a commonwealth relationship through England and that as such, "we have much common things" (Rahim, 3, p. 18). He also suggested that through witnessing the diversity of people and cultures that make up Canada, the Trinidadians might re-evaluate their own ethnic relationships. "I think Trinidad can take a lot from that, because I see a huge division in Trinidad" (p. 18). He referred again to the tensions he witnessed between the Indian and Afro-Trinidadians and speculated that, "we can compare certain [cultural tensions] that overlap, do a little exchange so there's definitely a doorway where we can do some exchanges...it will benefit both" (p. 19).

## **Implications**

ITEM student teachers begin their long, certifying semester without the orientation to British Columbia schools typical for student teachers from other programs. Although some local School Associates see this apparent lack of readiness as a deficit, and although the perception that they are "catching up" creates anxiety for some, most concur with Liam: "The types of lesson planning...and the types of bureaucracy" that confront the students in their Canadian classrooms is "pretty easy to pick up as you go" (Liam, 3, p. 1). Diana became aware that, as a white woman, she was no longer the focus of a particular kind of attention. Karen and Evelyn, who had felt so at ease in the southern environments, now found themselves back in their "outsider" identities. Liam, with his "tan," felt that his school did not value his experience and correspondingly, his particular philosophical stance. Paul Bishop, the Faculty Associate for the informants

who were in Trinidad & Tobago, acknowledged the importance of “re-entry support” at the onset of this semester.

Eventually, relatively isolated from each other, the informants become engrossed in and distracted by a demanding and critical practicum. Under these circumstances student teachers often lose focus on the theoretical and conceptual themes of their first semester. They fall into “survival mode”, reacting to day-to-day and minute-to-minute classroom events. Because the ITEM student teachers were also enrolled in *Education 370*, however, they were assigned an action inquiry project consistent with the international/intercultural themes of their first practicum. As their instructor, I was able to offer support with this inquiry and to maintain a connection with them over the course of the semester.

In their work with their own students and with their prescribed curricula, by the final interviews, the ITEM informants seemed to have more or less synthesized the categories of the previous chapters. That is, they integrated concepts of identity, cultural orientation, and pedagogical sensitivity, for example, into practices that focused on their particular versions of International Education. All of them, through their action inquiry projects, were compelled to keep the ideas of International Education in mind. Consequently they were able to connect with their students in important ways—in Karen’s case, Grade 5 students “gained something...everybody had a story.” In Don and Evelyn’s case, a little boy reclaimed his first language and was afforded a new status among his peers. Diana developed a professional passion for bringing students’ “back stories” into the curriculum. Holland et al. (1998) comment that as we subscribe and contribute, we “have the propensity to be drawn to, recruited for, and formed in these worlds, and to become active in and passionate about them” (p. 49). The figured world of International Education was being reified through the agency and improvisation of the student teachers. At the same time as they were developing and enacting their versions of International Education, they were taking up positions as teachers, more specifically, they were becoming International Educators. Evident in the final interviews was a clearer sense of International Education and what it meant to the informants, and a clearer sense of their own identities relative to its concept and practice. They had become experts, in a sense.

Taking up this “authorial stance” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 182) required dialogical participation with their students, their colleagues, parents and the curriculum. The evolution of their positions and identities from students to beginning teachers was thus negotiated. To describe the transformation, Holland et al. refer to Lave and Wenger (1991). They write, “Identities become important outcomes of participation in [Lave and Wenger’s] communities of practice in ways analogous to our notion that identities are formed in the process of participating in activities organized by figured worlds” (p. 57).

The graduating student teachers’ “response[s] to social and cultural openings and impositions” (p. 270) included thoughtful appraisal of the ITEM program. Some informants remarked that an out-of-country experience might not be necessary—why not focus on domestic situations to enhance one’s understandings of International Education? Diana challenged the presence of the ITEM in Trinidad & Tobago and questioned its influence there. Evelyn wondered about the value of English for Oaxacans, for indigenous Mexicans, and spoke about the politics and economics of language that the Canadian presence reinforces in Mexico. Don suggested that the program might be too comfortable to provoke any substantial pedagogical change. These critiques are evidence of the negotiation described by both Wenger and Holland et al. that indicate the perpetual evolution of figured worlds and communities of practice.

Their critiques also revealed an ethical perspective evident in five of the informants’ interviews. Inherent in their concepts of International Education was a similar ethical stance. By the final interviews, the graduating student teachers were describing International Education according to its unifying potential, its contributions to making better citizens, its purpose as a field intended to “make a difference and make a change.” Liam’s simple summary, that International Education is about “a way of treating the kids,” reveals his synthesis of cultural awareness with pedagogical sensitivity, based in a particular ethicality.

The final interviews also reveal conviction among most of the student teachers, that culture and cognition have a connection. Most of them believed that “positive outcomes for some students may depend on the teacher’s ability to conceptualize the role of culture and apply it in the teaching-learning process” (Hernández Sheets, 2005, p. 12). Looking back through their long practica to the kinds of experiences, discussions

and pedagogy they encountered in the south, they conceptualized International Education as an approach and a process. “Practice is, first and foremost, a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful” (Wenger, 1998, p. 51). The informants were able to identify what their out-of-country experience meant, how it influenced their practice, and the implications it had for their prospective professional lives.

Not surprisingly, their various insights tell us as much about the individual informants as they do about the success or efficacy of the ITEM. As Toni Morrison (1992) reminds us, “the subject of the dream is the dreamer” (p. 17). Idiosyncratic as their educational trajectories were, for the purposes of this research, we also need to examine the “mutual developmental process between communities and individuals” (Wenger, 1998, p. 264). How do the insights of the student teachers inform what we want to understand of the ITEM program’s educational influence? What meaning did the students negotiate for themselves in the southern sites and how were they able to apply it subsequently?

[What] participants learn in both settings becomes part of their identities, and is thus carried into other parts of their lives. But what their learning will mean in the broader context of their lives—how it will become knowing that will shape their overall trajectories and their broader experience of the world—is in both cases the same open question.

(p. 268)

As much as the informants were able to articulate what they had learned, they were at the same time, generally expressive of a consequent openness to International Education as an ongoing, transformative process as well as a practice.

The final interviews reflected an increased awareness of the students in their classrooms, and the informants’ beliefs about the importance of making international curricular connections with them. Rarely, however, did the graduating student teachers refer to their colleagues in the south. They allude to learning from the children there, but the School Associates and other educational professionals no longer seemed to figure in their recollections. The “mutual development process” identified earlier by Wenger, did not include the southern School Associates. To paraphrase Willinsky (1998), “we need to be able to imagine what the [university] presumes, how that presumption informs our

education, and how that presumption has been fed by the very specific material and historical relations that fall under the name 'education'" (p. 69).

### **Summary**

Following their final semester, the informants attempted to synthesize what they had learned in their out-of-country semesters with their teaching experiences in their British Columbia classrooms. By adapting their curricula to international/intercultural themes, they were able to integrate theoretical concepts in practical ways. The graduating students consequently articulated clearer ideas, not only about the concept of International Education, but its practice and value for education, generally.

The concept was seen to be a process as well as a practice, one that requires some travel beyond the borders of Canada in order to "bring back" a perspective or knowledge to share. The graduating students also recognized that International Education could be drawn from their classroom students through curricular acknowledgment of their diverse backgrounds and histories.

## Chapter 10. On the Continuum

It will not do to try to forget a past that is not past.  
(John Willinsky, 1998, p. 25)

The ITEM and its program envisions and enacts a kind of International Education that is based in a colonial, imperialistic past. Because the program and its participants can afford to fly south to spend a semester in poor countries, because the curriculum is planned by and for northern educators, and because available relationships in the “interspaces” where the southerners and northerners meet are not reciprocal, the “inter” of this international program, is asymmetrical. In and of itself, this is not necessarily a fault of the program. If there is a problem, it lies in the absence of 1) explicit recognition that the ITEM is an unequal experience for northern and southern participants, and the reasons this is so, 2) a healthy and sustained critique of the educative repercussions of such imbalance, and 3) a mutual investigation of International Education as perceived and experienced by both northern and southern participants.

By overlooking our positioning as a consequence of what West (2003) calls “four hundred years of transported bodies that constitute the fundamental foundation of wealth in the ‘New World,’” and by continuing to operate with the assumption the program is a mutually beneficial mission, we teach by our actions that International Education is defined, enacted and interpreted by and for wealthy nations and Western, or, in this instance, northern, mostly white educators. Such a lesson is rooted in modernity and familiar to us all, if not consciously, then experientially. The (international) educative result, in such a case, is to reinforce that *status quo*.

### What Do We Think They’re Doing?

What do the southern educators learn from this program? During my brief visits, I was not privy to broad or deep commentary from the educators involved with the ITEM. I suspect, as many from the colonized countries remind us (Essed, 1990; Smith, 1999; Spivak, cited in Smith, 1999; Brown, 2005) that participants in Trinidad & Tobago and in Mexico were reluctant to be critical of the ITEM program in their interviews with me, given our relative status. As mentioned in earlier chapters, southern informants identified some benefits, but compared with the Canadian interviews, these were from

the point of view of passive reception compared with the more active participation of the Canadian informants. It seemed evident to me that they had little awareness of the program's philosophy or intents.

For an educational project to have meaning, Wenger (1998) believes participation is crucial. He makes a distinction between engagement and participation, noting that for learning or transformation to occur, participation must include "doing, talking, thinking, feeling, and *belonging* [italics added]. It involves our whole person, including our bodies, minds, emotions and *social relations* [italics added]" (p. 56). As the ITEM flies in and out of its southern sites, potential for social relations and a sense of belonging for the southerners is necessarily compromised. If the ITEM is to operate from an ethical perspective, we must attend not only to what the project means to us and *our* concept of International Education, but we must also seek, hear and be responsive to the perceptions and needs of those we engage in the south. Understandably, we could be seen to be a kind of educational tourism in out-of-country sites that, through our brief stays there, "tend to render human relations fragmentary and discontinuous" (Bauman, 1996, p. 33).

According to Wenger (1998), for the project to be mutually meaningful, those involved must have a sense of negotiation. That is, they must perceive, if not experience, "mutual ability to affect and to be affected" (p. 53) by the program in which they are involved. Without this sense of ownership, particularly of shared ownership, there is potential for divisiveness, even alienation. In the interview data, there was evidence to suggest that the ITEM's presence created tension among the teachers in some of the southern schools. When the ITEM arrives, program intact, how can the educators in the south feel as though this is their project, too? Bauman (1996) suggests that unless we demonstrate sincere "engagement with the fate of the other and commitment to his/her welfare" (p. 33) we can be legitimately challenged for our moral stand in these undertakings. This may sound like strong criticism from the point of view of well-intentioned northerners. However, for those in the south whose requests are



overlooked<sup>25</sup> and who sometimes feel as though they've been taken for granted, this perspective is valid. If the ITEM is to operate from a more ethical perspective, we must attend not only to what the project means to us and *our* concept of International Education, but we must also seek, hear and be responsive to the perceptions and needs of those we rely on in the south.

### **What Do They Think They're Doing?**

All this is not to say that the educators in the south had no personal or local conception of International Education.<sup>26</sup> Nor were they disinterested. However, because the terms of the program are the ITEM's terms, it seems to me that the hosts were resigned to provide opportunity for the Canadians to achieve their purposes, while politely accepting any coincidental benefits that might accrue, benefits such as English language models [in Oaxaca], alternative examples of "real life" from the world "out there," status through the presence of white foreigners, and bodies in classrooms to do the work. There are few, if any, apparent intersections of ideological or philosophical meaning for southern and northern participants.

Although I am suggesting here that within the ITEM agenda, the educators in Oaxaca and in Trinidad & Tobago did not figure strongly, and did not feel conceptually connected with the program, I share Holland et al.'s (1998) idea that they were aware of their own agency and independently made meaning of the northern presence in their classrooms. Selina left to mark papers when the student teachers were teaching. Diana's School Associate was almost always absent from the school when Diana was teaching. Jean, the principal, recognized the opportunity for her teachers to observe and assess new teaching strategies while at the same time, profited by the elevated status

<sup>25</sup> During my visit to Trinidad & Tobago in October 2004, two different individuals who have worked continuously with the program asked me to request, with urgency, that SFU *not* send another Faculty Associate for a single year. Their request was delivered but neither acknowledged nor granted.

<sup>26</sup> In a recent response to a former ITEM Faculty Associate's questions about International Education, Burton Sanderalli, a graduate student in cultural studies at UWI wrote, "the post-industrial globalised capitalist so-called "pluralist" cultural framework that holds sway in "the North"... frames a discourse that seems to be completely all-defining to one who is there located but from my own location (and I am only speaking for myself) I must confess that I find it somewhat suffocating." (personal communication, Burton Sankeralli, April 6, 2006) A follow-up email commented that the ITEM's version of International Education "to us here may be irrelevant or worse...namely a system of domination." (personal communication, April 18, 2006)

the “Caucasian” foreigners conferred on her school. One School Associate initiated communications with ITEM faculty to pursue opportunities for a career in the north for a spouse. Most, I think, found ways to take advantage of the ITEM’s presence. Theirs, however, were improvisational, rather than participatory responses, serving their particular figured worlds.

### **What Do They Think We’re Doing?**

We in the ITEM have said that we do not want to be a neo-colonial project. We look to post-colonial discourses to assure us that what we do, when we head south to get an education, is not part of the modernist, imperialist tradition. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) tells us that from the point of view of the Third World in the south, even the use of the term “post-colonial” is a northern (or Western) imposition. She says, “post-colonial can only mean one thing: the colonizers have left. There is rather compelling evidence that in fact this has not occurred” (p. 98). I think it is incumbent on the ITEM program to see ourselves as others see us, and to respond respectfully. By so doing, we have the opportunity, in fact and in deed, to create a truly inter/national program, effected philosophically and practically by the southerners for participants from both north *and* south.

### **What Were We Thinking?**

In the year following the final interviews with the ITEM 9 informants, five of the six left Canada to teach in other countries. Diana, as planned, married, bought a house and settled in the lower mainland of British Columbia. By the time this defense is completed, two new Faculty Associates for the ITEM will know the names of their new student teachers, and preparations will be underway for the 11<sup>th</sup>-year of the program. The ITEM coordinator’s job no longer includes selecting classrooms for the student teachers—this is done by an independent coordinator and consequently, the ITEM is no longer served by a core of School Associates familiar with the program and its objectives. During the course of this research, Ian Andrews, the original faculty member, assumed other responsibilities, and Stephen Smith became the new faculty member for the ITEM.

This thesis, then, is an analysis of one segment along the continuum of the program-in-progress. By examining one year within the context of the ITEM's development, and at times making connections with the original intents, I have tried to assess its conceptual and actual educative qualities through the educational experiences and conceptual understandings of the participants. I also looked closely at what is meant by International Education, both in the ITEM program itself, and from other perspectives.

This inspection has been made through the lens of my own history and interest in the program. Because I helped to articulate the original purposes and themes of the ITEM, I have understood its evolution refracted through that lens. Just as the practices and understandings of the student teachers transform through their year in the ITEM, so have I made my own changes in my conceptions of the field of International Education. To guide my thinking, I employed social theories of learning, relying on Wenger's (1998) *Communities of practice*, identity theories as offered by Holland et al., and post-colonial writing from a variety of perspectives. The kaleidoscopic lens of International Education, in its ambiguity, offered multiple opportunities to refine the focus for a conceptually clearer vision of the field, particularly as it is understood and enacted by the ITEM. This study is my contribution to help illuminate and name beliefs and practices that might constitute the field generally, and inform the ITEM program specifically.

### **What Do We Think We're Doing?**

The ITEM 9 graduates completed their final practica with unanimous agreement regarding the value of the educational opportunities and experiences in their out-of-country semester. All of them recognized pragmatic applications from semester to semester. Others spoke of clearer, more confident recognition of themselves as teachers. For most of the six informants, this recognition included teacher as international educator.

The kinds of experiences that helped to establish this identity, in some cases resulted from an awareness of themselves as guests in an unfamiliar community. Rahim and Karen, for instance, as teachers of South East Asian ancestry, felt a sense of belonging in Trinidad & Tobago, finding ways to connect in a country where nearly half

the population shares their roots. For Liam, being able to manage a secondary classroom in a new language helped him to believe in himself, professionally. At the same time, he worked hard to stay attuned to nuances of culture and the way culture, identity and language are implicated in learning. Evelyn discovered what she already knew—she is Latina! Added to this rediscovery was an expanding understanding of the ways culture and language relate to identity and learning, and what she has to offer, personally and professionally to that pedagogical approach. Diane developed a finer appreciation for the experiences of “minority” children,<sup>27</sup> and for the contributions each child makes to the curriculum. She also started to think critically and politically about north/south relationships. Don began to make pedagogical connections between language, learning and cognition, and the complexities of culture that accompany those features of diverse public school classrooms.

### **What Have We Learned?**

The interviews provided data about northern and southern perspectives of the program and therefore, whether the expressed objectives and themes of the ITEM had been achieved. The student teachers were able to articulate some of the changes that had occurred in their own approaches to education as a consequence of teaching outside Canada.

Some examples of their new awarenesses were revealed in their long practicum teaching assignments. Because, through *Education 370* the student teachers were required to conduct an action inquiry project during their practicum, student teachers from the whole module made efforts to apply their new sensitivities to classroom circumstances. One student who had a relatively homogenous kindergarten class, wondered whether particular behaviours she had observed among her students were “a result of a culture ‘shock’ where the Kindergartens became shy and turned inwards or whether it was an attempt to assume the modelled behaviour of the Grade One students” (Laura, February 2005). Recalling her own culture shock as a white, Canadian

<sup>27</sup> As white student teachers learn a broader sense of themselves in the contexts of nations or communities of colour, we are well advised to remember Toni Morrison’s (1992) description of a character in a Willa Cather novel who exemplified “the power of a white woman gathering identity unto herself from the wholly available and serviceable lives of Africanist others” (p. 25).

student teacher in Trinidad & Tobago, this student teacher wondered whether, reflecting her own sense of disorientation and need to find a place for herself, she might better understand some children's classroom behaviours. Through her inquiry, she hoped "to increase Kindergartens' self-awareness of context-driven changes in behaviour."

Karen, one of the informants who had also spent her first semester in Trinidad & Tobago, developed the following inquiry: "If all students participate in a 'country of origins' project, how will that support the ESL (Korean) students to feel part of the community and support their English acquisition?" Karen articulated, in her final interview, that this assignment helped her to develop curriculum that addressed each child's "story" and, in the end, helped many children to find their stories in ways that enhanced their sense of belonging in the classroom, and their sense of identity, generally.

A third example represents a general approach to the diverse populations of lower mainland classrooms that characterized the graduating ITEM students from that year.

*The project that really got the class moving was the cultural sharing. The kids each brought in an item relating to their cultural heritage and shared it in front of the class. We had such a wide assortment of items from food, to music, to art, games, even some traditional wedding ware. During the cultural sharing we had an ongoing discussion about other cultures with similar items and found out that most of the items had a similar one in another country. As well, at the end of the lesson, we filled out slips answering questions on what the lesson meant to us. One of them was, "do you feel closer to other students in your class because of this cultural sharing?" I found that most of the students did. (Sandra, March 8, 2005)*

It could be argued that the previous example focuses on an investigation of culture rather than on international education. However, as we have noted, the dialogic and ambiguous nature of International Education is characterized by these overlaps. The students in Sandra's class were from a variety of national and cultural backgrounds, including many First Nations students. Sandra imagined the project as a direct result of insights she had developed during her semester in the south, and later commented on the ways the curriculum brought together classroom cliques that had been culturally, racially and nationally based, and formerly hostile to one another.

The focus on “culture” by the student teachers highlights, I believe, the ambiguity of the term “international” as it applies to education. The focus on culture also had varying consequences, with regard to identity, among the student teachers themselves. For several of the informants, Evelyn, Rahim and Karen in particular, the ITEM curriculum enhanced a sense of identity in generative ways. On the other hand, Paul Bishop, Faculty Associate for the ITEMs 8 and 9, spoke about white student teachers in Trinidad & Tobago who withdrew to the company of white people exclusively, during their recreational “free” time. He commented that these students had found one of the few “all white” bars in Trinidad & Tobago, and would often spend evenings there. These same students, late in the course of *Education 370*, described how as white Canadians, they felt they had no culture. Because of the way they had come to view culture after two semesters in the program, they developed a sense of themselves as “cultureless.” This was not a phenomenon limited to ITEM 9. I had heard similar comments from young white women the previous year.

I take this sense of lack to mean that a certain concept of culture had been transmitted to these student teachers through the discourse of the ITEM, a discourse that “shapes how we come to think and produce new knowledge, and facilitates new understandings” (Yon, 2000, p. 3). For all our fluidity and ambiguity, these young women had fixed on a modernist concept of culture that concerns “traditions, shared beliefs, and folklore...a product to be received and passed on” (p. 4). I believe this concept of culture develops partly as a result of the out-of-country semester where we go to learn about “others.” (And by extension, we learn about ourselves). This expedition can resemble in its practice, traditional forms of anthropological research that examined “‘patterns of culture’ and...tie[d]... the concept to questions of nationalities” (p.8). Just as there are ITEM students whose vision is expanded and made more flexible and fluid through their experiences in the south, so are there those whose stereotypes are reinforced, who develop new stereotypes, and who come away with the idea of themselves as neutral, or lacking, as having no culture to share.

In her thesis *Transformational Possibilities: The International Teacher Education Module at Simon Fraser University*, Joni Miller (2005) offers an example of educational “transformation” through an interview with a graduating student from the ITEM 8. This student talked about being initially “scared” of the people in her southern site, based on

their race. The student described her “transformation” this way: “Now when I see [them] I’m like, oh I love you. And that was really cool” (p. 52). The author did not challenge the wholesale transition, in the course of nine weeks, from being frightened of a racial group to feeling “love” for all of them. It strikes me that there was no transformation at all—what is still apparent to me is the racialization of a certain group of people and a consistent, generalized response, “Oh I love you!” based on that racial attribute.

Such generalizations are also a consequence, I believe, of the short immersion time in the south, accompanied by, as I have stated, a focus on learning from (and about) “them.” It bears repeating that as much as it opens us to new concepts and identities, this project can also perpetuate stereotypes and generalizations. The intensity of the ITEM may require us to drop our defences and look closely at our assumptions and prejudices, or it may create defences that inhibit growth and change.

The southern semester is almost universally described as intense. Don, though, was clear that for him the site held few cultural or linguistic challenges. But for others, immersion in the unfamiliar culture provoked a certain creativity, or, in the language of Holland et al., it inspired steady improvisational acts that established the student teachers’ agency, authorial stances, and delineated the figured worlds they were simultaneously entering and creating.

The intensity of the semester in the south sometimes translates as “discomfort” for many of the student teachers. Several of the informants acknowledged that this discomfort also provoked significant learning and although at times it was unpleasant, all of them believed that it was an important feature of the program and of their growth. Don spoke for all of the graduating informants when he recommended that “all student teachers need to be taken out of their comfort zone” (p. 20). Although I do not intend to expand extensively on this aspect of the ITEM here, it is meaningful to note other studies that ask “What do we—educators and students—stand to gain by engaging in the discomforting process of questioning cherished beliefs and assumptions?” (Bolan, 1999, p. 176). Bolan, in her essay, “Pedagogy of Discomfort” suggests not only can the discomfort that the students describe enable new ways of seeing the world, she also believes that such discomfort is symptomatic of “an historicized ethics.” She asserts that a carefully, sensitively administered pedagogy of discomfort can compel us to

interrogate our ethical assumptions in order to “recogni[ze] the selectivity of [our] vision” (p. 183), in this case, the colonial (and ethical) historicity of this program.

### **What Have We Got to Offer?**

Even if you don't get a chance to go away, you still will experience different cultures and cultural activities here in your own class so you have to be aware of it.

(Evelyn, 2005, 3, p. 25)

### ***To the Professional Development Program***

In addition to recommending a version of the ITEM's particular intensity, all of the students interviewed were able to suggest potential applications from the ITEM's curriculum to other teacher education programs. They were less sure, however, of how these ideas might be applied in their host countries. They unanimously acknowledged the value of providing classroom experiences in environments that diverge radically from students' own experiences. Don suggested the “downtown east side [of Vancouver]...native schools are perfect if you're not native” (Don, 3, p. 15). Evelyn and Karen also noted that it is not necessary to leave the country in order to find contexts that challenge our ethics, beliefs and knowledge systems.

In our presentation at the WestCAST conference in 1997 Erika said,

Much of this journey into teaching has been about trying to find a home in the classroom, to make the classroom a home for other student teachers and the children and young adults they have begun to address in their teaching. At the same time it has also, for all of us, constituted a search for a home in the larger global context, in the “world at large,” in the ecological system we share with others.

(Bishop, Hasebe-Ludt, Henry, & Scholefield, 1997, p. 10)

Although the faculty and the venues for the program's first semester have changed over the years, the aims of the ITEM have remained consistent. Among the student teachers, more recent graduates are intent on teaching outside Canada as soon as they graduate whereas in the early years, the focus was on learning from and preparing to teach to the diversity available in local classrooms. In both cases, however, the student teachers have developed similar philosophical approaches to “make the classroom a home,” wherever they are.



This original concept has value and application for all modules. Of value, too, is the belief that what students bring to the classroom from their own backgrounds, has relevance to the curriculum. Rahim said it this way: “they bring their education systems in here, their different knowledges, their different histories and what are we doing about it?” (Rahim, 3, p. 21). Such a challenging question broadens and enlivens the possibilities of establishing “home in the classroom” as a concept for International Education, for all students.

There has always been a self-consciousness particular to the ITEM, as a program, and among the individuals who have served its curriculum. This introspective practice offers a model for other teacher education programs. As we examine identities, as we trace our tracks through various cultures, as we find ourselves immersed in other countries that may or may not feel hospitable or engaged in our search for international education possibilities, we have remained an inquiring program. For better or for worse, we have reflected longevity through change. By “question[ing] traditional understandings of curriculum that may be valid no longer” (*ITEM Student handbook*, 1998, p. 4) in the face of dramatic domestic and global change, this program, I believe, has modeled one flawed but courageous and creative response to a rapidly changing world.

### ***To the Field of International Education***

The out-of-country experiences of the students, coupled with their efforts to integrate their new understandings in local classrooms, provide new data for further conceptualizing the field of International Education. The ITEM, unlike many other programs that describe themselves as International Education, examines *teaching* to internationalization as a curricular topic, as well as promotes ways to “internationalize” the curriculum. Additionally, the ITEM tries to prepare its teachers to develop an international approach to their teaching by having them examine issues of culture, nationality and identity. Where other International Education projects focus on either placing students out-of-country, or receiving foreign students at home, the ITEM focuses on preparing teachers, philosophically and in praxis, to address this international migration.

Liam said it well. He incorporated, conceptually and curricularly, the original peoples of Canada, the immigrant history of Canada, the contemporary presence of new settlers in our classrooms, and the “waves of North Americans going over to [Asia] to be ESL teachers” (Liam, 3, p. 13). He side-stepped the “mercenary “ (p. 13) aspect of International Education and recommended that “to counteract that, I think we should professionalize it” (p. 13). He recognized that the ITEM focuses its students on issues that concern a philosophical and ethical response to International Education as a pedagogy. And this approach to International Education as a pedagogy is what the program has to offer.

Recent changes to the conceptual bases of the program<sup>28</sup> introduced by Stephen Smith, may even, eventually, lead to a change in the name of the program. Other initiatives of Dr. Smith have included inviting educators from the southern sites to attend PDP programs in the north. Smith has also made efforts to employ academics in Trinidad & Tobago to support the program there. Additionally, he is exploring possibilities for compensating participating School Associates through seminars and certification in collaboration with the universities in the southern sites. There has even been talk of employing Faculty Associates at the southern sites who are *from* those sites.

I wish to conclude where we began. I still think about what Dr. Aoki wrote to us following the first meeting when Erika, Ian and I were conceptualizing the ITEM's purpose: “‘international’ as signifier has possibilities of many meanings and of the many, how one becomes the legitimate meaning (how ‘a’ becomes ‘the’) is a conscious or unconscious political act” (Ted Aoki, personal communication, 03/09/96). By choosing to spend a semester in the south, the ITEM faculty engaged in a political act. We chose a concept of International Education that needs to be interrogated while also serving as an example for other conceptualizations of International Education.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Smith, when preparing the program for the ITEM X students exchanged various communications with the ITEM faculty about the curriculum. None of these preparations contained the words “international education.” Instead he asked questions such as “Would an early EDUC 370 session within the beginnings of 401/2 set the scene for the kind of hermeneutic of place-centered pedagogy that EDUC 370 provides to go with the phenomenology of place-consciousness that the experiences of 401/2 oblige?” (personal communication, July 5, 2006).

## A Parable

Two households evolved simultaneously on opposite sides of the tracks. The advantages that accrued in “the wide lawn places” of the northern family was a consequence of coincidence, colour, language and economic advantages gained from the sugar and rum, gems and tobacco, cocoa and coffee, and (enforced) labour from south of the tracks. The southern household, long in service to outsiders, eventually secured their independence and freedom from indenture. As impoverished, wounded families do, they struggled in various ways to recover psychically and materially from a brutal past.

Seven years ago, the northern household proposed to visit their southern cousins. They wanted to cross the tracks for an educational experience in the South. And they did. Year-after-year, the northerners spent their money, crossed the tracks and visited the household in the south. “We’re here to learn! We’re here for an education! Good to see you!” and in they came.

They brought gifts. They spent time among the southerners, watching, teaching, learning and talking, talking, talking about what it was like to cross the tracks. Each year, after a couple of months, they re-crossed the tracks and returned to the north. Their ancestors got rum, sugar, cocoa and coffee. These northerners got an education.

The northern household used what they had learned in the south to teach their own communities all about what it was like to cross the tracks. They were thoughtful, intelligent and sincere. When newcomers came, the northern household was careful to teach them, too, lessons they had learned while visiting their southern cousins. They even invited two or three people from the household across the tracks to visit for a while, and taught them, too. When the northerners went to visit other neighbourhoods, they chose their gifts carefully, paid close attention to their manners and relied on their lessons from the south to guide them.

South of the tracks, the household continued to live and work at home. Although they couldn’t afford to visit the northerners, they had their own stories about crossing the tracks. They waited for their stories to be heard.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A. Professional Development Program Goals

1. The development of a clear, coherent and justified view of education that enables one to: understand the place of education in an open, pluralistic and caring society; determine the content, methods and institutional arrangements that are relevant, worthwhile and appropriate for the education of children; have a personal vision of what one can achieve as an educator; understand how schooling and other institutions influence students.
2. The development of a clear commitment to: respect students as persons with varied interests, backgrounds, points of view, plans, goals and aspirations; care about students and their individual development, uphold standards of excellence inherent in various forms of inquiry; uphold the principles that ought to govern a civilized, democratic and pluralistic community; establish and maintain ethical working relationships with all members of the educational community.
3. The development of clear commitment to lifelong learning manifest in: openness to alternatives and possibilities; reflective practice; engagement in dialogue and collaboration with colleagues, students, parents and others in the educational community; ability to form and reform ideas, methods, techniques; setting an example to students; stimulating students to be continuous learners.
4. The development of ability to create opportunities for learning that are: engaging and imaginative; significant and relevant to pupils' educational development; intellectually challenging; sensitive to issues of social equity and cultural diversity; appropriate to building habits of sound thinking; responsive to students' individual learning needs; reflective of growing understanding of what goes on in the classroom; consonant with learning goals.
5. The development of ability to put educationally sound curriculum ideas into practice in well-organized ways.
6. The development of knowledge about: teaching subjects; how individuals and groups of students learn; evaluation practices.
7. The development of ability to be a thoughtful and sensitive observer of what goes on in the classroom.
8. The development of ability to use evaluation and assessment practices that: use evaluative data as a means of furthering student learning; appreciate the subjectivity of evaluation; make use of varied practices that are congruent with learning goals; respect the dignity of each learner; show understanding of the moral implications of evaluation and assessment practices; promote self assessment.
9. The development of ability to use classroom interactions that: show caring and respect for every student; encourage learners to clarify and examine their ideas; are authentic, unpretentious and honest; communicate openness, a tolerance for uncertainty, and appreciation of the spirit of inquiry.
10. The development of appreciation for and skill in organizing harmonious working groups, and interpersonally sound working relationships among students.
11. The development of ability to observe, understand and respond respectfully to students with different learning styles and learning difficulties.
12. The development of appreciation for and ability to be flexible about curriculum—recreating, re-inventing, re-constituting, and discarding practices that have been observed, upon reflection, to be inappropriate to individual and group learning needs.

## Appendix B.

### Special Topics: Education 370-4

### International and Intercultural Education

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1. **Course number:** Education 370 Credit Hrs.: 4

2. **Course Instructor:** Anne Scholefield

3. **Semester to be offered:**

This course is being offered during the 2004-3, 2005-1, and 2005-2 semesters for PDP students enrolled in the International Teacher Education Module (ITEM). The course incorporates assignments undertaken during the pre-PDP semester, 2004-2, 2005-1 and uses semester 2005-2 to consolidate all of the assignments completed during the previous semesters. **Education 370 will be offered Tuesdays 8:30-12:30 in May and June starting May 3, 2005.**

4. **Description of Course:**

This course is based both on practical and theoretical orientations to international and intercultural education, including perspectives on the relationships between culture, learning and schooling.

The overall approach to the course is twofold. It examines the relationships between culture, learning and schooling from an intercultural orientation and it examines contemporary issues in teacher education from an international perspective.

This course surveys:

- a) methods for development of culturally sensitive and culturally responsive teaching practices and curricula;
- b) principles and practices in international education from a global and development education perspective;
- c) issues and perspectives pertaining to multicultural and anti-racism education and its relationship to schooling.

5. **Learning outcomes for students:**

The course will comprise a range and variety of learning experiences for students. These include: a) individual study, action research, and field-work with children both internationally and in Canada; b) focused practice on instructional strategies and procedures, with peer review and feedback to take place both in Canada and in the international settings of Oaxaca/Port of Spain during Education 401/402; c) small-group and whole-class discussions and seminars, problem-solving and presentations; and 4) lectures, workshops, and demonstrations.

The course will function as a forum and as a catalyst, not only for its own agenda but also for the development of each individual participant as it relates to the goals of the course.

**Learning outcomes:**

Participants will:

- become conversant with some of the major issues in international and intercultural education;
- become conversant with principles and practices of teaching and learning that are culturally sensitive and culturally responsive and responsible;
- become conversant with models of integrating and infusing cultural, global and multicultural content across the curriculum;
- become skilled in creating a culturally rich environment that nurtures all children;
- examine and begin to develop some understanding of the contexts and implications of international classrooms;
- undertake an action research assignment focusing upon culturally informed pedagogy;
- explore ways that classrooms, curriculum, schools and teachers can become more international and intercultural;
- examine teaching practices and education systems in different cultural contexts.

**6. List of student assignments to be completed and any other expectations of****Students:**

Course requirements comprise the following:

- regular class attendance and participation in all tasks (e.g., discussions, group problem-solving, self- and peer-evaluation strategies, etc.);
- systematic observations, with appropriate written reflections and commentaries, of children in a variety of settings;
- completion of professional readings and written assignments which, in each case, require participants to: prepare for reading; read; reflect on readings; and, lastly, extrapolate from and apply readings in a variety of ways-for example, in acquiring certain skills through frequent and/or extended practice in real-life contexts with children;
- demonstration of competency in the fulfillment of assignments; and
- evaluation of the student's work will be pass or fail.

Course assignments comprise the following:

- an action research assignment that provides an opportunity to undertake practice-based research on a topic of interest and value in both domestic and international classroom contexts;
- two readings connected to the themes of the course, with reflective writing
- a written description and analysis of one's current teaching practices generally and/or in a specific instructional context (both in Canada and internationally) with a focus on the themes of this course;
- professional portfolio.
- personal/professional credo (student statement of beliefs/philosophy of education); and
- an action plan for one's professional development, with rationale;
- periodic summaries of action research,, to be submitted by email.

**Dates for these assignments T.B.A.**

Jan. 4, 2005

## Appendix C. Interview Questions

### A. Pre-departure Questions for the student teachers

1. Describe what your expectations are for your practicum semester in T&T/Mexico.
2. What, at this point, is your understanding of “international education”?
3. How do you expect your semester away will help you to develop your understanding of international education?
4. What do you know about T&T/Oaxaca?
5. How do you define yourself culturally/nationally?
6. As an “International Educator” what do you think about your professional development responsibilities?
7. What are some of your most burning question re the focus of ITEM and your year ahead?

### B. Questions for student teachers on-site in T&T, and Mexico

1. Describe your impressions of the teachers’ role here—how does it differ from what you imagine a teacher’s role to be at home?
2. What are some of your most burning questions at this point?
3. What questions have surfaced for you re ‘International Education’? What has influenced those questions?
4. How do you think the Trinis/Mexicans perceive you and the ITEM program?
5. Given your brief time here, what do you think are the benefits for you as an educator?
6. What are the benefits for the Trinis/Mexicans?
7. What is the most significant experience for you here to date, personally or professionally?

### C. Questions for southern School Associates

1. Describe what you understand to be the relationship of the SFU teacher education program to your teaching/school.
2. Talk about what you have noticed about the Canadian teacher education program.
3. What are the benefits of hosting those student teachers for you/your school/your students?
4. What do you think are the benefits for the Canadian student teachers/

5. What recommendations might you make to improve the program/relationship for
  - a. your students
  - b. you
  - c. your school
  - d. the student teachers/SFU

**D. Questions for the student teacher graduates in March/April.**

1. How did the semester in the south influence your practicum here?
2. Comment on how you understand the connection between the themes of the ITEM (changing role of Education, teacher as person, building community) and your experiences in the south.
3. What was the most significant experience for you in 401/2 with regard to your understanding of the role of teacher?
4. Given what you know about the activities of other teacher education programs, how does your experience in ITEM compare?
5. If you were the Faculty Associate planning 401/2 in Trinidad/Mexico, what would you sustain from the present course? Why?
6. If you were the Faculty Associate planning 401/2 in Trinidad/Mexico, what would you change? Why?
7. Given that other modules cannot leave the country to complete 401/2, what, other than the out-of-country experience, would you recommend from ITEM to other modules as part of their 401/2 experience?
8. How might an outside observer be able to recognize the influence of your Education 401/2 experiences on your Education 405 practicum?
9. If you hadn't gone to Trinidad/Mexico, how might your practicum have been different?
10. What were the benefits for the Trinis/Mexicans of the ITEM's presence there?
11. What is your understanding of "international education"?
12. How do you define yourself culturally/nationally?
13. What burning questions still remain for you re 'International Education,' multicultural education or....? What new questions have been provoked?
14. How has your experience in the ITEM helped you to understand and progress toward the 12 Goals of the PDP?