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Becoming an ESL Teacher: An Autoethnography

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Becoming an ESL teacher: An autoethnography

by

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I studied the teacher identity development journey I underwent while completing

my first term of teaching adult ESL learners at a post-secondary institute in Ontario. I addressed

three questions. Firstly, I examined how my relationships with administration and colleagues

impacted my second language (L2) teacher identity development. Secondly, I examined how

sustained teaching experience influenced my L2 teacher identity development and pedagogical

content knowledge. Thirdly, I examined the extent to which my L2 teacher identity was formed

after my first teaching term. Autoethnography was the qualitative research method I used to

answer my questions. In autoethnography, the experiences of the author undergo careful

analysis with the aim of better apprehending cultural experiences (Ellis, 2004). This was the

most suitable methodology to employ as it let me creatively examine my L2 teacher identity

development from the perspective of both an outsider analyst and insider member (Reed-

Danahay, 1997). The process of systematic sociological introspection (SSI) made the creation of

the autoethnography possible. SSI (Ellis, 2008) involved four steps: (1) compiling relevant data

(i.e., journal, communication records); (2) reading the data to determine pivotal events related to

my L2 teacher identity development; (3) using the data and my memory to produce an narrative

recreating these events; and, (4) revising the narrative until an aesthetically pleasing and

logically plotted final draft was made. After the final draft of the autoethnography was

completed, an analysis of my L2 teacher identity development was conducted using Bullough's

(2005) theoretical framework. Through the analysis, I concluded that my professional

relationships had a very strong impact on my L2 teacher identity development. I found that even

though supportive colleagues and supervisors within my community of practice freely offered

me membership, I had a difficult time determining if I deserved or wanted it. In addition, the

analysis showed me that sustained teaching time had overwhelmingly positive ramifications for my L2 teacher identity. With time, I gained more confidence and felt more legitimate in the classroom. As a result of this growth in confidence and legitimacy, I was able to transition from playing the role of an ESL teacher to actually being feeling like one. Further, sustained teaching time also had positive ramifications for my pedagogical content knowledge, as I acquired a greater understanding of classroom management strategies, ESL subject matter, and pedagogical strategies. Finally, the analysis revealed that while I had an initial teacher identity after the completion of four months in the classroom, I still had key issues I needed to address in order to become the teacher I truly wanted to be. I recognized that I had to tackle my monolingualism, as well as learn more about pedagogical content knowledge, inter-cultural mediation, and colleague collaboration.

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CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

Teaching, like any human activity, emerges from one's inwardness … As I teach, I

project the condition of my soul onto my students ... The entanglements I experience

in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life.

Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. (Palmer, 1998, p. 2)

Lave and Wenger (1991) contend that a professional identity is not something that

individuals already have firmly established when they enter their working lives. They

additionally argue that a professional identity will not materialize merely as a consequence of

obtaining specific knowledge or competences (Lave 1996; Wenger, 1998). It is helpful to

acknowledge these concepts when examining the identity development of individuals in

professions, such as teaching, where the completion of adequate schooling and admittance to a

governing board results in the conveyance of a particular designation.

Though examination of teacher identity development with regards to novice elementary

and secondary teachers is relatively prolific (see, for example: Cook, 2009; Olsen, 2008; Pearce

& Morrison, 2011), few researchers have directly examined this issue with reference to novice

second language (L2) teachers. The phrase, novice L2 teachers, encompasses beginning

educators in the fields of English as Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language

(EFL), and Modern Languages (ML). Only eight studies (Farrell 2003 & 2006; Kanno & Stuart,

2011; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Tsui, 2007; Watzke,

2007) have investigated, to varying degrees, how novice L2 teachers come to acquire a teacher

identity over time. This study was instigated to provide a deeper understanding of this

phenomenon.

In the remainder of this chapter I introduce key aspects pertaining to this thesis. I begin by describing the purpose of the study and outlining the research questions it addressed. Following this, I provide the rationale for why this study was conducted, and discuss aspects of my personal background that help to situate me within the context of my research. I then define teacher identity and describe autoethnography, the research design and methodology. To conclude, I consider the significance of my study, as well as address its delimitations and limitations.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences that helped to facilitate the teacher identity development of the author, a novice L2 teacher. Three research questions are addressed in this study:

1. How did my relationships with colleagues and administration influence my L2 teacher identity development?

2. How did my sustained teaching experience impact my L2 teacher identity development and pedagogical knowledge?

3. Where did I still want to go in terms of my L2 teacher identity development after completing my first term of full-time teaching?

Rationale

This thesis was undertaken to answer the call of researchers to add to the small body of knowledge in the area of novice L2 teacher identity development (Farrell, 2006; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Liu & Fisher, 2006). In particular, I wanted to address the gaps I perceived in the existing published literature on this topic (Farrell 2003 & 2006; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Tsui, 2007; Watzke, 2007). I employed a

research design and methodology (i.e., autoethnography) that had not been utilized by other researchers who had published articles on the issue of identity development for novice L2 teachers. Autoethnography offered the opportunity for me to provide a unique account of L2 teacher identity development, as I was able to act as both an outsider researcher and insider participant (Reed-Danahay, 1997). In addition, I studied a participant (i.e., myself) who worked in a teaching context that had not yet been thoroughly explored. Of the studies that specifically addressed the identity development of ESL/EFL teachers (Farrell 2003 & 2006; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Tsui, 2001), only one examined individuals practicing in North America (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). Further, only one of those studies had examined a full-time in-service teacher teaching adult L2 learners in a post-secondary environment (Tsui, 2007). Thus, I felt the exploration of my L2 teacher identity development, as a full-time in-service ESL teacher providing instruction to adult L2 learners at a Canadian university, would offer new insights into what it is like to be a beginning professional educator in that specific area of ESL teaching.

Personal Background

My route to an L2 teaching career path was not direct. L2 teaching was not my initial vocational calling. From the time I was 14 up until 2011 when I turned 30, my goal was to be a university professor. Over the years, I have thought about pursuing Ph.D. work in multiple areas related to my academic and professional fields of experience: classical studies, English literature, and library science. Within the past couple of years, however, I have come to realize that gaining academic prestige in any of these fields will not make me happy. This is where L2 teaching, something I discovered by chance, enters the picture.

In May 2009, I was introduced to the concept of ESL teaching by a colleague at the

library where I was working. She informed me that she had just completed a multi-weekend

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) training course, and that the

certificate she received, along with her Bachelor of Arts degree, helped to qualify her for several

ESL teaching positions abroad. She encouraged me, because of our similar academic

backgrounds (i.e., English literature) and cultural interests (i.e., travelling, anthropology) to

consider following in her footsteps.

After some thought, I decided to act on my co-worker's suggestion and enrolled for the

same TESOL training course. At that time, I was not considering ESL teaching as a career, but I

thought that the course would positively add to my resume. Beginning this experience I naively

assumed that teaching ESL would be easy. I wrongly believed, as others have before me (Phan,

2008), that since I was a native English speaker and university educated I could walk into a

classroom with a textbook and begin to teach. I did not know about the existence of specific

language learning theories, and frankly, did not care. My vision of language teaching, influenced

by my own experience, was one of rote memorization of grammatical tables. I felt that I could

succeed with ESL students simply because I was interested in knowing people from different

cultures, and was open to working with individuals who had values and beliefs that differed from

my own.

The TESOL course in 2009 offered me an overview of the TESL profession. Through

short lessons of approximately one hour each, I was introduced to some important topics related

to teaching the five language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar): second

language acquisition, classroom management, multiple intelligence theory, and cultural

sensitivity. I also completed a one-hour in-class teaching component, in which I taught an

assigned topic and pretended that the other course participants were ESL students of a particular

age and level (e.g., beginner, intermediate, advanced). Unfortunately, I forgot much of the knowledge I had learned, both theoretical and practical, upon completing the final exam.

Between May 2009 and May 2010, I volunteered in multiple capacities as an ESL instructor: secondary school tutor, book club facilitator, conversational mentor, and discussion group leader. These experiences gave me some critical practical experience. The enjoyment I felt while pursuing these various endeavours, and the seeming success I had with my students, made me feel as if L2 teaching was a viable career alternative should the ruthless world of academia find me lacking in research stamina.

To help facilitate this 'Plan B,' I pursued additional ESL teaching certification in 2010. The second TESOL certificate I received, which gave me the credentials to teach ESL to adults in many Canadian institutions, required 100 hours of content instruction and 20 hours of practicum teaching. During the in-class component of the course I was introduced to communicative language teaching (CLT), an approach which promotes language learning through authentic and repeated language use, and task-based learning (TBL), which promotes language learning through the completion of tasks (Harmer, 2007). While I acquired a surface level understanding of both concepts, I did not reflect upon how to effectively implement CLT or TBL in the classroom. In general, my focus in the course was upon surviving the practicum component, which completely terrified me (Farrell, 2006; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). My primary concerns were proving my competence, addressing the assigned curriculum, and receiving a good evaluation from my associate so I could receive my certificate (Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Bown, 1975).

Completion of this second TESOL certification course and the professional recognition it provided did not, as some researchers (Lave & Wenger, 1991) have argued, provide me with a

teacher identity. What it did, however, was provide valuable context for comparison with my subsequent Bachelor of Education practicums in 2010 and 2011. As I reflected on those 10 weeks of elementary school teaching, I realized that I found the experience to be less challenging and rewarding than the one week I had spent in the ESL classroom. This reflection also helped me to solidify that I wanted to teach adults learners who were preparing for post-secondary studies. Recognition of these facts made me come to terms with a new truth about my vocational path: ESL teaching with a focus on Academic Preparation (AP) was now 'Plan A.'

Prior to beginning my first full-time ESL teaching position I did not have a "real" personal philosophy about teaching. During my Bachelor of Education program, I had created a broad philosophy of teaching statement. In that statement I made reference to my belief in student-centered instruction, in orienting my teaching around students' interests and needs, and in the value of inclusive classrooms. On my cover letters for ESL positions, I discussed my belief in CLT and TBL. Unfortunately, I wrote what I thought my professors and potential employers wanted to hear, and gave little thought to whether I actually agreed with, or even fully understood, what I had written. It was not until I finished teaching my first term that I was genuinely able to articulate my fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning.

In the next section, I turn my attention to defining teacher identity development.

Defining Teacher Identity

Researchers discuss two distinct yet connected types of identity. Firstly, there is one's personal (Harre & van Langenhove, 1999) or core (Bullough, 2005) identity. This identity shapes our worldview and is aligned with our sense of individual action (Pearce & Morrison, 2011). Secondly, there is our public (Harre & van Langenhove, 1999) or situational (Bullough, 2005) identity. This identity is what we show to the world while we navigate through diverse

daily situations (Pearce & Morrison, 2011). Our personal/core identity exists behind our public/situational identity (Bullough, 2005; Harre & van Langenhove, 1999). Some argue that these two multidimensional identities should be in harmony (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004), while others contend that the two identities will continuously be at odds in the struggle for a professional identity (MacLure, 1993; Samuel & Stephens, 2000).

Teachers' public/situational identities are shaped in multiple ways. Firstly, they are "subject to social and historical practices, including discourses around work and teaching" (Pearce & Morrison, 2011, p. 49). Additionally, they are influenced "by the specific cultural and institutional contexts" (Bullough, 2005, p. 240) of the schools in which they work. In general, schools encourage teachers to have specific professional identities (e.g., adhere to teacher-centered instructional practices), and this encouragement can either hinder or help identity development (Bullough, 2005). In the face of these pressures, novice teachers, in particular, often have a difficult time forming and maintaining a public/situational identity that is consistent with their personal/core identity (Alsup, 2006; Bullough, 1989, 1992, 2005; Pearce & Morrison, 2011).

Several theoretical frameworks (Bullough, 2005; Danielewicz; 2001; Lave, 1996; Nespor & Barylske, 1991; Wenger, 1998) have been proposed for studying the process of teacher identity development. These frameworks will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

Research Design and Methodology

In this study, autoethnography was utilized as the research design and methodology. Anthropologists began using the term autoethnography to describe their work in the 1970s. Heider (1975) first used the word "auto-ethnography" in his research regarding the Dani people of Papua New Guinea. He used "auto-ethnography" to reference the cultural recollections his

Dani participants provided (Chang, 2008). A few years later, Hayano (1979) used the term

autoethnography to describe a study of the ethnographer's own people (Chang, 2008). In his

book *Poker faces* (1982, cited in Chang, 2008), Hayano studied his membership within a culture

of Californian card players.

  Autoethnography is considered to be a "blurred genre" (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 765), and

it is situated on the left side of the qualitative research spectrum (Ellingson, 2011). Researchers

from many fields in the humanities and social sciences have formulated definitions for the term

(see, for example: Anderson, 2006; Denzin, 1997; Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005; Neumann,

1996; Patton, 2002; Richardson 2000b; Spry, 2001). These definitions vary, as Reed-Danahay

(1997) notes, depending on the emphasis the researcher places on each of the three aspects

associated with this methodology: self (auto), culture (ethno), and the research process (graphy).

In my study, autoethnography is regarded as "research, writing, story, and method that connect[s]

the autobiographical to the cultural, social, and political through the study of a culture or

phenomenon of which one is a part, integrated with relational and personal experiences"

(Ellingson, 2011, p. 599).

  Typically written in the first-person, autoethnographic texts take different forms and

examine diverse themes. The introspective process of writing autoethnography can be both

challenging and time-consuming (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004). Ellis and Bochner (2000) describe

this taxing process in the following way:

> Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-
>
> angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal
>
> experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by
>
> and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom

backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal

and the cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. (p. 739)

Though several varieties of autoethnographic writing have been recognized (Chang,

2008; Patton, 2002), the two varieties of autoethnography that have received the most attention

from qualitative researchers are evocative and analytic (Hayler, 2011). Evocative

autoethnography has been described as a "mode of storytelling [that] is akin to the novel or

biography and thus fractures the boundaries that normally separate social science from

literature" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 744). As it is highly personal and subjective, evocative

autoethnography is seen as both a controversial (Patton, 2002) and marginalized (Anderson,

2006) form of qualitative research. In discussing the limitations of this methodology, Crotty

(1998) observes that evocative autoethnography displays "rampant subjectivism" (p. 48).

Atkinson (1997) argues that many evocative autoethnographic writings are merely therapeutic.

Even strong proponents have acknowledged the difficulty of writing a quality evocative

autoethnographic text. Ellis and Bochner (2000) describe the challenges:

> It's certainly not something that most people can do well. Most social scientists
>
> don't write well enough to carry it off. Or they're not sufficiently introspective
>
> about their feelings or motives, or the contradictions they experience ... The self-
>
> questioning autoethnography demands is extremely difficult. So is confronting
>
> things about yourself that are less than flattering. (p. 738)

In response to the criticisms about evocative autoethnography, Anderson (2006) coined

the term, analytic autoethnography. In advocating for this different variety of objective

autoethnography, Anderson created a method of "qualitative inquiry rooted in traditional

symbolic interactionism" (p. 374). For an autoethnographic text to be analytic, Anderson

maintains it should have five pivotal features. Firstly, he feels that the researchers must be complete members of the culture they are studying. This membership can be acquired through one of three means: choice (e.g., career), circumstance (e.g., illness), or birth. Secondly, he feels that researchers must exhibit analytic reflexivity, meaning they should have "an awareness of [the] reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their settings and informants" (p. 382). Thirdly, researchers must be highly visible within their work. The audience should become aware of the researchers' thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Fourthly, the voices of others must be incorporated. If research focuses solely on the self, Anderson contends that it loses sight of the larger social picture and downplays the connection between community members. Finally, researchers must approach their work with an "analytic agenda" (p. 386). As a form of ethnographic practice, autoethnography should "use empirical data to gain insight into some broader set of social phenomena than those provided by the data themselves" (p. 387). Though this framework has been met with enthusiasm by some scholars for its commitment to rigor (Atkinson, 2006; Chang, 2008; Charmaz, 2006; Hayler, 2011), others have seen it as restricting the creative and literary elements of the autoethnographic genre (Burnier, 2006; Denzin, 2006; Ellis & Bochner, 2006; Vryan, 2006).

The use of autoethnography in the education field has been rising steadily since the later part of the 20th century. Early on, the primary users of autoethnographic writing in education were established professors who employed this method to reflect upon various aspects of their scholastic lives (Chang, 2008). These works examined, either directly or peripherally, issues such as student-professor relationships (Ellis, 1995), lessons learned through teaching (Tompkins, 1996), and how beliefs impact practice (Nash, 2002). Though these issues remain popular topics for examination (Hayler, 2011; Grainger, 2011), the scope of autoethnography has

moved beyond the confines of the realm of academia. Currently, this methodology is being used by educational scholars to investigate diverse topics of both personal and professional natures (see, example: Attard & Armour, 200; Nieto, 2004; Taylor & Coia, 2007; Trahar, 2009).

Educational academics and practitioners have embraced autoethnography for several reasons. Firstly, autoethnography gives voice to people who have been silenced in other forms of education research (Ellis, 2004; Wink, 2005). Members of ethnic minorities have been given an additional outlet through which to discuss their educational experiences, both positive and negative, to expand the discourse which has traditionally been dominated by Caucasian writers of European descent (Chang, 2005; Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang, 2010; Obidah & Teel, 2001; Phan, 2012; Robinson & Clardy, 2010; Romo, 2004). Secondly, personal narrative, a crucial aspect of autoethnographic writing, has long been used as a pedagogical tool for teacher education (Clandinin & Connelly 1986, 1987, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1999; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1990, 2001). It has been observed that individuals develop professionally through writing personal narratives as it enables them to make meaning of their experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Nash, 2004). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain that narrative inquiry for educators is essential: "Deliberately storying and restorying one's life or a group or a cultural story is … a fundamental method of personal and social growth; it is the fundamental quality of education" (p. 24).

Significance

This study is significant for several reasons. To begin with, my experience with regards to developing an L2 teacher identity varies from other experiences that exist in the current literature. Thus, my story can offer new insights into understanding this identity transformation. Additionally, no autoethnographic accounts appear in the published literature pertaining to

novice L2 teacher identity development as they do with novice elementary and secondary

teachers (Bullough, 2005). This narrative responds to the recommendation of other researchers

(Farrell, 2006; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Liu & Fisher, 2006) to further the dialogue in this area of

study. Furthermore, personal stories have been shown to have a more lasting impact on readers

than impersonal empirical studies (Shulman, 1986; Bullough, 1989). It is my hope that this

study will have an impact on readers, particularly those considering or beginning a career in L2

teaching. Finally, the process of creating this study served as a remarkable tool of professional

development, for as Hayler (2011) states, "valuable insights … can be gained by examining our

own memories and beliefs and that the narrative discourses through which we understand

ourselves and our work are a source of rich description and insight" (p. 1).

Delimitations / Limitations

This study examines the first term of full-time ESL teaching I completed at a post-

secondary institution in Northern Ontario from September to December 2012. As such, its scope

is limited to the viewpoints and experiences associated with my own teaching journey over a

brief period of time.

Summary

In this study I examined my journey towards acquiring an L2 teacher identity while

completing my first semester of full-time post-secondary ESL teaching. Through my

autoethnographic narrative, I considered how my acquisition of an L2 teacher identity was

influenced by my relationships with my professional colleagues. Furthermore, I investigated

how sustained teaching time and increased pedagogical knowledge impacted my identity

formation, as well as how I want my L2 teacher identity to evolve. Apart from providing me

with valuable professional insight and growth, this study aimed to advance the dialogue on the

topic of novice L2 teacher identity development as the current level of research is quite sparse.

A discussion of the literature examining L2 teaching and novice L2 teacher identity development is provided in Chapter Two. In particular, I highlight the findings of instrumental studies as they pertain to key concepts examined in my research questions. In Chapter Three, I describe autoethnography, the research design and methodology employed in this research. I explain how the data I utilized were collected and analyzed, as well as how I evaluated the finished autoethnographic narrative to ensure its quality. Moreover, I explore the ethical implications of my research and the reliability of my memory as a data source. The autoethnographic narrative, in the form of a series of journal entries, is provided in Chapter Four. This narrative, which chronicles my L2 teacher identity formation, is then interpreted using criteria established by Bullough (2005). Chapter Five summarizes the study, considers my findings, and provides recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the field of L2 teacher education has generated a

growing body of research on teacher learning and teacher cognition ... Yet, despite

this body of research, two gaps in knowledge are particularly noticeable: the paucity

of examinations of novice L2 teacher development over time and a lack of inquiry

into novice L2 teachers' identity development. (Kanno & Stuart, 2011, p. 237)

This chapter provides an examination of important issues relating to L2 teaching and

novice L2 teacher identity development. I begin by considering the adult ESL teaching context

in Canada. Next, I explore key theories of L2 teaching and some of the commonly used

instructional methods they are associated with. Following this, I briefly consider how culture

impacts L2 teaching practices. To conclude, I provide a review of the studies related to novice

L2 teacher identity development and introduce the theoretical framework used in this thesis.

Adult ESL Teaching in Canada

Each country offers a unique context for English language instruction. Even among

English-speaking multicultural countries, such as Canada, the United States, England, and

Australia, there are great distinctions in how adult ESL programing is offered and to whom.

Below I discuss key aspects of the Canadian adult ESL teaching context: who the learners are,

what language training programs are assessable, and how teachers are certified.

Learners

Language training programs for adult ESL learners have been offered in Canada since the

1970s (Li, Myles, & Robinson, 2012). Though access to adult ESL programming is open to

Canadian-born individuals, the vast majority of learners who attend adult ESL classes are

foreign-born (Li et al., 2012). These foreign-born learners can be placed into two large

categories. The first category is international students. On average, Canada welcomes over 130,000 international students each year (Li et al., 2012). International students come to Canada for a variety of reasons. For some, they have shorter-term goals they wish to achieve, such as upgrading their linguistic skills and experiencing a new culture by living abroad. For others, the objectives are longer-term, such as attending and graduating from a Canadian post-secondary institution.

The second category of foreign-born adult ESL learners is immigrants. Within the immigrant category, there are different classifications: economic immigrants, family-class immigrants, and convention refugees (Li et al., 2012). Economic immigrants are individuals who have been allowed to enter Canada as a result of being experienced workers with skills considered to be of value to Canadian society (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014c). Family-class immigrants are individuals who have been sponsored by Canadian citizens or permanent residents who are over the age of 18 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014a). Family-class immigrants are related to the people who sponsor them by blood (e.g., parents, siblings, children) or close association (e.g., spouse, common law partner). Convention refugees are those individuals who have chosen to remain in Canada as they have a justifiable belief that they will endure oppression (e.g., religious, political, racial) in their home countries (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014b). In 2012, Canada received over 257,000 immigrants from these different classifications (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013c), and more than 25% of them, predominantly family-class immigrants and convention refugees, did not speak English or French (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013b).

Programs

In order to meet the diverse needs of immigrants and international students, multiple

language training programs have been established across the country. Language Instruction for

Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs, which were established in 1992 by the government of

Canada, offer free ESL classes to over 60,000 adult immigrants each year (Citizenship and

Immigration Canada, 2013a). The curriculum of LINC programs is based upon the Canadian

Language Benchmarks (CLBs), which are nationally accepted standards to assess language

competence (Li et al., 2012). Though there are 12 CLBs, most LINC programs concentrate on

teaching CLBs 1 through 8, which are designed for beginning and intermediate students.

Learners with no or rudimentary English language proficiency are assigned to classes which

focus on CLBs 1 through 4. In these classes the emphasis is on teaching students how to

interact in daily situations (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). Learners with higher

English language proficiency are assigned to classes that are based around CLBs 5 through 8. In

these classes the focus is on helping learners acquire the language skills necessary to navigate

slightly more complex experiences that may occur in educational and occupational environments

(Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). Besides language instruction, LINC programs are

also intended to help immigrants with economic, social, and cultural integration into Canadian

society (Li et al., 2012).

Enhanced Language Training (ELT) and Occupation-Specific Language Training

(OSLT) programs, started by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, cater to immigrants seeking

English education with a strong work-related focus (Li et al., 2012). ELT programs provide

advanced English instruction to experienced internationally trained professionals who have

backgrounds in fields such as engineering, health science, and business (Li et al., 2012). The

aim of ELT programs is to assist these immigrants in transitioning to the Canadian workforce in

roles that utilize their knowledge and skills (Li et al., 2012). OSLT programs, on the other hand,

are designed for immigrants with intermediate or advanced English proficiency that want more knowledge about how to communicate and interact in specific work contexts (Li et al., 2012). OSLT program learners are interested in assuming support positions (e.g., accounting assistant) within various sectors of industry (Li et al,, 2012). Some of them are looking to change their careers, while others want to advance within their current positions (Li et al., 2012).

Private language programs and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs accommodate the needs of international students. Private language programs attract paying international students of all English language proficiency levels. These programs are popular with international students who want to upgrade their language abilities, experience Canadian culture, and prepare for standardized ESL tests, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). EAP programs, generally run by colleges or universities, equip students with the linguistic and academic skills they need in order to study at post-secondary institutions where English is the language of instruction. The curriculum of EAP programs often has a heavy focus on academic reading, writing, and research (Li et al., 2012). Completion of an EAP program, in conjunction with possessing other academic credentials (e.g., high school diploma), could lead to admission to specific college or university programs.

Teachers

In general, the minimum requirement for employment as an instructor in an adult ESL program in Canada is a university degree, demonstrated proficiency in English, and a TESL/TESOL certificate recognized by one of the four professional ESL teacher associations (Li et al., 2012). Acquiring a basic TESL/TESOL certificate requires the successful completion of practicum teaching (20+ hours) and many hours (100-250) of in-class instruction in TESL theory

and methodology (Li et al., 2012). Numerous employers, however, are looking for teachers who have work experiences and educational training that greatly exceed the minimum qualifications. Preference is often given to candidates who have completed graduate degrees (e.g., TESL, Applied Linguistics), have taught overseas, and are competent in multiple languages.

In the next section I discuss L2 theories and instructional approaches.

L2 Theories and Instructional Approaches

Over the years, several theories and teaching strategies have been advocated as being the most suitable for informing second language instruction. Since the scope of this thesis do not allow for a comprehensive examination of all L2 theories and teaching practices, I have chosen to focus on those theories (i.e., behaviourism, sociocultural model) and related instructional approaches (i.e., grammar translation, audio-lingualism, communicative language teaching) that are still widely discussed in L2 literature and widely used in L2 classrooms (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012).

Theory: Behaviourism

Behaviourism is a theory that maintains that learning occurs as a result of conditioning and the development of habits (Li et al., 2012). Behaviourists feel that in order to acquire the target language, or the language a student wants to learn, extensive practice and repetition is required (Li et al., 2012). For behaviourists, grammar knowledge is essential and it serves as the basis upon which other language skills are taught (Li et al., 2012). Heavily emphasis is placed upon forming learning outcomes that are simple to observe and record (Li et al., 2012).

Theory: Sociocultural Model

The sociocultural model theory is based upon the ideas of psychologist Lev Vygotsky (Li et al., 2012). Unlike others who felt that learning was predominantly determined by biology,

Vygotsky stipulated that learning is social and that knowledge "is constructed through a process of collaboration, interaction, and communication among learners in social settings" (Li et al., 2012, p. 62). Vygotsky introduced the influential concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is the difference between what a learner can do independently (i.e., the lower limit of the ZPD) and what he/she can accomplish with assistance (Li et al., 2012). In an L2 classroom where the sociocultural model is the foundation, teachers present new language that is slightly beyond a learner's present capabilities (Li et al., 2012). Through scaffolding, or changing the level of support, teachers can help a learner reach the highest limit of his/her ZPD (Li et al., 2012).

Instructional Approach: Grammar Translation

The grammar translation approach, which has been used for teaching languages for centuries, is behaviourist in nature (Li et al., 2012). In this approach, typically employed in classrooms where all the learners have the same native tongue, the stress is on teaching grammar rules (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012). Students are asked to apply the grammar rules they learn by reading sentences or passages in their target language and then translating these sentences or passages into their native language (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012). While this approach allows students to closely compare their target and their native language, grammar translation has been criticized for being too teacher-centered and neglecting the development of speaking skills (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012)

Instructional Approach: Audio-lingualism

The audio-lingualism approach was directly influenced by behaviourism (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012). It emphasizes the teaching of speaking skills through the use of drills where students listen to conversations or dialogues and then mimic them (Harmer, 2012; Li et al.,

2012). Students are conditioned by receiving positive reinforcement, such as praise, for correctly replicating modeled language (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012). This approach can be beneficial in teaching specific speaking skills, such as proper pronunciation and stress, but it does not give attention to spontaneous language use in uncontrolled contexts (Harmer, 2012). In addition, audio-lingualism does not focus on the improvement of learner abilities in reading and writing (Li et al., 2012).

Instructional Approach: Communicative Language Teaching

The sociocultural model theory inspired the creation of communicative language teaching (CLT). The CLT approach encourages learners to frequently communicate with one another in authentic and meaningful contexts in order to develop effective spoken and written language (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012). Teachers act as learning facilitators and tailor their instruction to meet the needs, preferences, and expectations of their learners (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012). In all forms of communicating, there is a focus on fluency rather than accuracy (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012). Language errors are regarded as natural and valuable learning tools, and correction often occurs after a communicative action has finished (Harmer, 2012; Li et al., 2012). Task-based learning (TBL), which has learners use their language knowledge to complete tasks, is an extension of CLT (Brown, 2001). Though CLT is excellent at helping learners improve their functional language skills, students who are accustomed to teacher-centered instructional methods may have a difficult time accepting this type of learning that calls for students to be proactive (Li et al., 2012).

The impact of culture on L2 classroom instruction is considered below.

Cultural Implications in the L2 Classroom

It is difficult to arrive at a universal definition of culture as definitions are culturally

bound (Li et al., 2012). Despite this difficultly, however, it is acceptable to assert that culture is

a "learned, shared, symbolic system of values, beliefs, traditions, knowledge, and attitudes that

shapes a people's mind and influences their behavior" (Li et al., 2012, p. 24). Seeing as many

L2 teachers work with learners from a variety of different countries on a daily basis, culture

plays an important role in their jobs. Besides teaching language, L2 teachers must be cultural

negotiators who effectively address cross-cultural misunderstandings and cultural adaptation

challenges (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Li et al., 2012).

Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings

In culturally diverse classrooms with students of different ages, genders, religions, and

economic backgrounds, L2 teachers must endeavor to promote understanding and respect

among all the members of their learning communities. To lessen the probability of having

damaging cross-cultural misunderstandings with students, L2 teachers must build their

awareness of the cultures of the students they teach and remain respectful of differences

(DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Li et al., 2012). Further, they must recognize that students will

enter their classrooms with culturally reinforced expectations of how they will be taught

(DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Li et al., 2012). Since L2 teachers will encounter varying

student expectations, they should remain flexible in what they teach and how they teach

(DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Li et al., 2012). In addition, it is important that L2 teachers

avoid making mass generalizations about learners from a specific culture (e.g., Chinese students

are quiet and want significant instruction in grammar) and realize that each student will have

personal learning preferences and needs (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Li et al., 2012). Time

should be made in L2 classrooms to discuss not only the target culture but also the cultures of the

students, as it delivers the message of culturally equality and hopefully helps to mitigate cultural

tensions (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Li et al., 2012).

Cultural Adaptation Challenges

Each person who stays in a new country for a relatively long period of time will experience a cultural adaptation process. Researchers have identified five stages of cultural adaptation through which newcomers' progress at different rates: honeymoon, culture shock, reintegration, autonomy, and independence (see Table 1). Of these stages, culture shock is "the most unsettling and the most detrimental to cross-cultural sensitivity" (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004, p. 110). During this stage, newcomers have a hard time adjusting to all of the different cultural elements (e.g., religion, politics, family dynamics, social hierarchies) of the new country (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Li et al., 2012). They experience an array of negative feelings such as unhappiness, uneasiness, loneliness, hostility, and anger (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Li et al., 2012). Culture shock is more intensely felt when the differences between the home country and the new country are pronounced (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Li et al., 2012).

Table 1

Stages of Cultural Adaptation (Li et al., 2012)

Stage	Explanation
Honeymoon	The new culture is fascinating. People experience feelings of happiness and excitement.
Culture Shock	Cultural differences between the new culture and the home culture become very evident and challenging to face. People may feel lonely, hostile, angry, and unhappy.
Reintegration	A bond is felt with the new culture, but there is also resentment.
Autonomy	A more fair view of the home and host culture is reached.
Independence	The host culture is understood and accepted.

While L2 teachers cannot prevent students for experiencing culture shock, they can assist in lessening its impact (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). To begin with, L2 teachers can help students to understand that the negative feelings they are experiencing are normal and most likely temporary (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). Another step that L2 teachers can take is exposing their students to the rules, customs, and traditions of the culture in which they living or studying in order to make them feel more comfortable in the foreign environment (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). Finally, L2 teachers can provide students with safe outlets (e.g., role plays, journals) to express their emotions and ask questions (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004).

In the next part of the chapter I shift my focus to important research regarding novice L2 teacher identity development.

Novice L2 Teacher Identity Development Research

Eight published studies have investigated, to some extent, the topic of novice L2 teacher identity development. Five studies have indirectly addressed the issue (Farrell, 2003 & 2006; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Richards 1997; Watzke, 2007) and three have directly addressed the issue (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Tsui, 2007). In Table 2, the key aspects (i.e., author(s), purpose/participant(s), research methods) of these eight studies are outlined for comparative purposes.

Pennington and Richards (1997) examined how five native Cantonese speakers coped with the demands of their first year of teaching ESL in Hong Kong secondary schools. In particular, they wanted to discover how the novice teachers functioned in the classroom, what principles guided their conduct, and to what extent they applied the practices they learned from their teacher education program. Over the course of an academic year, data were collected from questionnaires, bi-weekly teacher self-reflections, monthly meetings, and classroom observations. The researchers found that the teachers, who had been given specific directions to

follow regarding curriculum and grading, adhered to the guidelines and procedures laid out for them. Their overriding concerns were classroom management and finding a way to address all of the assigned material. The communicative language teaching methodologies they had been taught in their teacher education program were not implemented because internal pressures to conform drove them to focus on teacher-centered grammar instruction. Another factor that may have influenced the decision of the teachers to shun student-centered communicative pedagogy was that they had not experienced this pedagogical approach as English learners. The researchers recommended that these teachers should engage in more periods of self-reflection with the guidance of university sector mentors.

Peacock (2001) investigated how 146 student teachers' beliefs about second language learning changed over the course of their three-year BA TESL program at the City University of Hong Kong. To trace the beliefs of the participants, four data collection instruments were used: Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) self-report questionnaires; ESL proficiency scores measured through compulsory courses; a TESL instruction package; and classroom observations. Though the researcher predicted that initial misconceptions about learning a second language would change as a result of increased knowledge about TESL methodology, this was not the case. Student teachers who entered the program with the belief that second language learning was related to intelligence and was predominantly a matter of memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules maintained this belief over the period of their studies. Such beliefs about language learning, Peacock argued, likely stemmed from their own second language learning experiences.

In two studies, Farrell (2003 & 2006) investigated the experiences of a novice EFL secondary teacher in Singapore during his first year of teaching. Farrell explored the challenges

encountered by this new educator and how these difficulties were resolved. Data sources

included a teaching journal, classroom observations, post-observation conferences, and semi-

structured interviews. In general, he discovered that his participant, Wee Jin, had encountered

three major professional challenges. Firstly, he was unhappy with the teacher-centered approach

he was expected to follow. Wee Jin worked around this complication by incorporating learner-

centered activities whenever possible. Secondly, he was frustrated that he was required to teach

to the textbook that was geared towards examinations and not to student needs. To address this,

Wee Jin brought in additional resources to supplement areas where he thought the textbook was

inadequate. Finally, Wee Jin had trouble establishing relationships with his colleagues because

of cliques and the culture of the school. Despite his desire to interact with others and share his

ideas and concerns, he had limited opportunities for professional dialogues. This lack of support

was harmful to Wee Jin's development as new teachers need strong and involved mentors to help

make the transition to the full-time teaching environment successful.

Liu and Fisher (2006) explored the development patterns of three novice L2 teachers with

regards to several aspects of their self-conception (e.g., teaching performance, relationship with

pupils, teacher identity). The study was conducted over nine months as these teachers completed

three teaching practicums for their Postgraduate Certificate in Education at Cambridge

University. Methods included semi-structured interviews, logs, open-ended questionnaires, and

self-reflection reports. The authors found that it took participants the full three teaching

practicums before they could identify themselves as being 'real' or 'genuine' teachers. Factors

that helped to facilitate this new identity development were sustained time in the classroom,

more confidence in instructional skills, and meaningful contact with other staff members.

Watzke (2007) explored how the pedagogical content knowledge of nine American

novice Modern Language teachers enrolled in a field-based Master of Education program developed and changed over two academic teaching years at the secondary level. Data sources included bi-monthly reflective journals, classroom observations, and focus group interviews. Four themes emerged to explain the changes that occurred with participants' foreign language pedagogical content knowledge. The first theme showed, that with time, the teachers began to frame their teaching decisions around their professional experiences in the classroom rather than on their own learning experiences. The second theme indicated that the teachers gradually moved from teacher-centered techniques to student-centered techniques as they learned to surrender instructional control. The third theme demonstrated that the teachers eventually came to acknowledge that authentic language use was more important than isolated knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. The fourth theme illustrated that over the two years the teachers shifted their attention from creating motivating and entertaining lessons to creating lessons that had specific language learning outcomes.

Tsui (2007) used narrative inquiry to explore the identity development of Minfang, a Chinese EFL teacher. The narrative chronicles this man's journey as both an EFL student and teacher over a six-month period. Using Wenger's (1998) social theory of identity formation as a framework, Tsui identified two important sources underlying Minfang's teacher identity development. Firstly, he had to recognize that he possessed skills valued by his teaching community. Secondly, he had to be given legitimacy of access to practice (Wenger, 1998). Thus, Minfang needed to be granted full inclusion and participation within his teaching community in order to experience professional growth.

Most recently, Kanno and Stuart (2011) pursued a one-year case study of two novice L2 teachers in an American graduate program for teaching ESL. They sought to understand how

these individuals acquired a teacher identity, and in what ways their teacher identities influenced

their instructional practices. Sources of data included classroom observations, interviews,

journals, stimulated recalls, and professional documents. The researchers found that, from a

situated learning perspective, there was a meshed relationship between identity formation and

instructional practice. On the one hand, sustained classroom teaching time helped to cultivate

the development of a teacher identity for the participants. On the other hand, the participants'

growing teacher identities informed their instructional practices. In addition to this, Kanno and

Stuart noted that some of the important attributes that novice L2 teachers possess when they

enter the profession (e.g., dedication to student success, desire to teach) can dissipate as they

gain more experience and solidify their teacher identities.

Table 2

Studies Investigating Novice L2 Teacher Development

Author(s)	Purpose / Participant(s)	Research Methods
Farrell (2003 & 2006)	Monitored (over one year) how a novice EFL secondary teacher in Singapore transitioned to teaching full-time, and how support (from the school and colleagues) influenced the transition	Classroom observation, post-observation conferences, teaching journal, semi-structured interviews
Kanno & Stuart (2011)	Explored (over two academic years) how two novice student ESL teachers pursuing a MA TESOL at an American university learned to teach post-secondary ESL learners, and how their experiences impacted their identity development	Classroom observations, teaching journals, stimulated recalls, interviews, videotaped lessons
Liu & Fisher (2006)	Examined (over nine months) the changes in self-conception of three secondary Modern Language student teachers studying in a postgraduate teaching certificate program in the United Kingdom	Semi-structured interviews, evaluation logs, open-ended questionnaire, self-reflection report

Peacock (2001)	Traced (over three years) the modifications in the beliefs regarding L2 learning for 146 pre-service secondary teachers studying in a BA TESL program in Hong Kong	Classroom observation, learner self-report questionnaire, ESL proficiency scores, instruction package
Pennington & Richards (1997)	Tracked (over nine months) how five BA TESL graduates handled their first year of teaching in secondary ESL learners in Hong Kong	Classroom observation questionnaires, monthly meetings
Tsui (2007)	Investigated (over six months) how a university EFL teacher in China with six years of experience underwent his teacher identity formation	Interviews, reflective diaries
Watzke (2007)	Observed (over two years) the changes in the pedagogical content knowledge of nine Modern Language teachers teaching in American secondary schools	Classroom observations, reflective journals, focus group interviews

Influences of Novice L2 Teacher Identity Development

In this section I discuss in greater depth how the findings of the eight studies introduced above relate to key concepts addressed in my research questions. I begin by examining the ways in which relationships with colleagues and school administration can influence novice L2 teacher identity development. Following this, I explore how sustained teaching time impacts the pedagogical content knowledge of novice L2 teachers.

Relationship with Colleagues

Having affirmative relationships with colleagues has been shown to be an important factor that promotes identity development for novice L2 teachers, as it is imperative for them to have full involvement in their particular teaching community and feel respected by those within it (Farrell, 2003 & 2006; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Tsui, 2007, Watzke, 2007). In particular, concerned mentors can assist novice L2 teachers on both a professional and personal front. Professionally, mentors can help mentees in making a smoother transition to full-time teaching as they acculturate them to school life, and allow them to express both their teaching ideas and

classroom concerns (Farrell 2003 & 2006; Liu & Fisher, 2006). Further, mentors are able to provide constructive feedback and demonstrate methods that aid novice L2 teachers in making better instructional decisions (Farrell 2003 & 2006; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Watzke, 2007). On a personal level, mentors can make novice teachers feel as if they have an experienced ally who can empathize with their experiences and offer them advice (Farrell, 2003 & 2006). Wee Jin, the research participant tracked in a study by Farrell (2003), noted the importance of mentor support when he stated: "New teachers need a lot of affirmation and to pull through the first year. Obtaining feedback from a volunteer buddy without worrying about any negative implications would also go a long way in helping teachers to grow" (p. 107).

When novice L2 teachers lack relationships with their colleagues, however, their teacher identity growth can be thwarted (Farrell 2003 & 2006; Tsui, 2007). Being in a school with a highly individualistic or cliquish staff culture, for example, may cause novice L2 teachers to feel isolated (Farrell, 2003 & 2006; Tsui, 2007). Alienation may also result from teachers being excluded or ostracized due to factors beyond their control, such as native language and family background (Tsui, 2007). In such situations, novice L2 teachers can experience frustration (Farrell, 2003) and contemplate leaving the profession (Tsui, 2007).

Relationship with School Administration

Establishing a positive relationship with school administration also assists novice L2 teachers in developing a teacher identity (Farrell, 2003 & 2006). Receiving support from a superior with administrative responsibilities, such as principal or department head, can boost belief in one's abilities (Farrell 2003 & 2006). If a novice L2 teacher has strained or non-existent relationships with teaching peers, the backing of a superior can be the element that gives him/her the validation that they have the skills and attributes required for success within the profession (Farrell, 2003).

On the other hand, if novice L2 teachers are practicing in environments where they lack the support of administrators, or are made to feel inadequate by those in power because of their newness to the occupation, then their identity formation will be negatively impacted (Farrell, 2003 & 2006; Pennington & Richards 1997; Tsui, 2007). Often, when novice L2 teachers are at odds with the administration of the institution they teach at, it is because they are required to conform with teaching practices they do not support (Farrell, 2003 & 2006; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Pennington & Richards 1997). By conforming, the teachers may need to convey a fake image, and this creates an internal conflict between who the teachers want to be and who the teachers are expected to be (Farrell, 2003 & 2006; Tsui, 2007). For some, this conflict proves difficult to manage (Farrell 2003 & 2006; Tsui, 2007), and may lead them to leave that school environment in order to reach a satisfactory personal resolution (Tsui, 2007).

Impact of Sustained Teaching Time on Pedagogical Content Knowledge

In his influential work, Shulman (1987) noted that pedagogical content knowledge combined three different types of knowledge. One type of knowledge is pedagogical knowledge. For L2 teachers, pedagogical knowledge involves having an understanding of how L2 classrooms should be organized and managed, as well as having an understanding of communicative language teaching and its foundations (Watzke, 2007). A second type of knowledge is subject-specific knowledge. For L2 teachers, subject-specific knowledge entails having the knowledge to teach language systems (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) and skills (i.e., speaking, listening, writing, reading) effectively (Watzke, 2007). The third type of knowledge is knowledge of the teaching context. For L2 teachers, having knowledge of the teaching context involves establishing an understanding of their environment of practice (e.g., the roles of community members, institutional values) and their diverse learners (Watzke, 2007).

At the very beginning of their careers, novice L2 teachers typically do not have strong

pedagogical content knowledge (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). To begin with, novice L2 teachers let their prior knowledge as learners guide their instructional decisions (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Tsui, 2007; Watzke, 2007). They are influenced by the positive and negative learning experiences they have had, and adopt teaching practices that they themselves had responded to (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Tsui, 2007; Watzke, 2007). Often, the practices novice L2 teachers adopt (i.e., teacher-centered, grammar focused instruction) are chosen impulsively, and go against the practices (i.e., student-centered, communicative instruction) they have been taught in their teacher education programs (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). Another mistake novice L2 teachers make at the start of their teaching lives is that they are overly focused on classroom and instructional control (Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). This desire for control impacts what they teach (e.g., grammar rules, vocabulary) and how (e.g., rote memorization, drills, controlled role plays) they teach it (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). The necessity for control also affects the pace at which novice L2 teachers teach, as they are committed to addressing curriculum on a regimented timeline (Watzke, 2007). A third error many novice L2 teachers make is teaching lessons without specific language learning outcomes. This tends to result in lessons that are focused on being stimulating and/or amusing, rather than on building targeted language skills (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). A final mistake novice L2 teachers frequently make is to focus on impacting students through instilling in them the "general social and academic benefits of language learning: expressions of friendships, having fun, academic confidence, and mutual understanding of people from other cultures" (Watzke, 2007, p. 72).

With sustained time in the classroom, approximately six months to two years, novice L2 teachers' pedagogical content knowledge greatly improves (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Watzke, 2007). Firstly, they learn to let their prior experiences in the field as teachers guide their instruction (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Watzke, 2007). This happens as a result of reflecting upon personal classroom performance and interacting with individuals (i.e., colleagues, administrators, students) who can comment upon which practices best facilitate language learning (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Watzke, 2007). Secondly, novice L2 teachers learn to embrace their language facilitator role and relinquish their desire to control all aspects of the learning process (Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). This allows for more authentic integrated language use through student-centered activities (Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). It also means that novice L2 teachers weigh the learning pace of the students over their need to follow a strict schedule with regards to covering curriculum (Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). Thirdly, the lessons that novice L2 teachers create have clear language learning outcomes and are situated within the larger learning objectives of the courses they are teaching (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). The emphasis shifts from merely entertaining the students, to having them acquire language knowledge in order to complete tasks (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Watzke, 2007). Finally, novice L2 teachers come to value their ability to impact students through helping them understand and use language effectively both inside and outside the classroom (Watzke, 2007).

In the next section, I address the theoretical framework used in this research.

Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical frameworks have received attention in published studies (Farrell, 2006; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Tsui, 2007) on novice L2 teacher identity development: situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and story structure (Nespor & Barylske, 1991). Situated learning

stipulates that all learning is social. As an extension of this logic, this theory proposes that identity development occurs through one's interaction with other individuals (Lave, 1996; Wenger, 1998). Those who study the professional identity development of L2 teachers using this framework (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Tsui, 2007) analyze how a particular educator's identity development is impacted by his/her position (i.e., level of membership, level of engagement) within their community of practice (Lave; 1996; Wenger, 1998). These researchers explore how a teacher's professional identity emerges/evolves in relation to two factors: 1) his/her acceptance or marginality within his/her community; and, 2) his/her alignment with or rejection of values upheld by community members (i.e., teaching colleagues, administrators, students, and parents).

When using the story structure framework (Nespor & Barylske, 1991) to analyze the experiences of teachers, researchers (Bullough, 1997; Farrell, 2006; Johnston & Golombek, 2002) write narratives that are divided into three distinct categories: setting, complication, and resolution. In the setting category, researchers address who, what, when, and where questions. In the complication category, researchers address the problem(s) the teacher has encountered. In the resolution category, researchers address the action(s) taken by the teacher to resolve the problem(s). Those who use story structure framework as a means of analysis believe that it helps them to give order to diverse experiences, and that this new order allows them to better understand the experiences they discuss (Bullough, 1997; Farrell, 2006; Johnston & Golombek, 2002).

For the purpose of my study, I chose to use a theoretical framework that had not yet been employed in novice L2 teacher identity development research. I was drawn to the framework created by Bullough (2005) as it allowed me construct individual meaning (Stinson, 2009) and had been successfully employed in research using an autoethnographic approach for its method.

Bullough (2005) used his personal experience and academic research (Bullough, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1997; Bullough & Baughman, 1993, 1997; Bullough & Knowles, 1990; Bullough,

Knowles, & Crow, 1991) to create three separate, though related, dimensions to examine teacher identity development: 1) identification and membership; 2) subject location: rules and duties; and, 3) self-expression and enactment. The first dimension concerns the notion of belonging, and it encouraged me to ask the following questions: With whom and with what did I identify? To what did I belong? Who or what claimed me as a member? The second dimension is connected with understanding one's occupational position, and it encouraged me to ask the following questions: Where did I fit? What institutional spaces were open to me? What rules did I follow and what duties did I perform? How was my performance connected to and recognized by others? The final dimension relates to validity, and it encouraged me to ask the following questions: How did I feel when I played my part? Was the part I played life affirming and enabling of a sense of self-coherence? Did I possess the skills and knowledge needed for self-enactment? While meeting the needs of one dimension may assist an individual in meeting the needs in another dimension, each teacher is unique in how they undergo the non-linear process of professional identity development.

In Chapter Four, I analyze my autoethnographic narrative, a series of nine journal entries, using Bullough's (2005) three teacher identity development dimensions. Through this analysis, I address the three research questions that guide this study.

Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to examine important issues pertaining to L2 teaching and novice L2 teacher identity development. First, I discussed the adult ESL teaching context in Canada with a focus on describing the learners, programs, and teachers. Second, I introduced influential L2 theories and teaching approaches. Third, I considered how L2 teaching practices are impacted by culture. Next, I reviewed the eight published studies that have investigated novice L2 teacher identity development. Finally, I examined my chosen theoretical

framework. This investigation was crucial as the knowledge gained helped to shape and inform my autoethnographic narrative.

In the subsequent chapter, I explore the research design and methodology used in this study: autoethnography. I also give consideration to data collection, analysis, and evaluation, as well as to ethics.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

When researchers write autoethnographies, they seek to produce aesthetic and

evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience. They

accomplish this by first discerning patterns of cultural experience evidenced by

[their data] … and then describing these patterns using facets of storytelling …

Thus, the autoethnographer not only tries to make personal experience meaningful

and cultural experience engaging, but also, by producing accessible texts, she or

he may be able to reach wider and more diverse mass audiences that traditional

research usually disregards, a move that can make personal and social change

possible for more people. (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, para. 14)

This chapter has several aims. Firstly, it discusses autoethnography and why it was

chosen as the methodology for this study. Secondly, it examines the procedures that were

employed in order to collect and analyz**e** pertinent data. Thirdly, it considers the challenges I

faced while completing this research and what actions I took to overcome them. Finally, it

addresses the ethical implications of this study.

Autoethnography

This thesis presents a highly individualized narrative account of novice L2 teacher

identity development. In it, I attempt to derive meaning from the experiences and challenges I

faced in my first semester of full-time teaching in a post-secondary ESL classroom from

September 2012 to December 2012. To achieve my ends, I employed qualitative rather than

quantitative research, as qualitative research is a "situated activity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.

3) that "uses text as empirical material (instead of numbers) … [and] is interested in the

perspectives of participants … in everyday practices" (Flick, 2007, p. 1). The goal of the

qualitative researcher is to acquire an enhanced understanding of human behaviours (Bogdan,

2007).

  Within the spectrum of qualitative research, I sought out a method that met two initial

criteria. The first criteria I had was that I wanted a method that would allow me to act as the sole

participant in my research. I strongly desired to be the narrator of my experience because I felt I

was the person who best understood my experience (Hayler, 2011). The second criteria I had

was that I wanted a method that would allow me to explore the subculture of L2 teaching in an

analytic yet creative way. I wanted to create a first person narrative that was engaging and

informative for readers, and I wanted to write in a style and format that I was comfortable with.

Autoethnography was the methodology that best suited my criteria. Unlike other forms of

qualitative and quantitative research, autoethnography recognizes that a genuine and more

rounded view of a particular subculture is achieved when the unique voice and biases of a

researcher are not stripped from his/her research (Chang, 2008; Cunningham & Jones, 2005;

Ellis, 2004; Reed-Danahay, 1997). Additionally, since it differs from conventional academic

writing, autoethnography is often more appealing to readers (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004). The

formatting and style, similar to works of fiction and non-fiction, makes it accessible and

"friendly" (Chang, 2008, p. 52) to all readers, even those who lack knowledge about discipline

specific vocabulary and practices (Ellis, 2004). Furthermore, the self-reflection involved with

writing or reading autoethnography often enhances one's cultural understanding of self and

others (Brunner, 1994; Chang, 2008; Florio- Roane 2001; Nieto 2003). These new

understandings are important as they can positively impact further research and/or professional

practices, as well as precipitate cultural change (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004; Florio-Roane 2001;

Nieto 2003, 2004).

As indicated in Chapter One, autoethnography is defined in different ways by different researchers in order to meet different objectives (Ellis, 2004). Be they simplistic or complex, these definitions vary depending on the emphasis the researcher places "on the research process (graphy), on culture (ethno), and on [the] self (auto)" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). For a representative definition aims at sustaining a "triadic balance" (Chang, 2008, p. 48) among these three aspects, one can look to that of Ellingson (2011), who writes that autoethnography is "research, writing, story, and method that connect[s] the autobiographical to the cultural, social, and political though the study of a culture or phenomenon of which one is a part, integrated with relational and personal experiences" (p. 599). This is the definition I utilized in this study investigating my L2 teacher identity development.

Data Collection

Since autoethnography differs quite substantially from traditional forms of research, conventional methods of data collection are not always used in autoethnographic studies (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004). Instead, different methods, such as systematic sociological interpretation (Ellis, 2008), are employed by autoethnographers to fulfill this purpose. Carolyn Ellis (2008), a trailblazer in evocative autoethnography, advocates for systematic sociological interpretation and refers to it as "the process of thinking about thinking and feeling about feeling in a focused way in order to examine the lived experiences of the self" (p. 854). She also maintains that it "relies on ethnographic guidelines for recording and writing about experience and on phenomenological and sociological understanding for contextualizing and interpreting what that experience means" (Ellis, 2008, p. 854).

The process by which I engaged in systematic sociological interpretation involved

multiple steps. The first step entailed compiling multiple forms of relevant personal data (Ellis, 2008). The primary data source used, compiled via systematic self-observation (Chang, 2008), was a journal I which kept from July 2012 to January 2013. The journal chronicled key events in my L2 teacher development journey: my initial hiring (July 2012), my in-class teaching experiences (September-December 2012), and my post-semester reflections (January 2013). In this journal, I recorded details of my emotions, thoughts, and behaviours (Chang, 2008). I wrote in the journal each workday. On days when I taught, I wrote immediately after my classes as I wanted to "capture immediate emotion[s], provide a less tampered-with perspective, and record vivid memories of what [I] just observed" (Chang, 2008, p. 93). Though this was challenging after a long day of teaching, I was diligent in completing this task, and was always able to write, at minimum, a synopsis of my day. At the end of each week, I revisited what I had written over the past few days and added more details and reflections. By writing retrospectively, I hoped to provide "a natural flow of occurrence" (Chang, 2008, p. 93).

Apart from the journal, other sources of data consisted of records of communications (i.e., emails, Internet chats, text messages, social media posts) that transpired between myself and family members or friends during that same time frame. Once again, such data captured my emotions, thoughts, and behaviours (Chang, 2008). Though some consider such personal subjective documents to be "soft" data, I believe that this type of data offered a decisive advantage as it enabled me to create a raw and realistic representation of my L2 teacher identity formation (Dethloff, 2005).

After the data sources were compiled, the second step was to read them to determine the pivotal events relating to my L2 teacher identity development (Ellis, 2008). As I read through the data, I looked for the events that had produced the most emotional reactions and reflections.

I also looked for the events that had received mention in multiple data sources. This focused

reading allowed me to pinpoint the moments of greatest personal significance.

Once the key L2 teacher identity development events were determined, the next step was

to use the data sources and my memory to produce a first draft of the autoethnographic narrative

centering on recreating them (Ellis, 2008). For the format of the narrative, I chose a series of

diary entries as I felt this format would be accessible for readers and would allow me to write

creatively in the first person. Though multiple factors were considered while writing this draft

(e.g., sounds, colours, places), the primary emphasis was on emotions (Ellis, 2008). In order to

remember more details about my experiences, emotional recall (Ellis, 2008) was used. When

engaged in emotional recall, I used my imagination to emotionally and physically transport

myself back to events of significance (Ellis, 2008).

In the second and subsequent drafts of the narrative the focus was on developing a logical

plot trajectory (Ellis, 2008). While completing these drafts, increased attention was also given to

literary conventions (e.g., dialogue, characters) to improve the aesthetic merits of the work (Ellis,

2008). Through additional reading, revising and re-writing, my memory was further roused, and

this stimulation allowed me to access more particulars and thus create a more vivid and complete

text (Ellis, 2008). Ultimately, the writing process, which produced nine autoethnographic diary

entries, served as "a way of 'knowing' – a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in

different ways, [I] discover[ed] new aspects of [my] topic and [my] relationship to it"

(Richardson, 2000b, p. 923).

Data Analysis

After the final draft of the autoethnography was completed, a detailed analysis of my L2

teacher identity development was then possible using the three dimensions purposed by Bullough

(2005). I began the process by reading each diary entry to identify which information pertained

to each of the three teacher identity development dimensions. In identifying the dimensions, I

used three different highlighter colours, one for each of the three dimensions (see Table 3).

Events in the diary entries could relate to one, two, or all three dimensions. For example, the

teaching evaluation I underwent in October 2013 related to all three dimensions:

1. It impacted my sense of belonging within the L2 teaching profession (dimension one);

2. It showed me how my supervisor perceived my abilities, and what was expected of me
   within my position (dimension two); and,

3. It helped me to recognize what teaching practices I needed to change in order to be a
   more effective L2 instructor (dimension three).

Table 3

Coding Using Bullough's (2005) Teacher Identity Development Dimensions

Dimension	Questions	Colour
1. Identification and membership	With whom and with what did I identify? Who or what claimed me as a member?	Yellow
2. Subject location with rules and duties	Where did I fit and what institutional spaces were open to me? What rules did I follow? What duties did I perform? How was my performance connected to and recognized by others?	Pink
3. Self-expression and enactment	How did I feel when I played my part? Did I possess the skills needed for self-enactment?	Green

Once the dimensions were identified, I could then write a formal analysis to accompany

the nine autoethnographic diary entries. By recognizing which events and feelings were

associated with these dimensions, and combining that understanding with my knowledge of the

teacher identity development processes of other novice L2 teachers, I was able to address my

three research questions:

1. How did my relationships with colleagues and administration influence my L2 teacher

    identity development?

2. How did my perceptions about my L2 teacher identity change as a result of sustained

    teaching experience and increased pedagogical knowledge?

3. Where did I still want to go in terms of my L2 teacher identity development after

    completing my first term of full-time teaching?

<div align="center">**Challenges**</div>

While writing this autoethnographic narrative I encountered two distinct challenges:

using my memory as a source of data and assessing the quality of my creative research.

Memory

The topic of memory is important to address since my memory was a key source of data

in my research. I want to begin by conceding that my memory, like everyone else's, is not

perfect, and that the details I recalled for the narrative may have been "select[ed], shape[d],

limit[ed], and distort[ed]" (Chang, 2008, p. 82). Despite these shortcomings, however, I found

ways to make the most effective use of my memory. To begin with, the process of engaging in

systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall (Ellis, 2008) helped me to fine-tune

my memories and make them more accurate and comprehensive. Furthermore, the timing of

writing the autoethnography afforded some advantages to my memory. On the one hand, the

events I describe were close enough to the present "that it [did] not take much effort to access

lived emotions" (Ellis, 2008, p. 855), and on the other hand, I was far enough removed from the

events to "analyze [them] from a more distanced cultural perspective" (Ellis, 2008, p. 855). In

the end, my goal was to do as Richardson (2000b) and Bochner (2007) advise, and configure my memory in a fair, truthful, and consequential manner.

Assessing Quality

Both opponents and supporters of autoethnography acknowledge that producing a successful piece of autoethnographic writing is challenging (Anderson, 2006; Chang, 2008; Coffey, 1999; Ellis & Bochner, 2004). For an autoethnography to be effective and valid, and avoid being labeled self-indulgent and narcissistic (Coffey, 1999), it must therefore meet specific criteria established to assess quality in creative qualitative texts. In this autoethnographic research, I aspired to satisfy these quality standards in multiple ways. To begin with, I strived for the work to have aesthetic merit and present research in an innovative yet authentic way with a distinctive voice (Bochner, 2000; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Clough, 2000; Denzin, 2000; Ellis, 2000; Patton, 2002; Richardson, 2000a). Further, I strived for the work to be stimulating and have an impact on the reader (Bochner, 2000; Clough, 2000; Denzin, 2000; Ellis, 2000; Patton, 2002; Richardson, 2000a). Additionally, I strived for the work, by answering its research questions, to make a unique contribution to the literature regarding L2 teacher identity development (Bochner, 2000; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Chang, 2008; Clough, 2000; Denzin, 2000; Ellis, 2000; Patton, 2002; Richardson, 2000a).

Ethical Considerations

Though my lived experiences are the basis for this study, I acknowledge that my experiences did not occur in isolation, and that they involved various individuals within my teaching community (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004). Conscious to write with "an ethic of care and concern" (Ellis, 2004, p. 46), every effort was made to conceal the true identities of participants in my narrative to safeguard their anonymity (Chang, 2008). Individuals mentioned in the

narrative thus either have pseudonyms or are composite characters (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004). It is my firm belief that "the potential good from this story outweighs anything bad that could happen" (Ellis, 2004, p. 147) to either others or myself as a result of its construction.

Summary

Autoethnography was used as the method for my self-study. This was the most suitable qualitative research methodology to employ as it allowed me to innovatively examine L2 teacher identity development from the perspective of both an outsider analyst and an insider member (Dethloff, 2005; Reed-Danahay, 1997). Data collection was made possible by systematic sociological introspection (Ellis, 2008), and Bullough's (2005) theoretical framework for understanding teacher identity development was used to analyze the data. To ensure the validity of my creative qualitative research, I was conscious of meeting established guidelines for both ethics and quality.

In the forthcoming chapter, my autoethnographic narrative, in the form of nine diary entries, is presented. This narrative, analyzed using Bullough's (2005) three teacher identity development dimensions, seeks to illuminate a way of life by exploring an individual life (Reed-Danahay, 1997).

CHAPTER FOUR: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Multicultural teaching demands that we examine the beliefs and values central to

our identity, that our internalized habits, rituals, and routines of thought and

practice are explicit and ongoing objects of self-reflection. (Ambrosio, 2003, p. 37)

This chapter contains two parts. The first part is my autoethnographic narrative. The

narrative, consisting of nine diary entries, chronicles my first term of full-time post-secondary

ESL teaching at a university in Northern Ontario. It describes the events and attitudes that were

influential in either enabling or hindering my L2 teacher identity development. The second part

analyzes and interprets the diary entries using Bullough's (2005) three teacher identity

development dimensions.

Entry One: A New Frontier

We are not mere smudges on the mirror. Our life histories are not liabilities to be

exorcised but are the very precondition for knowing. It is our individual and

collective stories in which present projects are situated, and it is the awareness of

these stories which is the lamp illuminating the dark spots, the rough edges.

(Pinar, 1981, p. 184)

Monday, September 3, 2012

Dear Diary:

It feels weird to write "dear diary"! It has been eons since I have written in this fashion, perhaps

not since my high school days when I ranted about unrequited love and my desire to flee my

small hometown at the easiest possible date. Oh the memories!

To be honest, I haven't felt like writing in this way until now. My years of university study

(going on, yikes, 13) have made me a slave to academic writing. I have written essay after essay,

filling up multiple binders.

When I look back at what I have produced I am in disbelief. I have examined, among other

things, the functionality of clothing in *Don Quixote*, the role of dwarves in ancient erotic art, and

the classification of eating disorders within the Dewey Decimal System. It is quite the eclectic

collection and exciting Sunday reading (hardy har har).

Anyway, back to the present. Why am I writing in this diary? The answer is simple; I want to

document a new beginning that is both exciting and stressful (Pennebaker, 1990). I want an

outlet that allows me to be candid about my feelings and emotions. I want to be authentic, and not be confined by stringent academic writing conventions.

What is this exciting new beginning you ask? I am an ESL teacher. By that, I mean a "real" ESL teacher. One that gets paid (hallelujah). One that is able to make lasting classroom decisions.

I got this new position of "English Language Instructor" (very fancy) back in July. I will be teaching at the local university in the newly established ESL program starting next week.

I applied to the position on a whim. I saw the posting online, and felt the opportunity was too good to pass up as I was seeking a job in the post-secondary sector. Since I met the criteria they were looking for (on paper), I thought I would give it shot and see if I would be contacted.

Scoring an interview was unexpected, but fantastic. I can still vividly remember multiple aspects of the interview day. I can remember the pep talk I gave myself in the ladies room prior to entering the interview room ("Don't mess this up, Heather! Don't you dare mess this up!"). I can remember the three deer (yes, three deer) that were eating grass outside the window while I was answering questions. I can even remember the smell of vanilla from my body wash and the paranoia I had that the aroma was too intense. In particular, I can recall the closing dialogue between myself and the lead interviewer

Me: You will contact me regardless? Good or bad?

Sarah (now my boss): Don't worry. It will be good.

The memory of that moment, in realizing my interview success, will stay with me for my entire ESL teaching career (Kiernan, 2010). It was such a confidence booster!

In the end, the news was doubly good. To my extreme surprise, I was offered a fall term teaching position for their pre-university English upgrading program AND a summer term curriculum development contract. Though I felt a little bit out of depth (okay - REALLY out of my depth), I accepted both offers. They (i.e., Sarah and her right-hand woman, Rachel) thought I was capable, so I trusted their judgment (despite internal reservations). Both are experienced and highly educated ESL professionals, and as such, I figured they wouldn't assign me a task they felt was beyond my capabilities.

It was a steep learning curve! After six weeks of intensive reading, writing and rewriting, I submitted my proposed program curriculum for the three core integrated classes in the program (intermediate, high-intermediate, advanced). I was terrified that it would be rejected. I was losing sleep over the prospect and pulling out my hair (literally, as yanking and twirling my hair is a nervous habit). I knew my new boss was a straight shooter, and that she would not hesitate in offering her honest opinion. Thankfully, all of my fears (and occasional nightmares) were for not, and the curriculum was approved. It was acceptable (but I questioned if it was truly good). My heart soared - temporary at least - until I was struck with the worry that my fellow teachers would not be as accepting at what I had produced. They were the ones that would be adhering to it after all!

I know, in the semester to come, I need to be willing and prepared to face constructive criticism regarding my teaching practices. This should be a challenge considering constructive criticism is something I have had difficulty handling in the past. For me, receiving corrective feedback about how I teach (or do anything for that matter) is always a highly emotional experience (Copland, 2008; Kurtoglu-Hooton, 2008).

I must try to remember the following:

1. I am not perfect (nor will I ever be despite perfectionistic tendencies);

2. I have much to learn about ESL teaching;

3. I will inevitably encounter, regardless of my planning, "moments of frustration and self-doubt" (Bullough et al., 1991, p. 79); and,

4. 100% effort does not always equal 100% success.

So, next Monday (apart from being my 31st birthday) is the first day of in-class teaching. I am equal parts nervous, scared, and excited.

I will be teaching Monday through Thursday. Each morning, I will have the core class of advanced students. The class is integrated and will focus on all four language-learning skills: reading, writing (my favourite), listening, and speaking (my least favourite).

In the afternoons, I will be teaching four separate classes. On Monday and Tuesday I have the high-intermediate students for university skills and university lectures, while on Wednesday and Thursday I teach two sections of advanced reading and writing.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Morning	Advanced Core	Advanced Core	Advanced Core	Advanced Core
Afternoon	High-Int. University Skills	High-Int. University Lectures	Advanced Reading & Writing (A)	Advanced Reading & Writing (B)

I am very happy to have been assigned advanced and high-intermediate learners. While challenging levels to work with, this is still within my comfort zone. I have had limited experience working with students with low English proficiency levels, so teaching them would

have been a daunting task. Tackling the lower levels is a challenge for subsequent terms, when I have my teaching bearings better established.

As you can see, I have Fridays off. Well, off from this job, as the students are engaged in social and cultural activities. I still work as an academic writing coach on campus and have shifts there on Friday and Sunday. Though a rational person would take a breather on Saturday, I have decided to take a Master of Education course. I am taking it because it is pertinent to my professional objectives (the course focuses on international education), and because it gets me one step closer to completion. I really want to finish my degree as soon as possible. A finished graduate degree means a higher salary, and more importantly, significantly more sanity time.

I have set myself up for three and half months of madness, but I think I can handle the workload. Hopefully I'm not cursing this decision in a couple weeks' time. Nose to the grindstone Ms. Donnelly!

Hmm ... what else can I tell you? Oh yes! I am, by at least 10 years, the youngest teacher working for the ESL program. It's incredibly intimidating to be surrounded by my older co-workers, who are all very seasoned educators and bilingual. I feel out of place and I am not sure we will have much in common. It doesn't help matters that I look so young. I'm short, have a petite frame, and a babyish face. My father still, to my extreme annoyance, calls me "little one." I fear I will be referred to as "cute" until my dying day.

Anyways, time to stop ranting. I must try to unwind and prepare myself for the days ahead. Carpe diem! Signing off for now,

Hag-ridden Heather (yes, I like alliteration)

Entry Two: George Bernard Shaw was Wrong!

Reflection is a highly cognitive process. When a person engages in reflection, he

or she takes an experience, and filters it through personal biases. If this process

results in learning, the individual then develops inferences to approach the external

world in a way that is different from the approach that would have been used, had

reflection not taken place. (Daudelin, 1996, p. 187)

Sunday, September 9, 2012

Dear Diary:

Tomorrow is the big day and my emotions have shifted into overdrive! It all seems so unreal, so

foreign.

Though I have had nearly two months to come to terms with my new role, I still cannot believe I

am in this situation. This sense of disbelief is likely because I have spent over a decade avoiding

this very path (i.e., being a teacher)!

Beginning in high school, when my parents discovered I intended to pursue humanities major at

university, they nudged me - in a very obvious fashion - in the direction of being a teacher. They

wanted a practical application (i.e., a decent paying job) for the artsy fartsy stuff I was

passionate about.

Besides fitting the bill in a practical regard, teaching was pushed by my parents because it was

the career path, in retrospect, they felt they should have taken. Thirty years of demanding work

in medicine, while rewarding, left them questioning their choice of profession. They lamented

that their jobs (my dad is a doctor, my mom is a retired nurse) did not afford them the "cushy

perks" they viewed teaching positions as having: regular working hours, weekends off, summer

holidays, and the ability to strike.

While I could see the value in my parents' arguments, I was dead set against teaching and

nothing they said could convince me otherwise. I was incredibly stubborn (well, I still am). In

my naivety and state of unfounded pretentiousness, I thought that elementary/secondary school

teaching was too easy and not a prestigious enough career.

Not surprisingly, my attitudes about teaching and teachers were heavily influenced by popular

culture (Duncan, Nolan, & Wood, 2002; Raimo, Devlin-Scherer, & Zinicola, 2002). Although

inspirational teachers were present in some of the movies, televisions shows, and books I

saw/read, it was the bumbling and unprofessional teachers that lodged themselves in in my brain

(Beck, 2012). Instead of recollecting amiable teachers such as the dynamic Mr. Keating from

Dead poet's society (Haft, Henderson, Witt, Thomas, & Weir, 1989), the uplifting Ms. Stacey

from *Anne of Green Gables* (Montgomery, 1908/2008), or the sage-like Mr. Feeny from *Boy*

meets world (Nelson & McCracken, 2000), I most clearly remembered the uninspiring

Economics teacher from *Ferris Bueller's day off* (Chinich, Jacobson, Vickerilla, & Hughes,

1986), the depraved Wackford Squeers from *Nicholas Nickleby* (Dickens, 1839/2009), and the

jaded Ms. Krabappel from *The Simpsons* (Stern & Silverman, 1990).

My experiences as a student also influenced my perceptions about the teaching profession

(Farrell, 2003, 2006; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Richards; 1997; Watzke, 2007). While I

predominantly had good teachers (and a handful of great teachers), I was most profoundly

influenced by my worst teacher.

Mr. Morris - who I long associated with being the personification of evil - taught me in Grade 4. It was a pivotal year for me. I had just moved to a new city and was having difficulty adjusting and making friends. I was lonely, unhappy, and unmotivated. Instead of helping me with this rough transition, however, Mr. Morris seemed to go out of his way to make me feel even worse. For example, he told me, point-blank, that he thought I was stupid (he also used the words dumb, moron, and idiot). Additionally, he would laugh along with other students if they made fun of me. Now THAT truly burned.

Such actions could have crippled me, but they eventually made me stronger. His spite motivated me to strive for academic excellence. I became determined to prove him wrong, and I did. Just before I graduated from high school I sought out my unlikely motivator for a meeting. I reveled in watching his reaction as I told him I was graduating near the top of my class and attending a prestigious Ontario university with a scholarship. The look on his face (i.e., bug eyed, mouth ajar) was absolutely priceless!

Despite my glee at that moment, I couldn't help thinking "how does this man still have a job?" It made me angry to know that even though he had ridiculed me, and likely several other students throughout the years, he had retained his position. This made me question the standards of the teaching profession. How was this sort of conduct acceptable?

If I had to sum up my feelings regarding teaching from the period extending from 1990 (start of Grade 4) to 2009 (start of education related studies), it would be through George Bernard Shaw's paraphrased quote: "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach."

It took me a long time to adjust my attitudes about teaching and teachers, and to put aside

negative stereotypes and painful childhood memories. It wasn't until I stepped in front of a class myself that I acknowledged how challenging teaching can be, and came to see the true talent and skill of great educators.

My feelings about standards within the profession were renewed by the compassionate and dedicated associates who had overseen my training practicums. Would I have persevered on the teaching course had I encountered negative and hypercritical associates? I'm not sure. In the beginning, my nerves were so profound that I almost threw in the towel. I had a serious case of the heebie-jeebies! My mother literally had to drop me off at the front door of my first placement to ensure that I went. Boy, have I come a long way in a short period of time.

I am happy I have turned the corner with regards to my feelings about teaching and teachers, but I regret that it took me so long. It seems, on some occasions, parents really do know best (don't tell them I wrote that).

So, the countdown is on. Circa 12 hours remaining until the official launch of my ESL teaching career. What a birthday it shall be!

Until the next time,

Heather

Entry Three: Happy Birthday "Teacher" Heather/Header

Though I've been teaching for more than twenty years, the slight quiver in my

voice always occurs the first day of class. I guess no matter how long I teach,

I'll still feel the anxiety and exhilaration of beginning a new relationship with a

Class. The mysteriously attractive sensibility of "not knowing" reminds me of

feelings that arise in any new personal relationship. What will the students be

like? How will they perceive me, and I, them? Who will I become in the

relationship? What will they hold up for me and I for them? What will we

become together? (Ellis, 2004, p. 1-2)

Monday, September 10, 2012 (Happy 31st Birthday to me - confetti throw)

Dear Diary:

I survived day one. Yes!

It has been both exhilarating and frightening.

When I woke up this morning my first thought was "what do I wear?" I rejected the clothes I

had decided on the night before (red blouse with white polka dots, black skirt, red ballet flats)

after much agonizing. I felt they were too cutesy, and not polished enough. Eventually, I

selected some of my new "teacher" clothes: gray blazer over top a white tee, black dress pants,

and black shoes with a height amplifying wedge. It was a bit bland by my usual style standards,

but I wanted to look professional and not rock the boat with my fashion choices.

I arrived early to prepare my classroom, which I adore. It is large, and would comfortably

accommodate 40 students if need be (though my largest class is only 18, thank goodness). I have

a wall of windows overlooking a quiet road with a spattering of houses and some lovely trees. It

is a view to encouraging daydreaming. Such lovely fall colours!

Practically speaking, the classroom has two walls of chalkboards (should be fun trying to write

without causing the dreaded squeaky chalk noise) and a large interactive white board to work

with. Hopefully I can successfully assume, without much difficulty, the role of cool and tech-

savvy instructor.

So … how did the day go? Here is the run-down.

I taught two of my five classes. For both of these classes I had three items on the agenda:

housekeeping, introductions, and icebreakers.

In the morning, I had my core class of advanced students. It is still strange to think that I can say

"my class" and "my students"!

For the most part, the students seem nice and eager to improve their already strong English skills.

I keep thinking of them as kids, but they are truly adults. My oldest student, at 24, is only seven

years younger than me. I am relieved that they appear to perceive me as an authority figure to be

respected. I was petrified they would dismiss my knowledge and ability to teach them because I

look much younger than my age. I was particularly worried about the reaction of students who

come from cultures where teaching and wisdom are associated with age. For now: so far, so

good!

The makeup of the morning class is half Brazilian and half Chinese. Eleven of the students are

male, and one, a little Chinese fashionista named Daiyu, is female. I am pleased I have at least one estrogen bearer (and fashion enthusiast) in the classroom, so I am not entirely bombarded by testosterone.

The Brazilian students are here on a yearlong government-funded exchange from their home universities (Government of Canada, 2013). They will spend one semester in the ESL program, and then move to the university to take courses in their academic majors (predominantly engineering and computer science). This advancement to the university happens regardless of whether or not they receive the progression grade of 80%, so I am crossing my fingers and they will take this class and me seriously.

At the moment, the thing that strikes me the most with the Brazilian students is how they pronounce my name as "Header" and not "Heather." This is a difficulty I have encountered before with ESL students, as "th" sounds occur almost exclusively in English (Cameron, 2012), and it inspires my first teaching goal for the semester: to make these students experts in pronouncing words (Heather among them) with "th" sounds!

My Chinese students are a different story altogether. These students want to complete entire degrees in Canada, and as such, they must pass the advanced level of the ESL program with an 80% average to secure university admission.

One of these Chinese students, Fang, has already made it clear to me that he feels he is ready for undergraduate classes. He insists that his placements tests, both the IELTS exam he took on this own and the TOEFL exam we gave him here at the program, do not reflect his true ability.

I must admit that Fang's questioning and forthrightness took me aback. In the past, the Chinese students I have worked with are generally reluctant to share their feelings and typically accept decisions made by their instructors (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). It is different, as well as refreshing and beneficial, to encounter a student who bucks stereotypes (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010; Li et al., 2012).

While I can understand Fang's anxiousness to begin his bachelor degree studies, I think the true reason behind his desire to be on main campus (which is removed from the ESL program building) is his Canadian girlfriend. I feel he could be my most challenging student, so I will be keeping a keen eye on him.

This brings me to my afternoon classes! In the afternoon, I had the high-intermediate students for a weekly course entitled "University Skills." I'm going to be teaching them about research, citation, and plagiarism (topics I find very interesting because I am a library nerd).

This class, a good blend of both sexes, has 13 Chinese and one Saudi Arabian student. Given this demographic, I have a sinking suspicion I am going to have to learn multiple phrases in Mandarin such as "English, please," and "stop talking in Mandarin."

Thankfully, I got some early birthday presents (courtesy of my boyfriend) that will assist me with this. First, there is a classic miniature Chinese dictionary. One cannot go wrong with dictionaries, and I prefer old-school paper copies over electronic. Second, there is a book entitled *Chinese slanguage* (Ellis, 2010), which helps people learn Mandarin phrases with pictures and English words. This is great for a visual learner like me. Thus far, my favourite learned expressions are "book itchy" meaning "you're welcome," and "woe hen how" meaning

"I'm fine" (Ellis, 2010).

On a serious note, I have some worries about my Arabic student, Bashshar. I sincerely hope he will be accepted by his Chinese peers. I do not want him to be excluded from activities, both in and out of the classroom. Additionally, I hope he will accept me as a female teacher, for he comes from a patriarchal society where it is not culturally appropriate for women to educate men (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). I have female friends who have encountered difficulties in teaching ESL to men from patriarchal societies, both abroad and here in Canada, so I hope that Bashshar is liberal-minded and open to different gender roles.

Teaching classes was only part of the day. After classes were completed, it was time for some ESL program public relations. As the program is brand new, the local media was invited to spread news of its existence.

The first order of business was speeches. To begin, Sarah (boss/director/big cheese) touted the importance of the ESL program and how it enhances the academic prowess of the university. She was followed by the guest speaker, Mayor Anderson, who spoke passionately about how the ESL program will benefit the community both culturally and economically. Each speaker was met with enthusiastic applause by the audience gathered for the festivities.

The second order of business was a photo-op. For this, the students (front rows) and teachers (back row) were posed on the steps in front of the historic building housing the ESL program. When I was up there, it seemed like time stood still. I was in a haze. I am excited to see this image. I don't consider myself to be photogenic, so hopefully I don't look too bad. Regardless of my appearance, however, the photograph will be a nice keepsake to look back on in the years

to come. I am fortunate to have an aspect of this professionally symbolic day captured on film.

The third order of business was cake (lots and lots of cake). Though some of the students found it too sweet for their palates, I devoured my slice. I was famished and in serious need of sugar. As an added bonus, I got some leftovers. This means that lunch is covered until mid-week.

At the end of the day, this event left me feeling confused.

On the one hand, I felt powerful. Standing with the other teachers, dressed in my "teacher" clothes, made me feel like one of them. This validation as being a member of the teacher community was important (Liu & Fisher, 2006; Tsui, 2007). I thought to myself, "perhaps I do belong here."

On the other hand, I felt like a fraud. Did surviving one day of teaching make me a "real" teacher? I was qualified to do what I was doing, but I still didn't identify as being an ESL teacher (Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). I could act the part, yes, but on the inside I knew the truth. It seems I will have to "fake it until I make it"!

But enough of dreary thoughts - now it is time to celebrate (it is still my birthday after all). I shall treat myself to a Pad Thai dinner and a relaxing bubble bath.

Wish me luck for tomorrow (I think I may need it),

Heather/Header ;)

Entry Four: Getting into the Groove

While teaching English, some of the roles I feel I have been assigned include:

kindergarten teacher … jail warden … prison guard … drill sergeant … parent

… big brother … coach … entertainer … counselor … and therapist … But the

one role that I often have trouble convincing myself that I am really performing

is English instructor at a university (though of course, there were a few times when

I felt as if I was "really" being an English instructor). (McVeigh, 2003, p. 138)

Monday, October 8, 2012

Dear Diary:

So, I have nearly survived a month of full-time teaching.

It has been challenging, especially combining it with my other job and Master's degree work, but rewarding. I definitely have a newly found respect for people who work multiple jobs and do additional schooling at the same time. I'm certain I could not endure all these pressures if I had anything else, such as children, added to the chaos.

In general, I'm beginning to get into the groove of teaching. The more time I spend in the classroom, the more comfortable and legitimate I feel (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Tsui, 2007).

This is especially true of my morning class.

Our daily time together works wonders in establishing a learning routine.

A typical morning follows this pattern:

Time	Activity
9 – 9:15	Discussion of homework / review of material from previous class
9:15 – 9:50	Discussion of daily news articles (alternate between spoken and written sources)
9:50 – 10	Break I
10 – 10:50	Introduce new material from textbook
10:50 – 11	Break II
11 – 11:50	Complete in-class assignment (e.g., individual, pair, group) related to new material (e.g., written summary and response, panel, debate, peer review)
11:50 – 12	Begin homework for the next class

This is a routine that I feel comfortable with, and the students also seem quite content (except for the occasional grumblings from Fang).

Besides establishing a learning routine, my daily interactions with the students have also given me the chance to better learn their personalities and assess (or attempt to assess) their unique challenges with regards to English.

Though recognizing English errors is not challenging, I still lack finesse in explaining the errors (especially grammatical ones) to the students with the appropriate vernacular (i.e., you cannot say "I should to do my homework" because should is a bare infinitive). Grammar knowledge – which I am finding is very crucial to ESL teaching – is my Achilles heel. It is incredibly frustrating.

Well, let me tell you about my Brazilian students. I am very impressed by their progress and attitudes. They are making great strides in their English acquisition (though the pronunciation of my name is still proving difficult). Most of time they call me "teacher" with the occasional "teacher Heather" thrown into the mix. This doesn't bother me. In fact, I rather enjoy it. Hearing myself referred to as "teacher" on a consistent basis is good for strengthening my

professional identity and sense of belonging.

Another great thing about the Brazilians is that they are eating up the Canadian experience. They definitely appear to be in the honeymoon stage of culture shock, where everything about Canada is fresh and exciting (Li et al., 2012).

The group of them are planning a Christmas break trip to some of the big Canadian cities: Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec City. It should be a great experience for them. Hopefully they don't get into too much mischief.

These young men are also super excited at the prospect of seeing snow. Their enthusiasm, akin to little children, is quite charming! My concern is that they may not be able to handle the impending cold weather, as some of them are already wearing long-johns. The new environment is proving a shock to their systems!

On the awkward end, the Brazilians are asking me for tips about "how to pick up Canadian girls." I understand their curiosity, which is only natural, but these are not the type of questions I was bargaining for. When they make these inquiries I typically laugh it off and tell them to ask their Canadian buddies.

In general, I have mixed feelings about this situation.

Part of me is flattered that they feel comfortable enough with me to ask personal questions.

The other part of me, however, feels that in asking these questions they are relating to me more as a peer than as a teacher. While I'm confident they do not intend any disrespect in doing this, it is still a sticking point.

I have asked my colleagues if they have been asked similar questions by their students, and by these particular students when they teach them in the afternoon, and they say no.

It seems to me that my age is the main factor. I am a good twenty years younger than the other two core teachers. It seems natural that the way students perceive me will be different than how they perceive my older colleagues.

I have discussed this worry with Tricia, the low intermediate core teacher, during our lunchtime chats which we started back in September. These sessions are incredibly valuable for me – especially considering I don't interact with the other instructors that frequently. All of the other instructors (there are three besides Tricia and myself) seemed wrapped up with their own classes and families (which is understandable), and are on campus only for teaching. We do have a small teacher lounge, but it is on the opposite side of the building we teach in and no one appears to go there. This is a real shame!

Tricia is proving to be a great friend and informal mentor. She acts as a sounding board for my concerns (e.g., how do I make my classes more dynamic, how do I achieve a life/work balance). When I talk with her, I don't feel alone in this process. She makes me remember that we are all in the same boat – piloting classes in a brand new program. It means a great deal to me have this level of rapport and professional acceptance from an experienced colleague (Liu & Fisher, 2006; Tsui, 2007).

Anyway, back to the key point. Tricia has often told me that her students call her their "Canadian mother." If that is the case, am I viewed as an "older Canadian sister" by my students? I wish I knew – but I am truly afraid to ask!

This leads me to my Chinese students. They are also an excellent group of hardworking learners. They are very dedicated to their studies and determined to gain university admission so they can start classes in their majors next term. While (on the whole) quieter and less dramatic than the Brazilians, they regularly contribute to discussions and make the classroom a better place.

I am very happy that, despite their differences, the two cultural groups are interacting well. They are keen to learn about each other's languages (they learned the bad words first naturally) and cultures. I was worried that there might have been some cultural conflicts, but the students have (in general) become fast friends.

My biggest challenge, as I predicted on the first day of class, is Fang. Though he consistently attends class and hands in quality work, he makes it apparent that he is not happy to be where he is. He frequently asks me, and his afternoon teachers, why he has to do certain activities or work with certain students. I try to explain to him that the activities that we are doing (e.g., summarizing, paraphrasing, group discussions, peer reviewing) are aimed that providing him with the academic and social skills necessary to be successful in a Canadian university environment.

It is very unfortunate he feels the way he does. I hope his attitude changes with time.

Apart from the way he interacts with me and other teachers, I am troubled by the way Fang interacts with Ping.

They bicker about everything (or so it seems)!

These hostilities could stem from deeply rooted cultural tensions between Mainland Chinese

(Mandarin speakers), such as Fang, and Hong Kong natives (Cantonese speakers), such as Ping (Parry, 2012).

The most heated Fang versus Ping argument occurred last week when we were discussing our daily news articles (incorporating these articles into class time as an activity to encourage spontaneous language use was Tricia's idea). During that class, I had brought in an article examining the dispute between China and Japan over the ownership of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands.

Fang, who adopted a decidedly anti-Japanese stance, could not understand Ping's moderate position and ability to see both sides of the issue.

It was a tense and uncomfortable situation.

I found it difficult to diffuse the conflict and return the focus of the lesson to where it should have been: language learning (Li et al., 2012).

While the other Chinese students, likely engaging in face saving behaviours, did not intervene (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004), the Brazilian students were keen to resolve the problem. Paulo told Fang to "chill out." Sergio asked them both to "calm down." This peer intervention seemed to do the trick and the issue was eventually dropped (though Fang was still fuming).

My afternoon classes are very different from my core class. These classes are meant to give students a taste of Canadian university life. They are meant to expose students to different teachers, different teaching styles, and different accents.

Since I only teach these classes once per week, I feel more like a guest lecturer than a teacher.

I find it harder to gauge the students' personalities and language abilities. As such, it is difficult to fully address their unique learning needs. I do the best I can!

In my Monday and Tuesday classes, where 13/14 students are Chinese, there was an initial problem with students speaking Mandarin during class time (even though they are very capable English speakers). I have managed to crack down on this and implement the "English only" classroom policy. I have learned how to give certain instructions bilingually (both spoken and written). When I first did this, the students were shocked and impressed. Their reaction was unforgettable! Now they know that when I bust out the Mandarin I am not happy, and that quickly alters their behaviour (they have realized that angry Heather is not a good thing).

On a happy note, Bashshar (my lone Saudi Arabian student) is getting along extremely well with his classmates and me. To my relief, I have not sensed any problems pertaining to my gender. It likely helps that his other teachers in the program are also female. He can't escape us!

Finally – a very brief comment about Wednesday and Thursday classes: there is no drama to report (that I can detect). The students are well-behaved and progressing nicely with their work. Since we have a lot of material to cover in a short period of time (i.e., one unit per 3.5 hours), I am sticking fairly closely to the textbook and its accompanying teacher manual that offers some interactive suggestions about how to teach the material. I am happy I have this resource – I would be quite lost without it.

Well my friend, bed beckons! More later (I promise),

Heather

A memory stirs …

The anti-Japanese sentiments expressed by Ping made me remember a conversation I had in high

school with my best friend, and Beijing native, Fan. I had asked her why she got so offended

when she was mistaken for being Japanese. Instead of answering directly, she lent me a book

called *The rape of Nanking: The forgotten holocaust of World War II* (Chang, 1997). After

reading this book, and later watching documentaries based upon it (Guttentag, Jacobs, Leonsis,

& Sturman, 2007; Pick & Spahic, 2007), I better understood the long and complicated history

between these two countries. I better understood why tensions exist.

As an ESL instructor I must remember such moments. I must be attuned to the effects of culture

and history on student identities and world perceptions.

Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands Conflict: Take-Away Lessons

1. Conflict in the ESL classroom is inevitable (Messerschmitt & Hafernik, 2009)

Even when I am vigilant in choosing articles for classroom discussion, certain topics will
(expectedly or unexpectedly) open Pandora's jar! I must be prepared for anything. I must be
able to make conflict a learning opportunity, and teach students to discuss differences of opinion
respectfully (Messerschmitt & Hafernik, 2009).

2. I want to become like Kerr's (1999) edgewalker

While I feel that my primary role as an ESL teacher is to "stimulat[e] and encourag[e] language
development" (Li et al., 2012, p. 180), it is also important that I can act as a competent
"mediator [who] danc[es] between the different cultures" (Li et al., 2012, p. 244). An
edgewalker is such a mediator! Through prolonged experiences with "different cultural
communities [edgewalkers] develop cross-cultural competence while maintaining a healthy
understanding of self" (Chang, 2008, p. 28).

Entry Five: Monolingual Girl

English second language teachers are a group of people whose professional life is

intrinsically involved with linguistic identity. (Kiernan, 2010, p. 5)

Friday, October 12, 2013

Dear Diary:

Ugh! This is going to be a very busy weekend! Not only do I have to prep for next week, I also

have to create a test for Monday's core class.

This test will be entirely different, in both content and structure, from the first one I produced.

That test, I realize now, was laden with errors. I wrote it to emulate tests I had taken during my

years of undergraduate study. It tested students' knowledge of textbook content through

traditional strategies (i.e., short essay responses, multiple choice questions, fill in the blanks).

The first inkling I had that I had missed the mark with that initial test came when I read the

comment at the top of my student Gustavo's paper: "Reading NOT Memorizing." This remark

startled me. It made me reflect on what I had produced, and it left me pondering the following

question: what should a quality language based test look like?

I tried to recall the type of tests I had received in my last language learning class (i.e., Grade 9

French from 1995-1996). What I remembered, apart from the eccentric outfits my teacher wore,

were the grammar rules I had to decipher and then try to apply in different contexts.

My time reflecting on those bygone days of high school French eventually led to an epiphany! I

realized that I was meant to be testing the students' ability to apply specific *concepts* and not

merely learn (or memorize, as Gustavo had indicated) specific *content*.

Man, did this realization make me feel stupid. Once again I had let my own experiences of

learning, in completely unrelated disciplines, influence my teaching choices! I'm sure that

proper ESL testing methodologies were explained during my TESL training (Brown &

Abeywickrama, 2010), but when the time came for me to create my own assessment tools, all of

my prior training was trumped by my own experiences as a student (Garton & Richards, 2008).

The whole situation made me regret, yet again, my decision to stop taking French classes. And

why did I stop taking French? Because (horror of horrors) I had difficulty getting As.

Silly teenage Heather! Having fluency in a second language would really help me in my current

line of work (Medgyes, 1999; Phan, 2008). It would make me better prepared to understand the

learning challenges faced by my students (Medgyes, 1999; Phan, 2008).

It is sad to say, but I often feel professionally inadequate being a monolingual individual

teaching in a field that champions bi/multilingualism. I feel hypocritical when I tell my students

to push on through linguistic challenges and potential failures, as I neglected to do this myself.

I am a language instructor who is afraid of learning languages! Am I not the ultimate phony?

Okay, okay - enough beating myself up for past decisions (for now). I really need to get some

sleep (or attempt to get sleep at the very least).

Good night world,

Heavy-hearted Heather (the alliteration returns)

Entry Six: "E" Day

One of the things you may not realize is that very early on, especially if you want

to be successful in this teaching business – in other words, if you want your students

to learn – you will need to lose a lot of [your] ego. You will, rapid-fire, need to: [p]ut

into perspective … the occasional indifference or insensitivity of your students; [c]are

more about your students' learning than about your dominance; [t]alk less and listen

more; [a]nswer less and question more. (Christenbury, 1994, p. 13)

Friday, October 19, 2012

Dear Diary:

I didn't sleep well (again) last night. I was up tossing and turning, worried about today's

evaluation (a work that sends shivers down my spine).

I was a nervous wreck all this morning; petrified at the thought of my 45-minute evaluation.

This evaluation left me more nervous than I had been for all my other teaching evaluations

combined. I know this is ridiculous considering I endured constant observation and scrutiny for

both my TESL and Bachelor of Education practicums; yet, I was on pins and needles! Tricia

(thankfully) offered me some words of encouragement right before the evaluation transpired.

My nerves must have stemmed from the fact that Sarah (aka the big cheese) truly intimidates me.

She has taught ESL for multiple years on multiple continents, and I am an amateur!

I was determined to show her two things during the evaluation. First, I could deliver a coherent

and meaningful lesson. Second, the students respected me and I could effectively maintain order

in the classroom.

Like other new teachers, I wanted to receive positive recognition from an experienced educator in a position of power (Copland, 2008). I wanted to show her that I deserved my position (Copland, 2008). This was important to me because I felt I was at the bottom of the teaching hierarchy due to my minimal formal classroom experience.

I dreaded the idea of Sarah leaving the classroom thinking: "She is horrible! What on earth possessed me to hire her?"

Well, here in a nutshell, is what happened!

Sarah arrived, as scheduled, at 11:15 am to watch me deliver a lesson to my core class about the proper pronunciation of words with "ed" endings.

I chose this topic (which is not addressed in the course textbook) because my students needed a refresher on the pronunciation rules. The Brazilians, in particular, have the habit of pronouncing all "ed" ending words with the / Id / sound. This results in many awkward sounding sentences!

Prior to teaching the lesson, I submitted the following lesson plan to Sarah so she could see the direction I was taking with the session.

A Refresher: Proper Pronunciation of Words with "ED" Endings		
Instructor: Heather Donnelly	Level: Advanced	Time: 45 minutes
Objective Students will be able to properly pronounce words with "ed" endings (regular verbs in the past simple tense) by learning the pronunciation rules and solidifying their understanding through activities		

Hook 1. Write three words on the white board: talked, robbed, and blinded 2. Call on students to pronounce these words (provide correction if needed) 3. Write / t /, / d /, and / ld / on the board and ask the students which pronunciation goes with each word (/ t / with talked, / d / with robbed, / ld / with blinded) 4. Elicit new "ed" ending words that have these three different pronunciations		5 minutes
Introduce Learning Concepts 1. Distribute the handout entitled *Pronunciation Rules: Words with "ed" Endings* 2. Use the handout to discuss the three pronunciation rules (provide specific examples for each sound and have the students repeat the words)		10 minutes
Activity 1 1. Distribute the handout entitled *Practice "ed" Endings* and highlighters (if students do not have their own) 2. Have the students silently read the paragraph provided on the handout 3. Have the students highlight the words with "ed" endings and write the proper pronunciation sound (/ t /, / d /, or / ld /) beside each word 4. Have students confer with a peer to check their answers 5. Call on students to read sentences from the paragraph aloud (provide correction if needed)		15 minutes
Activity 2 1. Assign students a particular pronunciation sound by having them pick a cue card from a bowl (cue cards have / t /, / d /, or / ld / written on them) 2. Have students create sentences with "ed" ending words (two minimum) having their particular sound 3. Call on students to read their sentences aloud (provide correction if needed)		10 minutes
Wrap-up 1. Give students time to work on their homework assignment (a paragraph utilizing 15 "ed" ending words – 5 words for each pronunciation sound) 2. At the next class meeting, students will read their paragraphs aloud and then submit them for assessment		5 minutes

Since I was unaware of the specific criteria I was being evaluated on, I opted for a "safe" and

regimented lesson (Copland, 2008; Howard, 2008). I chose a rather teacher-centered approach

because I was not comfortable assigning activities with more unpredictable outcomes.

Anyway … the lesson was progressing as well as I could expect until Activity 2.

When it came time for Deshi, a typically reserved Chinese student, to provide his sentence with words having / t / sounds he said: "The man hiked / t / up the hill, and then pissed / t / in the bushes."

It was an OMG moment! If I had predicted a student to say something like that it would have been Fang, who has used inappropriate language in class and likes to challenge me.

This was very out of character for Deshi. I was shocked he chose to use the word pissed in a sentence. I was mortified he said it in front of my boss.

What was I to do? He did as he was assigned - he had found "ed" ending words pronounced with a / t / sound and put them into a sentence. He had pronounced his chosen words properly.

In the end, I reacted by saying: "An interesting choice of words, Deshi. What sentence did you come up with, Sergio?"

I could have kicked myself! How could I not think of anything else to say? I might have used the repeat feedback technique (Li et al., 2012) and said "pardon me" or "please repeat that Deshi." I might have also used the echoing technique (Li et al., 2012) and replied "the man did *what* in the bushes?" As always, hindsight is 20/20.

The rest of the lesson went by in a blur. All I could think was "I cannot believe that happened. What must Sarah be thinking of me? I'm surely in trouble now!"

When class ended at noon, Sarah called me into the classroom across the hall. I didn't want to face the music, but I knew I had to.

She started off by asking me what I thought of the lesson. I mumbled something about it "not transpiring as I had envisioned." That was an understatement!

After my response, she proceeded to list what she perceived to be the positives of what she had observed. The lesson was well organized – check. The lesson incorporated aspects to appeal to audio, visual, and kinaesthetic learners – check. The students seemed engaged and were relatively well behaved – check, check. The lesson objective appeared to have been met - check.

This was followed by the "things that could be improved" discussion. Ick! I braced myself for impending humiliation – but it never truly came.

To begin with, I was told that I should do more to personalize the classroom. That wasn't the feedback I was expecting, but I could see her point. My classroom is rather Spartan, and I have noticed that the other teachers do more to jazz up their spaces.

This being the case, I have decided to purchase some maps and artwork with my term stipend. I want to make the classroom look inviting but not overly childish. I think it would be fantastic if I could get some vintage travel posters to represent the nationalities of my students.

Another suggestion I received was to write on the board more often. Again, this feedback was unforeseen, but upon reflection I understood why the comment had been made upon reflection.

I replayed the lesson in my mind and realized that I had only utilized the board during the hook and wrap-up. For the rest of the period, I had relied upon handouts and spoken answers.

In the future, I must keep in mind that the learning experience of students will likely be enhanced if I convey my message through multiple modes and mediums.

And that, to my surprise, is where the suggested improvements ended! No mention of Deshi's comments! No mention of my response! It seemed that her reaction to the lesson was completely different than my own, and that she had been attuned to aspects that I hadn't really considered (Copland, 2008; Howard, 2008; Kurtoglu-Hooton, 2008).

Despite Sarah side-stepping the Deshi incident, I still needed to know what she thought about the episode. As such, I asked for her opinion directly.

Her reply was that Deshi was likely acting out due to the new situation (i.e., her presence in the classroom). She viewed my response as adequate given that he had correctly completed his required task. She told me that it was good that I didn't harp on the issue, and lightened any tension by promptly returning the lesson to its language focus (Lui, 2008).

This answer had a powerful effect on me. It gave me some reassurance that I should trust my instructional instincts (Olsen, 2008), and not let small events rattle my confidence (Liu, 2008). Further, it showed me that I must focus *less* on marginal aspects of my personal teaching performance, and *more* on the overall learning of the students (Kurtoglu-Hooton, 2008).

Tonight I go to bed exhausted, but feeling more teacher-esque (is that a word?)! I have received confirmation from my employer that I am not a complete teaching disaster!

TTYL (acronyms are the best),

Heather

Entry Seven: P is for Plagiarism

Teachers' beliefs and practices are not something carved in stone; these may shift

over time when teachers receive more training, when they gain more experience

in teaching, [and] when they are exposed to more students and cultures … We can

ignore neither the growth of the students nor the teachers, who need to revise their

teaching philosophies from time to time for the benefit of their students. (Li et al.,

2012, p. 32)

Monday, December 3, 2012

Dear Diary:

The semester is winding down. There are only four days of classes left, followed by exams. I

can't believe the end is so near.

I spent this past weekend marking the final assignment for my two advanced writing courses.

The assignment was a review of a pre-approved book of their choice. I thought it to be a

straightforward and fair task that the students could complete without serious difficulties – I was

mistaken.

In the beginning, I was curious to see what the students would produce - and learn about some

new books in the process! It didn't take long, however, for my curiosity to turn into utter

frustration and dismay.

After breezing through a couple of papers, I came across one that immediately produced alarm

bells in my brain.

The paper had perfect spelling and grammar.   The paper had a smooth flow. The paper had challenging vocabulary and was composed of a series of complex sentences.

A search in Google confirmed by suspicion: plagiarism.

Once I had found that one case of plagiarism, I was hypercritical of every paper I read afterwards. By the time I had completed marking, I had discovered a total of eight plagiarized papers. This meant that 40% of the students had committed plagiarism in some fashion.

Some plagiarized from one source, while others got "creative" and plagiarized by combining multiple sources together.

Some plagiarized a few sentences, and others opted to plagiarize the entire assignment.

I couldn't believe it! How did they think I wouldn't figure it out? After 12 weeks of teaching them, I have a very good idea of their writing proficiency levels! Further, I know that an essay written by an ESL student at this level *should* have errors in terms of sentence construction, grammar, and spelling.

My anger was increased by the fact that ALL of these students had nearly completed an entire course about university skills where learning about plagiarism, and how to avoid committing it, was a major component. To add insult to injury, some of the offending students had ME as their teacher for this course!

The following question then arose: how do I handle this situation?

Because of its newness, the ESL program does not have a formal plagiarism policy in place.

Obviously all the teachers had warned the students against the deed, but none of my colleagues had yet encountered any violators.

My first act was to email Sarah, who was out of the country on another recruiting trip (more students were needed to keep the program afloat), for her words of wisdom. While she ultimately told me to handle the situation as I saw fit, her advice was to give the offending students a zero on the assignment while offering them the option of completing a rewrite.

The idea of giving the offending students zero was something I had already considered, so that seemed like an easy instruction to follow. The option of rewriting, however, is one I chose (in this particular instance) to disregard.

My feeling was that offending students: (A) had not finished their book; (B) had not understood their book; (C) had not managed their time effectively enough to write the review on time; (D) had not felt their writing was good enough and wanted to make it better; or (E) had not understood what they were doing was plagiarism.

If the reason for plagiarism had been option (A), (B), or (C) – which seemed likely motivators – then rewriting the paper would prove difficult (especially with final exams looming).

That is why I decided on an alternative approach to addressing the issue.

Today I met with each student who had plagiarized. I told them that they would be receiving a zero on this assignment and that the weight of the assignment would shift to their final exam.

After that, I gave them a short assignment to complete in my presence.

The first part of the assignment was a written statement. In the statement, each student had to formally acknowledge that they had plagiarized. Additionally, they had to provide information about what source(s) they had plagiarized from (if they could remember), and discuss why they had felt the need to do what they did.

The second part of the assignment was for the students to copy, word for word, the university's academic dishonesty policy (I discussed the document with them in detail).

I had them do this because I felt they needed a FULL understanding of the severity of their actions. They had to be aware that while using the words of others without citation could be commonplace in their own writing cultures (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008; McCool, 2009), it is not tolerated at Canadian universities. They also needed to know that most instructors would not think twice about failing ANY student (ESL or not) who submits plagiarized work.

I think my message got through, as all of the students I spoke with seemed genuinely sorry for what they had done and were keen to avoid any misconduct that could jeopardize their academic futures. The Asian students, in particular, appeared humbled by the ordeal and apologized profusely. I think they may have lost face, and felt that they disrupted the balance of our teacher-student relationship (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Liu, 2008).

These events – apart from stressing me out - have made me reconsider the way I will approach similar assignments in the future.

I have come to recognize that this time around my approach was too hands-off. I perceived the assignment to be easy and straight-forward, and wrongly assumed they would as well. I gave them a model assignment and a marking rubric, but did not truly show them how to go from

point A to point B.

I should have done scaffolding.

I should have encouraged the use of leveled readers, such as those offered by Penguin, to ensure that all of the chosen books were of an appropriate length and utilized language that matched the comprehension level of the students.

I should have encouraged reading groups, so students could have discussed what they were reading with other peers.

I should have encouraged the different parts of the writing process: pre-writing/brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

I should have had the students hand their work in at different stages to check their progress instead of having everything due at once, as is the custom in university writing courses of a non-ESL nature (likely because it is assumed that students are informed about the writing process and conventions of style and formatting).

Such strategies might have helped mitigate factors that could have resulted in plagiarism.

What seems clear is that I have taught academic writing the way I learned it myself – and that this is not the most effective methodology for teaching ESL writers (Li et al., 2012).

This incident was a lesson for us all.

Heather

Entry Eight: Pomp and Circumstance

No classroom is as challenging, complicated, and yet interesting as an ESL

classroom with teachers and students from diverse cultures. The teacher is an

important agent whom the student looks up to for modeling the language and

culture. The students are the other important agents, who bring to class their

various languages, traditions, and beliefs, as well as their expectations for their

teacher and class. What to teach, how to teach and how to learn, how to get along

respectfully and what to take away from class – these are the questions the teacher

and the students will need to consider and negotiate. (Li et al., 2012, p. 31)

Friday, December 14, 2012

Dear Diary:

The end of the teaching term has arrived! Today was graduation day.

I am relieved everything went off smoothly. Tricia, Claire (the other core teacher), and I have

been scrambling to put this all together! With Sarah and Rachel still out of the country on a

recruitment trip, the organization of the festivities was left to the three of us. Luckily, Tricia and

Claire had some experience planning graduation ceremonies (I was pretty clueless).

Since this was the inaugural graduation for the program (and a reporter was coming from the

university newspaper), we wanted to make it special for the students.

We acquired food (simple and tasty) and decorations (minimalistic and classy). We prepared

certificates. We purchased small achievement awards for the most improved students in each

core class. We wrote speeches celebrating the students.

All this was on top of our teaching duties. Exams finished two days ago, and we have already marked them and submitted final grades! The turn-around was absolutely crazy. I haven't slept in the last 48 hours and I'm about ready to crash.

Despite my exhausted state, however, I am very happy.

It was INCREDIBLY satisfying to see all my students graduate. When I called them up for their certificates during the ceremony, each one of them (even Fang to my surprise) wanted to have their picture taken with me. This was very touching. They wanted a memento of their time with me. Years from now they can look back and say, "that's me with teacher Heather." I hope their memories of me and the program are positive. I also hope they remember my lessons about pronouncing "th" sounds and words with "ed" endings correctly (and other skills as well)!

Another touching element was Raoul. He is a quiet Brazilian student in my core class who has shown tremendous dedication to his studies. He was so excited to get the most improved award, and very happy that I had verbally acknowledged this progression (especially in writing). I will never forget the huge smile on his face when he collected the award and proudly showed it off to his classmates. It was a special moment (I was tearing up).

It moved me to know that I had assisted Raoul, and other students, in bettering their English skills. I had led (or tried to lead) the students to water (knowledge), and they drank.

After the formal ceremony, many of the students from my afternoon classes also wanted their pictures taken with me. Among them were the plagiarizers I had penalized last week. It was

nice to see that they didn't seem (at least externally) to hold a grudge against me. Once again, I was happy to pose with them as their teacher.

Facebook friend requests followed. This was tricky. I was flattered they wanted to keep in touch, but I have been warned about befriending students (past, present, future) on social media sites. I have peers who consistently befriend students and peers who opt against it.

In the end, I said no to these Facebook friend requests, but told students to keep in contact via my work email. This was the safe option. I did it because I felt I needed to keep a professional distance. I want them to acknowledge me as an educator and not as their buddy.

So, with this term in the pages of history, I look to the future. As of yet, I do not know what is happening next semester. What shall the fate of the program be? What shall my fate be? Will I be asked back? With Sarah gone, everything is up in the air. All I can do is wait.

Regardless of what comes next, I am proud of myself for completing the semester. It has truly been one of my greatest accomplishments (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Tsui, 2007).

I feel as if I should create my own certificate to acknowledge this feat. The inscription, in lovely calligraphy, could read: "This certificate is awarded to Heather Donnelly to commemorate the completion of her first term of ESL teaching without epic disaster or firing." LOL.

Cheers to the success of my students! Cheers to the success of me as a teacher! Cheers to an uncertain future!

Heather

Entry Nine: The Rubicon has been Crossed

I struggled with how to become a teacher; I always felt as if I was simply playing

a role, not taking on an identity, when I stepped in front of my class ... I now believe

that being successful as a teacher means more than being able to keep classroom

control, being able to present your content clearly, or being able to manage your

classroom with confidence and organization. Success as a teacher is attached to a

sense of professional identity that integrates the intellectual, the emotional, and the

physical aspects of the teacher's life as well as taking on the subjectivities of "teacher."

It means being able to combine … the core identity or personal beliefs and a sense of

self with a professional identity that in our culture is often very narrowly defined.

(Alsup, 2006, p. 36)

Monday, January 14, 2013

Dear Diary:

Hard to believe, but a month has passed since graduation.

For the sake of my sanity, I elected not to teach this term. It was a difficult choice to make,

especially when I was offered another term contract, but I know it was what I had to do.

Last term was very intense. My plate was full, if not over-flowing, with responsibilities. I had

full time ESL teaching, my part time job as a writing coach, and my Master of Education studies

to contend with. I had no life outside of professional and academic work, and my energy

reserves were depleted come December.

In retrospect, I don't know how I made it through. The juggling act was difficult, and I'm shocked that I did not drop that many balls during the process. It was a crazy and life changing roller coaster ride. If I had it to do over again, I would look to lighten my load and ease myself into teaching more gradually as to avoid enduring a trial by fire (Farrell, 2003). Yet, as is my pattern with most things in life, I jumped in the deep end head first.

This term I am changing my focus. I shall be working more intensely on completing my Master's degree. I know I will feel better once I have that degree in hand. It will take a tremendous burden off my shoulders. The freedom will be glorious!

Besides allowing me time to focus on my academics, taking a step back from teaching has allowed me time to reflect critically on the previous few months. This reflection has been incredibly beneficial (Hayler, 2011; Olsen, 2008).

I have come to realize that I have finally, to use a classical reference, crossed the Rubicon. I'm no longer the "faker" I was back on my birthday in September. I feel like an ESL teacher now.

This identity transformation occurred as result of multiple factors.

Factor One: I completed the term!

Having the opportunity to plan and teach five courses from beginning to end was amazing (as well as terrifying and exhausting). For each class I had to navigate different waters, and was faced with unique challenges and rewards. I definitely needed that sustained time in the classroom environment to develop a sense of confidence and legitimacy (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Liu & Fisher, 2006; Tsui, 2007).

Factor Two: I was asked to teach again!

Even though I turned down the opportunity to teach (at least for this term), being offered another contract was validation that I had delivered, in the eyes of my superiors, a respectable teaching performance. They believed I was teacher. Their belief made me believe (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Tsui, 2007).

Factor Three: My colleagues accepted me in the teacher role!

Being embraced as a peer by my colleagues was HUGE in terms of making me feel at ease in the teaching world (Liu & Fisher, 2006; Tsui, 2007). My relationship with Tricia was particularly important. Without her, I'm not sure I could have survived psychologically. She led me through several periods of self-doubt, and instilled in me the belief that I could persevere (Farrell 2003 & 2006; Liu & Fisher, 2006).

She made me feel like the optimistic title character from the book from my childhood, *The Little Engine that Could* (Piper, 2005). Like that small resilient rain, I kept saying to myself, "I think I can. I think I can. I think I can" (Piper, 2005, p. 29).

Tricia has become a true friend. Her knowledge of teaching and encouraging attitude made her a fantastic mentor. She has also made me realize that teaching doesn't have a magic 'one-size-fits-all' formula (Garton, 2008). Each teacher must find his/her own teaching path.

In addition, Tricia helped me realize that my fears and trepidations are normal, and thus, nothing to be ashamed of. She reminded me that even experienced educators have times of doubt and anxiety (Palmer, 1998), and that my colleagues can be a great source of professional and

emotional support.

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Factor Four: My students accepted me in the teacher role!

A huge stepping stone on the path to my "teacherhood" was having my students view me as a teacher. Though I had my fair share of difficulties with the students (e.g., Fang's attitude, the plagiarism incident), they never outright rejected me in the teaching post. If such a rejection had transpired, I question if I would have had the gumption to continue.

Since graduation, I have had several students email me with uplifting messages (e.g., they enjoyed my class, they learned a lot, they are finding what I taught them useful, they are sad I will not be teaching them this term). This feedback lets me know that I was not completely off base in my approach, and this is incredibly satisfying to hear.

To be honest, I truly miss being called "teacher Heather" (whatever the pronunciation of my name) on a regular basis. It has a beautiful ring to it!

While this ability to identify as an ESL teacher is a significant leap in the right direction, I know that more identity work needs to be done.

Two nagging issues still persist.

Nagging Issue One: My monolingualism!

This is such a roadblock!

I truly feel my lack of fluency in another language diminishes me professionally, and I fear that it will hinder my ability to advance in the ESL field (as it likely should).

I need to remember what it is like to be a language learner. I need to experience effective language teaching and model those practices in my own instruction.

This means that I must bite the bullet and confront my silly linguistic phobia head-on. Yet, as the famous saying goes, it will be easier said than done.

What am I afraid of? Two words come to mind: struggle and failure.

I am the type of person to hone my strengths and deeply bury my weaknesses. I stick with what comes to easily me, and avoid what does not (no matter how beneficial it might be). Learning languages, along with driving and undertaking most sports, has traditionally fallen into the latter "avoid like the plaque" category!

This attitude needs to change.

I need to accept and learn from failure.

It is sad (and wrong) that I preach language learning perseverance to my students, but don't practice it myself!

It will be a long road, as gaining native-like fluency in a language can take up to 10 years (Li et al., 2012)! I am comforted, nevertheless, by the knowledge that prior educational achievement in one's first language is the key aspect that predicts the speed of learning another language (Li et al., 2012). If that is the case, mastering a second language is not a pipe dream.

Nagging Issue Two: My grammar and teaching strategy demons!

I have seen that effectively teaching ESL learners, particularly at the advanced level I want to

specialize in, involves having a sound knowledge of all English language skills and systems.

While I feel I need to expand my knowledge in all the areas of English instruction, I know that grammar remains my Achilles heel!

Despite my TESL training, I do not completely understand grammar and do not feel adequately prepared to teach the nuances of grammar in an effective way.

As a native speaker, certain things just sound and/or look right. At some point along the way, my understanding of specific grammatical rules was lost and instinct took over.

Though I always prep for what I am expected to teach, grammar questions frequently arise that I cannot sufficiently (or perhaps even accurately) answer. I hate this feeling! During such occasions, I cannot respond, however tempted I may be, with "that's just the way it is!"

So, in a way, to teach ESL is to re-learn English.

I accept that it will be impossible, whatever my training, to answer every grammatical question posed by students off the top of my head. However, it would make me feel significantly more professional if I could answer the majority of them on the spot (Kanno & Stuart, 2011)!

I want to be as knowledgeable as I can be about what I am teaching and how I am teaching it.

I want the students to feel confident in my abilities and the knowledge I give them.

Besides increasing my knowledge of grammar, I also want to learn to teach using a more student-centered approach.

Looking back on the semester, there were several aspects of my teaching approach that should have been changed.

Firstly, I was heavily wedded to the course textbooks and teacher manuals (if a teacher manual was available). I relied on these resources to provide me with teaching suggestions, but did not really consider whether or not they were the best fit for the situation or the students.

Secondly, I was operating on my own schedule and based the pace of my teaching on my own agenda and not student needs. As a result, some students may have come away from my classes lacking a solid understanding of some of the concepts I addressed.

Thirdly, I didn't allow the students to have input into the supplemental materials (e.g., daily news articles) I utilized in the classroom. Instead of letting them show me what they were interested in learning, I imposed onto them my own beliefs about what was "interesting" and worth knowing. This was a wasted opportunity to learn more about my students.

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Recently, I read an article that likened qualitative researchers to bricoleurs as they merge various disciplines, theories, and methodologies to create meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1999).

This description made me consider what metaphor I could create to describe the process of developing an L2 teacher identity.

What I came up with is that constructing an L2 teacher identity is akin to constructing a quilt.

To make a quilt, you sew together assorted fabric blocks you have assembled into a pattern you find appealing. As time goes by, this pattern may retain its initial appeal or it may require some

tweaking to be revamped into something new to suit your evolving taste.

The same is true of assembling an L2 teacher identity. You piece together different "blocks" - or different beliefs about who you are as teacher.

It takes time to establish a combination of "blocks" that forms a pleasing combination (i.e., is a true reflection of your teaching self). For some, the combination of "blocks" will remain intact for the entirety of their teaching careers. For others, the "blocks" will change and new combinations will be sought to reflect new perspectives and understandings.

For me, I'm certain the "blocks" will change. However, at the moment, I am happy that I have established my first L2 teacher identity "quilt." It is unique, and reflects the teacher I am now.

Figure 1: Teacher Identity "Quilt"

Be committed to improving knowledge of TESL subject matter (especially grammar)	Be an edgewalker (understand cultures and how to be an cultural mediator)	Be engaged in personal development (trust instincts, learn a language)
HEATHER		DONNELLY
Be committed to having meaningful and collaborative relationships with co-workers (keep the lines of communication open)	Be the friendly teacher not the friend (facilitate learning but don't be afraid to exert authority to maintain an optimal learning environment)	Be committed to improving knowledge of TESL pedagogy (communicative and student-centered instruction)

So diary, it is time to bid you adieu.

Thank you for allowing me to vent and reflect while I have taken this teaching odyssey.

Together, we have crossed a vast river.

More obstacles, however, are ahead. I hope I can overcome them. I think I can.

VENI VIDI VICI

Heather

Autoethnography Analysis

In this section I analyze my autoethnographic narrative using Bullough's (2005) three teacher identity development dimensions: 1) identification and membership; 2) subject location: rules and duties; and, 3) self-expression and enactment.

Identification and Membership

To address Bullough's (2005) first teacher identity development dimension I consider the following two questions: With whom and with what did I identity? Who or what claimed me as a member?

In the initial stages of my teaching journey, I had a difficult time identifying with teaching and being a teacher. I believe this inability to identify with the teaching role stemmed from several factors. Firstly, I had decidedly negative views about teachers for many years (see Entry Two). I thought that being a teacher, a role I associated solely with elementary and secondary educators, did not involve great skill. My perception was that teachers merely had to regurgitate information from textbooks and maintain order in the classroom. I distanced myself from the prospect of being a teacher, despite it being offered as a career choice with many practical perks (e.g., good salary, good vacation time, good working hours) by my parents, because I wanted a job that I felt had more status and prestige. Furthermore, my respect for the teaching profession had diminished as a result of enduring damaging belittlement at the hands of my fourth grade teacher. For me, that man was the face of teaching.

Another reason why identification with teaching and teachers was challenging was because of my lack of full commitment to the endeavor when I finally did begin teaching-related activities and education. As is evident from what was stated in the previous paragraph, I did not intend on being a teacher and was not "called" to teach. Teaching was, for several years, a means for me to achieve some other end. I took TESOL certification in 2009 and 2010 to add

diversity to my resume with the hope of it helping me to secure graduate scholarships in other

academic programs. I took a Bachelor of Education degree with the thinking that it could help

me get an academic librarianship position. I had no intention, in the moment, of using the

teaching education and experience I was receiving to be a teacher. I completed the assignments

and practicums that were required of me to receive the certification/degree, but I was not 100%

invested in my actions. Even when I started my first full-time ESL teaching position at the

university it was not a calculated move (see Entry One). I had applied for the post because I was

qualified on paper and was curious about my marketability. I did not really *want* to the job per

se, I wanted to see if I *could* get the job. When the job was offered, I accepted it because it

seemed foolish to turn down an opportunity to work in the post-secondary sector, which was the

sector I was targeting.

   A final reason why identification with teaching and teachers was challenging was

because I had difficult time relating with my colleagues (see Entry One and Four). Though there

was no ill treatment, I initially felt isolated from them. I felt isolated because I was significantly

younger than they were and I believed we had little in common with each other beyond working

for the same university. I felt isolated because I lacked their years of teaching experience and

ability to speak multiple languages. In general, I opted against seeking close relationships with

my colleagues because I was afraid that such relationships might expose my perceived

professional incompetence. I believed that they were true ESL teachers, and I was not.

   In the end, my ability to identify with teaching and teachers was made possible by

sustained time in the classroom and a changing of attitudes. With more teaching experience, I

came to view the teaching profession in a new light. I came to truly understand that good

teaching requires both skill and planning, and teachers need to do more than just supply subject-

specific knowledge and effectively manage the classroom. I came to recognize, especially at the

graduation ceremony (see Entry Eight), that I could have a positive lasting impact upon the

students and their language abilities. Further, after I left the position in January 2013, I realized

that I could fully commit to ESL teaching as my career path in the future (see Entry Nine). I

realized that I missed the classroom, interacting with students, and being called a teacher.

Through my interactions with my colleague Tricia, I recognized that my isolation was of my own

making. She helped me to see I could relate with other instructors who were older, more

experienced, and more knowledgeable without being made to feel inferior or inept. She also

taught me that the common bond of being a teacher could be a strong unifying bond.

Besides having difficulty identifying with the teaching role, I also found it challenging to

feel as if I was a fully-fledged member of my ESL teaching community. This inability to feel

like a member, however, was not caused by being marginalized or being refused membership by

those with my teaching community. On the contrary, those in my community of practice offered

me membership right away. From the time of my interview in July 2012 until the day they

offered me another teaching contract in January 2013, the actions of administration confirmed

my status as a group member. I had equal status (e.g., equal pay, equal hours) with the other

instructors, and was not treated differently, even though I had significantly less teaching

experience. The administration of the ESL program appeared to have faith in my abilities. For

example, I was given the task of developing the curriculum for the three core classes (see Entry

One), and was given freedom to make my own instructional decisions with regards to teaching

style and assessment (see Entry Six). In addition to administration, my fellow instructors also

accepted me as a member of the teaching community. Though my interactions with the other

instructors, apart from Tricia, were limited due to multiple factors (e.g., my fear of relationships

exposing inadequacies, co-workers' personal schedules), they were nonetheless positive. I never

felt as if my place within the teaching community was questioned by anyone I worked with.

Despite the seeming acceptance by administration and colleagues, I still questioned the

membership that was offered. On the one hand, I questioned whether I deserved membership

(see Entry Three). I wondered if I was hired for my abilities, or hired out of convenience. I pondered the convenience theory for two reasons. Firstly, I felt that few people, especially those who did not already live close by, would apply to work for a new ESL program in a relatively remote Northern Ontario community. Secondly, I assumed that few people living within the community would have recognized TESL training, as it was not being offered locally at that time. These factors led me to believe that I was given the curriculum development and teaching contracts not because I deserved them, but because I was the best or only available option.

Another reason why I questioned membership was because I was not completely sure if I wanted it. As I indicated earlier, I initially took the ESL teaching position because it was in the post-secondary sector (see Entry One). Throughout the semester, I wondered if I could or even should teach ESL indefinitely at the institution I was at. Certain events (e.g., my unsuccessful first test for students) and personal attributes (e.g., my monolingualism) made me doubt my suitability for TESL positions (see Entry Five).

I was only able to accept the offered membership when I felt I deserved it and when I wanted it. A couple of incidents helped me to recognize that I did deserve membership: my positive teaching evaluation (see Entry Six) and being offered a contact for a subsequent term (see Entry Nine). These incidents showed that my ESL teaching skills were deemed to be acceptable in the eyes of program administration. Once I had this recognition of my teaching competence, the original reason for my hiring was deemed to be less relevant. In terms of wanting membership, that only truly happened when I ceased to have it. Choosing not to return for a second term made me realize that I enjoyed belonging to a supportive teaching community that included administrators, colleagues, and students.

Subject Location: Rules and Duties

To address Bullough's (2005) second teacher identity development dimension I consider the following four questions: Where did I fit and what institutional spaces were open to me?

What rules did I follow? What duties did I perform? How was my performance connected to and recognized by others?

During my time teaching in the ESL program, I had a very vague understanding about where I fit within the program and what institutional spaces were open to me. What I did know was that I was on a four-month term contract to teach five courses within the 19-course program. Beyond that, I did but not know my fate. Though I was on the same length of contract as the other instructors, I felt their positions were more secure than mine as they were more experienced educators. I perceived myself to be at the bottom of the teaching hierarchy (see Entry Six), though that was never implied by the words or actions of others. The uncertainty of what was to come kept me on my toes, and made me feel as if I was on a trial teaching run. I could not think beyond the term I was teaching, and with no guarantees of retaining a teaching role, envisioning a future and advancement within the ESL program was challenging. Even if I had been on a longer contract, I would not have felt 100% secure within the position as the program was new and there was uncertainty about future student enrolment (see Entry Seven and Eight). If enrolment plummeted, teachers would have their hours' cut or positions eliminated. This precarious situation worked against helping me to solidify an L2 teacher identity.

With regards to teacher rules, the ESL program had minimal and none that I was uncomfortable adhering to. It was my understanding that I was expected to: arrive punctually to teach my classes, track student attendance, notify the office if I was not able to teach due to illness or emergency, turn off audio visual equipment, lock classroom doors, treat learners with respect, and promote the "English only" policy while teaching. These requests seemed logical, and the only ones that required real effort were the last two. Understanding how to treat the students with respect required a solid knowledge of effective intercultural communication (see Entry Four). I needed to know what might be offensive to them in terms of what I said, how I said it, and what non-verbal cues I used. Furthermore, enforcing the "English only" policy was

also difficult, especially in two of my afternoon classes where 93% of the students spoke

Mandarin (see Entry Four). With these students, I found that if I gave them brief directions or

feedback bilingually, in English and Mandarin, they switched to English quickly. I think they

changed to English because they realized I must really be serious if I went to trouble of learning

how to say something in their native language. So, by marginally breaking the "English only"

policy myself, I helped the students to stay committed to speaking English.

Initially, I viewed my ESL teaching duties as follows: cover the curriculum, assess

student learning, and accept the cultural diversity of the learners. My ideas about tackling the

first two duties were influenced by my recent years as a learner in variety of post-secondary

courses that were not related to language learning. In terms of covering the curriculum, I

believed that would be achieved by completing the units in the textbooks from which the

curriculum was derived. In terms of assessment, I thought that was successfully done by testing

the students on the content from the textbooks. In terms of accepting learner diversity, I felt that

was accomplished by being open-minded to values and opinions that differed from my own.

Over time, I continued to view these duties as being important, but I eventually realized

that I was not addressing them in effective ways. For addressing the curriculum, I recognized

that it was not enough to just have the students read the textbook and complete the provided

exercises and activities. I saw, particularly from the advice of Tricia (see Entry Four), that I

needed to take the subject-specific knowledge that the students were learning from the textbook

and help them to utilize that knowledge in authentic communicative tasks. In order to complete

these tasks, as I learned from cases of plagiarism on a book report (see Entry Seven), students

required explicit directions and clear models about how to progress from start to finish. With

assessment, the feedback of a student (see Entry Five) helped me to recognize that I should be

testing my ESL learners on their abilities use specific language skills and not memorize textbook

content.   Interactions with my students Fang and Bashshar (see Entry Two), furthermore,

showed me that my open-mindedness to different points of view was not sufficient to ensure I was fully accepting the cultural diversity of my students. My responses to these two students indicated that I was strongly influenced by stereotypes (i.e., Chinese students are passive learners, Muslim males will resist having female teachers), that that these stereotypes clouded my first perceptions of these individuals. This judging of students based on stereotypes, while unintentional, was wrong.

Acknowledging that my performance was connected to others within my teaching community was also a personal challenge. For a long period of time, I was of the belief that I was working in isolation, and I was too absorbed in my own experience to consider or care about the link between the courses I taught and the others in the program. All that existed for me was the microcosm of my own classroom. Some events, however, helped to me to see the broader macrocosm of the program. Firstly, when I began to inquire to other instructors about how certain students were functioning in their classes (see Entry Four), I remembered that my classes were only part of the each student's total course load. Secondly, when I worked with Tricia and Claire on planning the graduation ceremony (see Entry Eight), I saw that my contribution to the functioning of the program was important but merely a small section of the larger connected whole.

I was fortunate to receive positive recognition for my teaching performance from program administrators. This recognition came in the form of my teaching evaluation (see Entry Six) and being offered a second four-month teaching contract (see Entry Nine). Such recognition, as previously stated, was vital in helping me feel as if I was a valued and able member of the teacher community.

Self-Expression and Enactment

To address Bullough's (2005) third teacher identity development dimension I consider the following two questions: How did I feel when I played my part? Did I possess the skills

needed for self-enactment?

For the majority of my first teaching term I felt as if I was playing the role of an ESL teacher rather than actually being one. I felt I lacked the experience to assume the position I had been given, and questioned if I was the correct fit for the position. When things transpired in the classroom as I had envisioned them, I was happy, but when things went another way I was distraught (see Entry Six). I viewed small and unexpected events as significant setbacks, and these setbacks often impacted my confidence. In truth, I did not truly believe I was an ESL teacher until after I had successfully completed the term. My greatest feelings of accomplishment came at the graduation ceremony (see Entry Eight) and when I received emails with encouraging feedback from my former students (see Entry Nine). Such occurrences showed me that I was capable of making a difference for students, and that I could be intellectually and emotionally fulfilled if I chose ESL teaching as my permanent career path.

At the end of my first semester of teaching I felt like I was a real ESL teacher. However, I also recognized that I needed to grow in various areas in order to be the type of ESL teacher I wanted to be (see Entry 9). In particular, I needed to further develop my pedagogical content knowledge. In terms of classroom management, I needed to fully relinquish my desire for control and possession (e.g., my class, my students), and step into the role of language learning facilitator. To allow this is happen, I must allow my instructional decisions to be informed by my teaching experiences and knowledge, rather than my learner experiences. In terms of subject-specific knowledge, I needed to go beyond the assigned textbooks for my classes and learn how to effectively teach language systems (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) and skills (i.e., speaking, listening, writing, reading). This requires establishing clear language learning outcomes for each lesson I teach, and considering how each lesson fits into the larger scheme of a particular course. In terms of pedagogical knowledge, I needed to understand how to successfully implement communicative student-centered learning. Doing that means

recognizing that student-centered learning involves more than simply implementing some

interactive activities into instruction (see Entry Six), and encompasses allowing students to

influence all aspects of the learning process (i.e., activities, materials, content, pace).

Another area I needed to develop further in order to be the ESL teacher I wanted to be

was inter-cultural competence. During the term, the way I approached teaching and interacting

with the students was sometimes influenced by stereotypes (see Entry Two). I had beliefs about

how students from particular cultures would behave and what they would expect of me as a

teacher. In addition, my approach to teaching and interacting with students was influenced by a

desire to avoid conflict (see Entry Four). Moving forward, I have to understand how to

effectively converse with members of different communities by recognizing common ways of

thinking and behaving, while still seeing variety among individuals within those communities

and viewing conflict as a learning opportunity.

Learning how to work collaboratively with other teachers was a third area of growth that

I needed to address. Though my interactions with Tricia showed me some of the personal

benefits of colleague collaboration (see Entry Four), I explored only minimally the professional

benefits of collaboration. I felt that working with others would expose my weaknesses, and I did

not think I could offer any teaching ideas that would be of value to others. Additionally, I did

not want to open myself up to potential constructive criticism, as I was sensitive to judgments

regarding my teaching approach. In the future, I must keep in mind that my colleagues can be a

great source of support and wisdom, and that are roles are connected. I should not perceive the

feedback I receive from them as a personal attack, but rather as suggestions that can help me

evolve as an ESL educator.

A final area I felt I needed to address in order to be the type of ESL teacher I wanted to

be was my monolingualism (see Entry Five). Being a monolingual instructor in the ESL field,

which promotes bi/multilingualism, made me feel like a fraud. I felt my bi/multilingual colleagues could better relate to the language learning challenges being faced by the students. By committing myself to learning another language, I can re-experience the language learning process, and hopefully discover effective teaching strategies (i.e., student-centered, communicative, task-based) to incorporate into my own teaching.

Summary

This chapter had two sections. In the first section, I provided my autoethnographic narrative that described the events and attitudes that were pivotal in my L2 teacher identity development. In the second section, Bullough's (2005) three teacher identity development dimensions were used to analyze the autoethnographic narrative. Through this analysis, I tried to address the following questions:

1. How did my relationships with colleagues and administration influence my L2 teacher identity development?

2. How did sustained teaching experience influence my L2 teacher identity development and pedagogical content knowledge?

3. Where did I still want to go in terms of my L2 teacher identity development after completing my first term of full-time teaching?

In the next chapter, I conclude this research study by summarizing its purpose and significance, reconsidering its findings, and providing recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

[A]utoethnographic writing does not merely tell stories about yourself garnished

with details, but actively interprets your stories to make sense of how they are

connected with others' stories. In the interpretive process, you gain new knowledge

and insight about yourself and others and become transformed. (Chang, 2008, p. 149)

This last chapter serves to summarize and highlight the key aspects of my study detailing

my first term of full-time teaching of adult ESL learners at a post-secondary institution in

Northern Ontario in the fall of 2012. It re-examines the purpose, significance, and findings

of my investigation. Further, it provides my recommendations for further research, and offers an

epilogue with my final reflections.

Purpose and Significance Re-examined

This study was undertaken to answer the call of researchers to add to the small body of

knowledge in the area of L2 teacher identity development (Farrell, 2006; Kanno & Stuart, 2011;

Liu & Fisher, 2006). By examining my L2 teacher identity development journey through a

research design and method (i.e., autoethnography) that had not been utilized for this purpose, I

hoped to engage readers via my personal story and provide them with new knowledge about the

culture of L2 teaching and what it is like to be a novice teacher in this field. Having such

enhanced knowledge about the process of L2 teacher development would be of benefit for

several parties, such as teacher educators, practicing L2 instructors, and potential L2 teachers.

This knowledge, furthermore, was of great benefit to myself, as I was able to grow as an L2

educator as a result of understanding my professional development (Hayler, 2011).

Findings

Three research questions guided the formation of this study. In order to answer these questions, two main steps were taken. Firstly, I wrote an autoethnographic narrative consisting of nine diary entries using the process of systematic sociological introspection (Ellis, 2008). By using this process, I was able create an authentic account detailing my L2 teacher identity development. Secondly, I analyzed this autoethnographic narrative using Bullough's (2005) three teacher identity development dimensions: 1) identification and membership; 2) subject location: rules and duties; and, 3) self-expression and enactment.

Relationships with Colleagues and Administration

The first question I posed was: How did my relationships with colleagues and administration influence my L2 teacher identity development? I found that these relationships had a very strong impact on my professional development (Farrell 2003 & 2006; Liu & Fisher, 2006). In terms of colleagues, I developed my strongest relationship with Tricia, an experienced co-worker, who acted as an informal mentor and provided me with valuable personal support and some instructional support. She was vital in making me feel welcomed within the profession and helped me to realize the benefits of colleague collaboration, which I had initially shunned fearing it would expose my perceived teaching incompetency to my peers. Tricia was also pivotal in helping me to see that my performance was connected to my other colleagues in the broader vision and functioning of the program in which I was working. With my other three teaching colleagues, I had limited interactions due to several factors (i.e., my self-imposed isolation, personal schedules). However, the interactions I did have with them were positive, and I was always made to feel like I belonged.

My relationship with the administration of my ESL program was also positive. While I was not overly close with administrators, I did feel supported and accepted by those in charge from the very beginning of my employment. Sarah, the director of the ESL program, showed

through her actions that she had faith in my abilities. For example, I was never excessively

scrutinized, and I was able to make independent instructional choices with regards to how I

taught and how I assessed the students. In addition, I was not treated differently than my more

experienced teaching colleagues, and this equal treatment was significant in helping me feel like

a legitimate member of the teaching community (Farrell, 2003 & 2006).

Despite being offered immediate membership within the teaching community by my

colleagues and administration, I had a hard time accepting this membership. My difficultly

accepting membership stemmed from my questioning whether I deserved and wanted it. I had

the belief that I had been hired out of convenience rather than ability, and that I may not have

been ideally suited for the ESL teaching position I had obtained. Full acceptance of the extended

membership only occurred when my attitudes changed, and I came to see that I was worthy of

membership and I desired membership.

Impact of Sustained Teaching Time

The second research question I posed was: How did my sustained teaching experience

impact my L2 teacher identity development and pedagogical content knowledge? Sustained

teaching time had overwhelmingly positive ramifications for my L2 teacher identity (Kanno &

Stuart, 2011; Watzke, 2007). When I began my first teaching term, I felt I was playing the role

of an ESL teacher rather than being one. My professional qualifications (i.e., TESOL

certifications, Bachelor of Education degree) were not enough to instill me with a professional

identity (Lave 1996; Wenger, 1998), and I had given little thought as to what type of teacher I

wanted to be. With time, however, I gained more confidence and felt more comfortable and

legitimate in the classroom. Certain events made me realize that I could successfully function as

an ESL teacher (i.e., positive teaching evaluation, being offered a second contract) and make a

difference for students (i.e., encouraging emails from former pupils following my first term).

Eventually, I was able to understand what type of teacher I desired to be (see Figure 1), and what skills and attributes I needed make that possible.

Sustained teaching time also had positive ramifications for my pedagogical content knowledge (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Watzke, 2007). At the beginning of my teaching tenure, I had limited knowledge about effective classroom management strategies, and I had extreme difficulty relinquishing instructional control. My subject matter knowledge, furthermore, did not extend far beyond the information that was provided in the textbooks and manuals I was utilizing for my classes. I felt my obligation as a teacher was to find an interesting way to pass along this textbook information and then assess the students on it. In addition, I gave minimal attention to properly implementing the pedagogical strategies I had been taught during my teacher training (i.e., student-centered, communicative, task-based). Often, my instructional choices were influenced by my experiences as a learner and modeled after teaching practices I had been exposed to in those situations (i.e., teacher-centered, non-communicative).

By the end of my teaching tenure, my pedagogical content knowledge had grown as a result of reflecting upon my practices, but much work still needed to be done. I was able to relinquish some instructional control, though I still did not feel completely comfortable doing so. I was more confident in my subject matter knowledge, yet I still recognized that I was not well equipped to effectively teach all of the language systems (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) and skills (i.e., speaking, listening, writing, reading). I saw the importance of creating lessons and assessments with specific language learning outcomes, though I did not fully understand what steps (e.g., explicit directions, scaffolding) I should take to ensure these outcomes could be met. Further, I realized that my role was to serve as a language development facilitator, but I had misguided ideas about how to successfully implement student-centered communicative learning.

Areas for Further Development

The last research question I posed was: Where did I still want to go in terms of my L2 teacher identity development after completing my first term of full-time teaching? While I found that I possessed an initial teacher identity after the completion of four months in the classroom, I knew I had a few key issues to address in order to become the teacher I truly wanted to be. One issue I had to address was my pedagogical content knowledge. I saw I had to strengthen my knowledge of L2 classroom management, subject matter, and pedagogy in order to create the best possible learning conditions for students. A second issue I had to address was my inter-cultural competence. I realized that I needed to know more about how to effectively communicate with members of different ethnic communities and moderate cross-cultural discussions, as I found that certain interactions I had had with students were influenced by my stereotypes and a desire to avoid any type of conflict. A third issue I had to address was improving my collaboration with colleagues. I recognized that I had to keep the lines of communication open and embrace advice from co-workers, particularly on matters related to my teaching, as such advice would allow me to improve my instruction. The fourth issue I had to address was my monolingualism. I felt that my inability to speak a second language hurt my advancement potential within the TESL field, and put me at a disadvantage compared with my bi/multilingual colleagues who had a better understanding of the language learning process and the challenges faced by L2 students.

Recommendations for Further Research

As previously indicated, the broad topic of novice L2 teacher identity development has not been heavily investigated. As such, more research on all aspects of the topic needs to be undertaken. In particular, I think that consideration should be given to the issue of how being monolingual impacts the teacher identity development of novice ESL/EFL teachers. Of the eight studies conducted examining novice L2 teacher identity development, only one (Kanno &

Stuart, 2011) appears to have monolingual participants, though this fact is not explicitly confirmed or addressed. In general, research has focused on Asian-born novice ESL/EFL instructors who themselves were ESL/EFL learners (Farrell, 2003 & 2006; Peacock, 2001; Pennington & Richards, 1997; Tsui, 2007). While studies examining such participants are valuable, further attention should be given to novice ESL/EFL teachers, both monolingual and bi/multilingual, from North America and other parts of the world.

I would additionally recommend that more studies be done on this topic utilizing autoethnography as their research design and method. Autoethnography encourages writers to engage in critical self-reflection while still grounding that reflection in the context of others (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004; Hayler, 2011). I strongly believe that novice L2 teachers can benefit from engaging in the process of writing an autoethnographic narrative as it allows them to learn more about themselves as educators and as members of the larger L2 teaching community.

Epilogue

When I began my Bachelor of Education program in 2010 one of the first things I learned, and one of the few things to stick with me, was Gardner's (2006) theory of multiple intelligences. Of the nine intelligences he discussed, the two I knew I possessed were intrapersonal and linguistic. I have always been in tune with my thoughts and emotions. I have always had an affinity with words and expressing myself through writing (in English at least). Despite recognizing these intelligences, however, I have often wondered how they could work in tandem to benefit me in an academic and professional sense. My discovery of autoethnography answered that question.

The process of writing a creative autoethnographic narrative about my L2 teacher identity development has allowed me to thoughtfully analyze the feelings and actions associated with my first term of full-time teaching. This analysis has allowed to me to recognize the commonalities I have with other novice L2 teachers, and recognizing these shared experiences has made me feel

less isolated. It has truly been a cathartic and liberating endeavor, and hopefully those who read this thesis will come away having an enhanced understanding about both autoethnography and various factors associated with the professional identity development of novice L2 teachers.

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